

Chasing Menelik's Ghost: Why Abiy Ahmed Has failed the Oromo People

By Asafa Jalata*

Abiy Ahmed, who claimed to be an Oromo and came to state power in 2018 in Ethiopia mainly because of the Oromo youth protest movement that occurred between 2014 and 2018 to oppose the terrorist policies of the Tigrayan-led government, turned against the objectives of the protest movement, which included democracy, national self-determination, and social justice. He came up with a grand narrative called Ethiopianism, which attempts to rebuild the so-called great ancient Ethiopia with the image of Menelik (the principal architect of the Ethiopian Empire) by glorifying his ghost and justifying colonialism, state- or state-sponsored terrorism and recurrent wars on the Oromo people and the subjugated others. As far as the colonized nations are concerned, Menelik's state-building and empire-building strategies and policies symbolized darkness and horror because they involved terrorism, slavery, colonialism, racism, genocide, and gross human rights violations. In other words, Ethiopianism has justified the Habasha (Amhara-Tigrayan) colonial political project of domination and exploitation of the Oromo and others by any means necessary. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the Oromo national movement led by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the development of national Oromummaa as Oromo nationalism has recently shaken the foundation of Habasha supremacy or Ethiopianism for the last half-century. Currently, the Ethiopian state led by Abiy Ahmed is trying to destroy or suppress national Oromummaa,¹ which means Oromo national identity, culture, and nationalism, and the Oromo national movement, which struggles for Oromia's self-determination and egalitarian democracy of the gadaa/siiqqee system (indigenous Oromo democracy).² Following the policies and practices of the Haile Selassie, Mangist Haile Mariam, and Meles Zenawi successive nafxanya (gun-holders and terrorist) governments, Abiy Ahmed has consolidated the nafxanya system, state terrorism, and gross human rights violations in Oromia (the Oromo country) and beyond. First, the paper provides a historical background for the contradictions between Ethiopianism and national Oromummaa. Second, it explains the effects of European imperialism and Ethiopian colonialism on the Oromo and the other colonized nations. Third, the piece explains why the Abiy Ahmed government and its supporters are determined to restore Menelik's legacy and maintain the supremacy of Amhara culture, language, history, and Orthodox Christianity in a multicultural and multireligious empire. Finally, it presents a discussion and concluding remarks.

Keywords: Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopianism, Ethiopian colonialism, Menelik, national Oromummaa, the Oromo National Movement, and Nafxanyas (gun-holders)

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¹For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, *Oromummaa: Oromo Culture, Identity and Nationalism*, Oromia Publishing Company, Atlanta: Georgia, 2007.

²Asafa Jalata and Harwood D. Schaffer, "The Oromo Movement for Gadaa/Siiqqee Renaissance in the 21st Century," *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, pp. 1-27.

Contradictions Between *Ethiopianism* and *Oromummaa*: Nine Centuries of Contestations

The Abyssinian peoples (Amhara and Tigray), who prefer to call themselves *Habashas*, emerged with a common Orthodox Christianity, political system, tradition, and customs. One must accept Orthodox Christianity, learn at least one of the *Habasha* languages (Amharina or Tigrigna), and accept their traditions and habits to be Amhara or Tigray. Although they developed through the assimilation of the remnants of the Axumites and other indigenous peoples, such as the Agaw, Qimant, and others, the *Habashas*, particularly the Amhara, later assimilated the other colonized peoples. The monarchical, state, and church institutions have gradually maintained Amhara privileges, supremacy, and ethnonational stratification. Before they colonized the Oromo, the Amhara warlords destroyed or suppressed the Agaw, Qimant, and others by suppressing their cultures, languages, identities, and histories and dispossessing their economic resources, such as land. The Habasha elites have used the ideology and discourse of *Ethiopianism*, which provides false narratives of the successive Amhara state and the ruling class to explain, justify, and glorify the formation of the Ethiopian Empire and to deny the colonization of the Oromo and others.

The ideology of *Ethiopianism* emerged from the name Ethiopia, which originated from the Greek word *Aethiopes*, which means burned face or black.³ Classical Greek explorers and writers named the territories inhabited by Black peoples, Ethiopia, in Asia and Africa.⁴ *Ethiopianism* with broader Pan-Africanism in the contemporary period is linked to the black world that classical Greek writers explained above. However, the Ethiopian colonial rulers have distorted this version of *Ethiopianism* and used it as a racist ideology to legitimize the *naafxanya* (gun-carrying rulers) and the colonial system they created. Even though the historical meaning of Ethiopia applies to all Black peoples, it contemporarily applies to the geographic areas of Abyssinia proper and regions that the Habashas or Abyssinians colonized and created the Ethiopian Empire. Recognizing the political and ideological significance of the name Ethiopia and especially its Christian Biblical connections, Abyssinian leaders have claimed an Ethiopian identity and asserted that their ancient territories included all regions that classical geographers and historians described as Ethiopia.⁵ The official adoption of Ethiopia for the Abyssinian Empire occurred in 1931 when Haile Selassie officially changed the name

³A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia*, vols. I and II (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1928), pp. 120-121. Discussing ancient Ethiopia, Budge says, "The descriptions of Ethiopia given by Homer, Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny make it quite clear that they indicated by this name the vast tracts of country [regions] in Asia and Africa that were inhabited by dark-skinned and black-faced peoples." See also Jean Doresse, *Ancient Cities and Temples: Ethiopia*, Elsa Coult, (tr.), (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959), pp. 7-61.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵For further discussion, see Gadaa Melba, *Oromia: A Brief Introduction*, Finfinnee, 1980; Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1868-1992*, Denver, Co., Lynne Rienner publishers, 1993, pp. 3-6.

Abyssinia to Ethiopia in his constitution.⁶ Gradually, *Ethiopianism* has emerged as a political and ideological construct that Amhara and Tigrayan state elites have used to justify and rationalize Ethiopian settler colonialism, the *gabbar-nafxanya* system (semi-slavery), the racialized state power, and an ethno-racial hierarchy.⁷

Ethiopia has become an empire by claiming the name of ancient Ethiopia and justifying terrorism, enslavement, colonization, and the continued subjugation of Oromos and others through the discourse of race, religion, and *Ethiopianism*.⁸ *Ethiopianism*, or Greater Ethiopia's ideology, claims Ethiopia was never colonized like other parts of Africa because of Habashas' bravery and patriotism, making this Empire unique.⁹ The false Ethiopian historical discourse claims that Ethiopian boundaries are sacred since they were established 3,000 years ago. Furthermore, it is asserted that Abyssinian "society represented an advanced level of social and economic organization" that enabled it to defend itself from European colonialism by eliminating slavery and protecting "all the peoples of greater Ethiopia from falling prey to European imperialism"¹⁰ and that Ethiopia played a crucial civilizing mission by colonizing and dominating the Oromo and other nations who were considered backward, pagan, destructive, and inferior. These racist mythologies assisted Ethiopia in enjoying more recognition in Europe and North America, and "there was extended public discussion of Ethiopia's place in the world community and a great elaboration of the Ethiopian mythology initiated by European writers for a European public."¹¹

As a racist ideology, *Ethiopianism* claims that Habashas are different from other Africans and superior to them lay at the core of the European justification for empowering them to colonize and rule the Oromos and other nations. The Ethiopian Empire was created with the alliance of European imperialist powers, such as France, England, and Italy. Habasha warlords and rulers have maintained their power through a coalition with successive imperial superpowers, namely, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and China, that have protected successive Ethiopian state elites and their governments.¹² The Abiy government also receives substantial financial and military support from the United Arab Emirates.¹³ With the establishment of their colonial authority in the colonized states, Habasha settlers "assumed that their innate superiority over the residents accounted for this accomplishment."¹⁴ These essential components of racist discourses have remained intact. "Socialist" and then "democratic" discourses

⁶Gadaa Melbaa, *Oromia: A Brief Introduction* (Oromia: Finfinnee, 1980), p. 32.

⁷Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*: *ibid.*, pp. 65-93.

⁸Asafa Jalata, *Fighting against the Injustice of the State and Globalization*, New York: Palgrave, 2001.

⁹See Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*, Trenton: NJ: Red Sea Press, 1990.

¹⁰Donald N. Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p. 16.

¹¹Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *ibid.*, p. 176.

¹²Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*, *ibid.*

¹³[ispionline.it/en/publication/the-uaes-rising-military-role-in-africa-defending-interests-advancing-influence-172825](https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/Missions/Addis-Ababa/UAE-Relationships/Bilateral-Relationship); <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/Missions/Addis-Ababa/UAE-Relationships/Bilateral-Relationship> accessed on 01/05/2025.

¹⁴Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *ibid.*, p. 111.

have been introduced by successive Habasha state elites and accepted by their global supporters without changing Ethiopian society's colonizing and racist structures.

The Ethiopian state has been owned and controlled mainly by the *naafxanya* (settler) class, which includes Habasha elites, Ethiopianized Oromos, and other collaborators who dominate all aspects of state power and use state terrorism to maintain their power and privilege. The state has been Abyssianized or racialized to exclude non-Habashas peoples from decision-making power. The Ethiopian state has effectively used *Ethiopianism* to hide the crimes against humanity. Therefore, the only way to liberate Oromo society is by building and strengthening the Oromo national movement based on the ideology of national *Oromummaa* (Oromo-centric history, worldview, culture, nationalism, and egalitarian democracy). Rejecting the ideology of *Ethiopianism*, Oromo nationalists have developed national *Oromummaa* to oppose and dismantle the Ethiopian racial/ethnonational hierarchy and settler colonialism and its institutions. National *Oromummaa*, as an Oromo nationalist ideology and worldview, builds on the best elements of Oromo culture and traditions and advances an indigenous Oromo democracy known as the *gadaa/siiqqee* system.¹⁵

Before their colonization, the Oromo had the *gadaa* system of government, which "organized [them] in an all-encompassing democratic republic even before the few European pilgrims arrived from England on the shores of North America and only later built a democracy."¹⁶ The Oromo had an unwritten constitutional government. According to Lemmu Baissa,

Gadaa government comprises a hierarchy of triple levels: national, regional, and local. At the pan-Oromo level, the national government was led by an elected *luba* council [leaders] formed from representatives of the significant Oromo moieties, clan families, and clans, under the presidency of the *abbaa gadaa* and his two deputies . . . The national leadership was responsible for vital matters such as legislation and enforcement of general laws, handling issues of war and peace and coordinating the nation's defense, managing intra-Oromo clan conflicts, and dealing with non-Oromo people.¹⁷

Gadaa has three interrelated meanings: the grade during which a class assumes politico-ritual leadership, the eight years during which elected officials take power from the previous ones, and the institution of Oromo society.¹⁸ Discussing the philosophy of Oromo democracy, Asmarom Legesse notes,

¹⁵Asafa Jalata Harwood D. Schaffer, "Gadaa as the Fountain of *Oromummaa* and the Theoretical Base of Oromo Liberation," *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume 21, Number 1, pp. 1-25.

¹⁶Bonnie K. Holcomb, "Akka Gadaatti: The Unfolding of Oromo Nationalism-Keynote Remarks." Proceedings of the 1991 Conference on Oromia. University of Toronto, Canada, 3-4 August, 1991: 1-10.

¹⁷Lemmu Baissa, "The Oromo Gadaa System of Government: An Indigenous African Democracy," edited by Asafa Jalata, *State Crises, Globalisation and National Movements in Northeast Africa*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 101.

¹⁸Asmarom Legesse, *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1973).; Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System*, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2006).

"What is astonishing about this cultural tradition is how far Oromo have gone to ensure that power does not fall in the hand of war chiefs and despots. They achieve this goal by creating a system of checks and balances at least as complex as the systems we find in Western democracies."¹⁹

The *gadaa* system has the principles of checks and balances (through periodic succession every eight years), division of power (among executive, legislative, and judicial branches), balanced opposition (among five parties), and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots. Other system principles have included balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions, and confederacies, accountability of leaders, settling disputes through reconciliation, and respecting fundamental rights and liberties.²⁰ All *gadaa* officials were elected for eight years by universal adult male suffrage.

Currently, the Oromo national movement led by the OLF and the OLA is struggling to retrieve popular Oromo democracy through the principle of national self-determination. National *Oromummaa*, as an intellectual and ideological vision, places the Oromo man and woman at the center of analysis and, at the same time, goes beyond Oromo society and aspires to develop global *Oromummaa* by contributing to the solidarity of all oppressed peoples by promoting the struggle for national self-liberation and egalitarian democracy. National *Oromummaa* is a complex and dynamic national and global project. As a national project and the ideology of the Oromo national movement, national *Oromummaa* enables Oromos to retrieve their cultural-centric political strategies and tactics that can mobilize the nation for collective action, empowering the people for liberation.

The global *Oromummaa* enables the Oromo people to form alliances with all progressive political and social forces that accept the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian democracy in promoting global humanity free of oppression and exploitation. It is based on mutual solidarity, social justice, and popular democracy. National *Oromummaa*, as an element of culture, nationalism, and vision, has the power to serve as a manifestation of the collective identity of the Oromo national movement. The foundation of national *Oromummaa* must be built on overarching principles embedded within Oromo democratic traditions and culture and, simultaneously, have universal relevance for all oppressed peoples. The main foundations of national *Oromummaa* are individual and collective freedom, justice, popular democracy, and human liberation, all of which are built on the concept of *safuu* (moral and ethical order) and are enshrined in *gadaa/siiqqee* principles. Although national *Oromummaa* emerges from the Oromo cultural and historical foundations, it goes beyond culture and history in providing a liberating narrative for the future of the Oromo nation and other oppressed peoples, particularly those who suffered under the Ethiopian Empire.

As a critical ideology and worldview, national *Oromummaa* challenged the idea of glorifying kings or strongmen or chiefs who collaborated with European

¹⁹ Asmarom Legesse, *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1973), p. 2.

²⁰ Lemmu Baisa, *ibid.*

slavers and colonizers and destroyed African peoples by participating in the slave trade and the project of colonization. Successive Ethiopian government elites have built their power on the foundation of an ethnoracial hierarchy rationalized and justified by racism. They have maintained their legitimacy and survival through external connections and domestic political violence. Because they have failed to remove the political obstacles that have facilitated external dependency and state violence, they cannot build multinational democracy, peace, stability, and development. Because the Ethiopian state has been supported by mighty global powers and the imperial interstate system, there have been connections between racism, state violence, and global tyranny. National *Oromummaa* promotes sovereignty in opposition to dependency, sustainable development and self-sufficiency, national self-determination, and egalitarian democracy. As far as the Oromo people are concerned, *Ethiopianism* as an ideology and practice of colonial project of the successive *Habasha* ruling classes started nine hundred years ago, when the Amharas attacked the Oromo subgroups in Menz, northern Shawa, to destroy their religion, culture, language and initiated the dispossession of their lands to subjugate and exploit them.²¹

At the same time, using *Oromummaa* as a resistance ideology and a survival strategy, the Tulama Oromo groups in Menz and its surroundings started to oppose *Ethiopianism* to protect their Oromo identity, culture, history, and humanity and to defend the Oromo country from the Amhara and other invading forces.²² However, national *Oromummaa* as Oromo nationalism and national cultural and historical restoration started to further develop with Oromo national organizations, such as the Matcha-Tulama Self-Help Association in the 1960s and the Oromo Liberation in the 1970s to restore Oromia's self-determination, sovereignty, statehood, and egalitarian democracy of the *gadaa/siiqqee* system. The power of national *Oromummaa* as self-definition and self-discovery was initiated by a few Oromo organic intellectuals who wrote *The Oromos: Voice against Tyranny* in 1971 and restored the original Oromo name by rejecting the derogatory colonial name, *Galla*. Stokely Carmichael states, "The first need of a [mentally] free people is to define their terms," cultures, names, and objectives.²³ Oromo organic intellectuals and many activist Oromo scholars further developed different forms of *Oromummaa*.

Oromo nationalists paid dearly in restoring the authentic Oromo name, culture, and history, which the neo-*nafxanaya* government of Abiy is working day and night to destroy through its institutions, such as schools, media, the army, security structures (such as *Koree nageenya* (death squad),²⁴ and other agencies. The concept

²¹See, Mekura Bulcha, *Contours of the emergent and ancient Oromo nation: dilemmas in the Ethiopian politics of state and nation-building*, Center for Advanced Studies of African Societies, Cape Town, 2011; Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: 1300-1700*, James Currey, 2015.

²²See *The Oromos: Voice against Tyranny*, 1971. This was the first underground Oromo paper to initiate the Oromo national movement.

²³William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, pp. 29-62.

²⁴In Ethiopia, a secret committee orders killings and arrests to crush rebels, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ethiopia-violence-committee/> accessed 12/29/2025.

of Oromo self-definition has been central to the Oromo national movement because it promotes *Oromummaa* and the revolution of mind and culture to defeat the ideology and practice of *Ethiopianism* and an inferiority complex in Oromo society. Through self-definition, self-discovery, and self-legitimation, Oromo nationalists have developed a collective consciousness of national *Oromummaa* and Oromo national pride to empower the Oromo people by struggling for liberation, freedom, and egalitarian democracy by attacking and delegitimizing *Ethiopianism* and *Habasha* or Amhara supremacy. The complex contradictions and conflicts between *Ethiopianism* and *Oromummaa* can be addressed and understood by analyzing the antagonistic historical relations between the Oromo and the Amhara for centuries.

Although the colonization of the Oromo during the last decades of the 19th century intensified the conflict between the Oromo and the *Habashas*, their disputes on land, identity, power, religion, culture, and history started in the 12th century, as mentioned above. "From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, the [Oromo] were dominant on their territories; no people of other cultures could exercise compulsion over them."²⁵ However, starting from the last decades of the 19th century, the European intervention on the side of the *Habasha* changed the balance of power by favoring the latter. The Ethiopian colonial state used a document known as the *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the Kings) that rationalized and legitimized the monarchy by linking its genealogical descent to the ancient King of Israel, Solomon.²⁶ By tracing "the origin of the Ethiopian state in the era of Solomon, the legend endowed the Ethiopian nation with a notable ancient past. Tradition reckons history, hence the claim to three thousand years of existence."²⁷

Based on this myth, the Amhara monarchy considered itself a Solomonic dynasty. The so-called Solomonic monarchy remained in power from 1270 to 1974, when the military government overthrew the Haile Selassie regime and ended the legend that connected the Amhara dynasty with King Solomon. The first Amhara warlord, Yekuno-Amlak, claimed the restoration of the Solomonic dynasty in 1270 when he emerged as the first Amhara negus (King) and later shifted the geopolitical center from Lalibela, Lasta, to Menz, the northern Shawan plateau.²⁸ The successive Amhara ruling classes continued using the Solomonic dynasty's mythical claim and Orthodox Christian ideology to maintain their dominant political economies. "The Solomonic myth, introduced with the decline of the Axumite Empire, when more cement was needed to patch up the cracking wall of unity,"²⁹ was combined with Orthodox Christianity to shape the behavior of the Amhara-Tigrayan peoples. Claiming their descent from King Solomon and their election by God, the monarchs placed themselves at the top of the secular

²⁵Virginia Luling, "Government and Social Control among Some Peoples of the Horn of Africa," M.A. Thesis: The University of London, 1965.

²⁶John Markakis, *Ethiopia: anatomy of a traditional polity*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 19974, p. 29.

²⁷J. Markakis, *Ethiopia*, p. 29.

²⁸R. Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History*, p. 64.

²⁹Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes, the Challenge of Islam, and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), pp. xviii-XVIII-xix.

and ecclesiastic hierarchies; they had the absolute right to appoint and dismiss church and government officers.³⁰

From the 15th century onwards, the monarchies maintained political order through their loosely organized army, Orthodox Christian ideology, the monopolization of imported firearms during the 19th century, their control over the appointment and dismissal of officials, and the ability to mobilize human and economic resources in the kingdom through their officials. The monarchs' primary duties were defending the Amhara or Tigrayan people from their enemies and expanding their colonial territories to find more land, enslaved people, cattle, ivory, and other commodities. The colonial government also forced the conquered peoples to provide men as a fighting force and product for the monarchs and their followers. In search of land, enslaved people, serfs (*gabbars*), cattle, and other resources, the Amhara warlords, who called themselves kings, expanded their colonial territories to the Oromo communities of northern Shawa. Mekuria Bulcha writes, "The Gaalaan and the Amhara fought in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. The Gaalaan, who the Tuulama Oromo consider as *angafa* (the senior *gosa* or the firstborn), is numerically the largest Oromo *gosa* [clan] cluster."³¹ He considers the northern Shawan plateau the ancient country of the Oromo nation and refutes the claim that the Oromo came to Oromia/Ethiopia from another place. Bulcha characterizes the Shawan plateau as the "*cradle of Oromo civilization and springboard for Amhara expansion*" to the larger Oromo country. He argues that Amda Tseyon first conquered Shawa between 1314 and 1344.³²

The Shawan plateau was called a 'pagan' territory in the chronicle of Amda Tseyon. The people that the Amharas called 'pagans' were the Oromo. The Amhara group that later called itself Menz "remained as a pocket of resistance in a rugged mountainous area, located in the northern horn of Shawa. As early as the 17th century, the Menz, under the leadership" of Kristos Warada Qal (1696-1703) and later Sahle Selassie (1813-1847) intensified attacking the neighboring Oromo clans.³³ Bulcha notes that Menz is not an Amhara name but was usurped from the Oromo. As a territory, Menz includes Geera Meder, Laalo Meder, and Mamaa Meder when the Amhara king conquered it, and they are Oromo names.³⁴ The name Shawa was usurped by Sahle Selassie as the name of his kingdom when he established it in 1814. Isolated Christian communities from northern Wallo trickled down to the South between the 9th and 13th centuries and gradually reached Menz within the Shawa plateau and formed a Christian kingdom.³⁵ Christian Amhara priests moved into neighboring Oromo communities. As described in *The Oromos: Voice Against Tyranny*:

³⁰Allan Hoben, "Social Stratification in Traditional Amhara Society," *Social Stratification in Africa*, Arthur Tuden and Leonard Plotnicov (eds.) (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 218.

³¹Mekuria Bulcha, *ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 142-151.

³³The Oromos, *ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁴Mekuria Bulcha, *ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

³⁵The Oromos, *ibid.*, 11.

Under their Abbaa Boku and other politico-religious leaders, the Oromo people tried hard to save their homelands from invasion by resisting Christianity, which the imperialists used as a vanguard force of aggression. The Oromos, true to their love of freedom and dignity, burnt the Christian villages that were newly established among them. The Christian priests began compromising their religious practices with the Oromos to overcome this problem. [They started celebrating] the Maskal and the Timket, simultaneously [with] the Oromos' annual ceremonies. Besides this, the Christian kingdom sent troops to settle in areas where Christian churches started evicting the Oromos [by] building monasteries to defend priests.³⁶

Furthermore, Mohammed Hassen also notes that "some Oromo groups already living in the region of Shawa before the formation of the Shawan Amhara Empire during the first half of the fourteenth century remained an integral part of that empire during and after the fourteenth century."³⁷ During the reign of Amda-Sion, the Christian Amharass intensified their expansion into the neighboring Oromo communities in two ways. First, they annexed the Christian communities settled among the Oromo in some parts of Shawa.³⁸ Second, they forcefully converted some Oromos to Christianity by killing confident Oromo political and religious leaders. As one source noted, "If a Christian kill ... [Oromos] either with a spear or with another weapon...[the Oromo] which he kills shall be considered for him as an offering to God."³⁹ The neighboring Oromo communities fought against the invading Christian kingdom until the rise of Imam Ahmad, a Muslim leader who conquered and dominated the Christian Empire and other communities between 1527 and 1543.⁴⁰ The Oromo suffered immensely from the *jihadi* war because they were involved in both sides of the conflict against invading Christians and Muslims.⁴¹

When the Christian and Muslim forces were contesting in the Horn of Africa for power and control over resources, the northern and southern Oromo branches fought to liberate their territories and the conquered Oromo communities from the two invaders. When the Amhara Christian kingdom attacked the Tulama Oromo clans, such as the Gaalaan, Yaya, Waji, Abichu, Lalo, and Warra Qaalluu, the Muslim Somali and Afar invaders attacked the Oromo groups living in the area that currently called Somalia and other regions.⁴² Starting with the Metta Oromo, Sahle Sellasie, the King of Menz from 1813 to 1847, raided and butchered 4,500 Oromos, enslaved the remaining men, women, and girls, looted grains and herds, and burned and destroyed Oromo communities.⁴³ "The raids offered Sahle Selassie and his butcherers an opportunity to enrich themselves with booty and enslaved people. This account of Sahle Selassie's campaign is only one of the numerous similar campaigns against the Oromo and other groups butchered by Sahle Selassie's

³⁶*The Oromos: ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

³⁷Mohammed Hassen, *ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Faqi, *The Conquest of Abyssinia: Futuh Al Habasa* < Tsehai, 2005.

⁴¹Mohammed Hassen, P. 88.

⁴²Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, *History of the Oromo to the Sixteenth Century* (2nd ed.). Finfinnee: Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise, 2006.

⁴³Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*, Denver, Lynn Reiner Publishers, 1993, pp. 12-13.

ancestors and successors."⁴⁴ As a religion and state ideology, Orthodox Christianity created a bridge between European imperialism and Ethiopian colonialism during the first half of the 19th century. European missionaries, explorers, and merchants convinced their respective governments to support the *Habasha* warlords against the Oromo and others they considered "pagan" and "savage."

But whenever the Amhara soldiers established their settlements among the Tulama Oromo, the Oromo collectively chased the settlers away or killed them. The result was that the Amaharas could not effectively occupy any Oromo land during this period. Furthermore, between 1855 and 1868, under the leadership of Tewodros, the Amaharas started major campaigns to either colonize and convert the Wallo and Yejju Oromos to Orthodox Christianity or expel or exterminate them. The Oromo branches from northern Shawa and other places had political and religious institutions of *gadaa* and *qallu* that helped them defend their culture, identity, territory, and economic resources. The *gadaa* centers were established at places such as Odaa Mormor (near the Blue Nile), Odaa Nabee (in Shagar), Odaa Roba, and Madda Walaabuu in Bale. In these centers, two different institutions, *gadaa* and *qaaluu*, "served as the center of politics and religion for the Oromo clans living in the areas."⁴⁵ The renewal and centralization movement of the *gadaa* system occurred at Odaa Roba by replacing Odaa Nabee, a politico-religious center, for several hundred years. Subsequently, "Odaa Roba [became] a new holy politico-religious center of the Oromo people at large that the various representatives of Oromo groups periodically visited from all directions for such celebrations like *Jilaa Gadaa* [pilgrimages.]" Later, the politico-religious center of Odaa Roba moved to Madda Walaabuu (spring of freedom), likely because of the pressure from the Muslim empire-builders of Afar and Somalia.⁴⁶

With the support of other Oromo branches, the Bale Oromo living around Madda Walaabu reorganized and reconsolidated their political power and the *gadaa* system starting from the fourteenth century.⁴⁷ Between 1518 and 1519, the general assembly of the Oromo people was held for six months at Madda Walaabuu to deliberate on how to liberate and defend the Oromo country from the Christian and Muslim invaders; delegates from different parts of the Oromo country participated in this assembly.⁴⁸ The main question Walaabuu Jiloo, *Abbaa Gadaa* of Madda Walaabuu, asked at the general assembly was, "Maal Taana?" ("What are we going to be?"⁴⁹ After thorough discussions and deliberations, the general assembly defined the main enemies of the Oromo people as Christian and Muslim empire builders. These enemies were attacking the Oromo people by killing them, taking their land and other resources, and forcing them to abandon their culture, religion, and identity.⁵⁰ The history of Madda Walaabuu demonstrates that the most significant revival and reorganization of the *gadaa* institution occurred

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, *ibid.*, p. 56

⁴⁶See Asafa Jalata, "Politico-Cultural Prerequisites for Protecting the Oromo National Interest," *Sociology Mind* (2018), https://works.bepress.com/asafa_jalata/94/, accessed on 07/25/2021, 95-113.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 104

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

at the beginning of the 16th century.⁵¹ Since this century, the renewal and reorganization of the *gadaa* system have involved fundamental changes, including establishing political objectives, the rules of the game, and specific rules and regulations.

The assembly passed three primary political objectives: The first objective was to strengthen the institution of the *gadaa* system to defend the Oromo people from the wars of Christian and Muslim empire-builders. The second one was consolidating the Oromo military power by recruiting and training *qerroo* (Oromo youth) between 18 and 24 to regain the old Oromo territories lost due to the constant wars. The assembly formulated new rules and regulations, which were important in realizing the objectives. The third objective was to strengthen the *Muuda* religious pilgrimage to the seat of *Abbaa Muuda*, the chief *qaallu*, every eight years. In the indigenous Oromo religion known as *Waaqeffana*, *Abbaa Muuda* established an ethical and moral order, which defined the relationship among *Waaqa* (God), society, and nature in a balanced way. In 1522, the Oromo intensified their defensive struggle to recover their lost territories and liberate the conquered Oromo groups. Darrel Bates notes, "The [Oromo] ... had suffered in their time from both parties and were waiting in the wings for opportunities ... to recover lands taken from them."⁵² As mentioned, between 1257 and 1543, the Muslims destroyed the Christian rule and established their own under Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi. The Imam was defeated and beheaded in 1543.

The wars between the Christians and the Muslims endangered the Oromo's survival as a people. With the renewal and reorganization of *gadaa*, the Oromo carried out *butta* wars every eight years, when power transferred from one *gadaa* grade to the next. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when they intensified their territorial recovery through the *butta* wars, many Oromo branches were under one *gadaa* government. The *gadaa* system strengthened and enabled them to recover their lost territories and accommodate their increased population and stock.⁵³ The Oromo fought twelve *butta* wars between 1522 and 1618, recovering and reestablishing the Oromo country called Oromia today.⁵⁴ According to *The Oromos: Voice Against Tyranny*, "the sixteenth century's so-called 'Galla'⁵⁵ invasion' was neither an invasion nor a migration. Instead, it was a national movement of the Oromo people incited by the southern Oromos and supported by the northern Oromos under the domination of the Abyssinians with the specific goal of liberating themselves and their territories from colonial domination."⁵⁶

Before the rise of Tewodros between 1855 and 1868, there was a balance of power between the Oromo and the Abyssinians, and sometimes the former

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵²Darrell Bates, *The Abyssinian Difficulty: The Emperor Theodoros and the Maqdala Campaign*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), P. 7.

⁵³Asmarom Legesse, *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1973).

⁵⁴Tesema Ta'a, T. *The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia: From the Mid-16th to the Early-20th Centuries*, (PhD Dissertation, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University., 1986)

⁵⁵Galla is a derogatory name given to the Oromo by their enemies; it connotes primitiveness or backwardness.

⁵⁶*The Oromos, ibid.*, pp. 2-13.

influenced the Abyssinian kingdom of Gondar."⁵⁷ According to J. Spencer Trimingham, "Tewodros capitalized on the Abyssinian concerns and set in motion a series of events that led to the establishment of the modern Ethiopian Empire. During the leadership of Tewodros, some of the Abyssinians engaged in a series of campaigns to colonize and convert the Wallo and Yejju Oromos to Orthodox Christianity or expel or exterminate them. Before this time, the Wallo, Yejju, Azabo, and the Raya Oromo groups had accepted Islam 'as a bulwark against being swamped by Abyssinian nationalism.'"⁵⁸ Despite his brutal campaigns and the attempt to deport the Wallo Oromo *en masse* to western Abyssinia, Tewodros ultimately failed to control them effectively. The Ethiopian rulers had long feared both Islam and the Oromo "and the thought of the two in combination [were] their recurring nightmare."⁵⁹ On October 29, 1862, Tewodros wrote two identical letters to Queen Victoria of England and Emperor Napoleon III of France expressing his hate for the Oromo: "My fathers, the emperors, having forgotten the creator, He handed over their kingdom to the Galla [Oromo].... But God created me, lifted me out of the dust, and restored this Empire to my rule. He endowed me with power and enabled me to stand in the place of my fathers. By this power, I drove away the Gallas."⁶⁰

After Queen Victoria ignored the letter, Tewodros mistreated and imprisoned British diplomats in Abyssinia. As a result, Great Britain sent an expeditionary force to release them. Yohannes of Tigray and Menelik of Amhara, rivals of Tewodros, then allied themselves with the British to destroy Tewodros. Yohannes provided logistical support for an expeditionary force of Great Britain that was sent to release those British whom Tewodros imprisoned. Tewodros was defeated by the British expeditionary force and committed suicide in 1868 without completing the process of the creation of the modern Ethiopian state. The death of Tewodros was followed by fierce competition and conflict between various centralizing warlords, such as Gobaze of the Amhara, Wag, and Lasta, Kasa of Tigray alias Yohannes, and Menelik of Shawa. On July 11, 1871, with the military and political assistance he received from the British Kasa defeated Gobaze at the battle of Assam and proclaimed himself Emperor Yohannes IV on January 21, 1872.

He also established his suzerainty over Menelik of Shawa and Adal Tassama (Takla Haymanot of Gojjam) and began to collect taxes. Between 1872 and 1889, Yohannes faced three external political pressures during his reign. As the Italians expanded their colonial territory from the Red Sea coast into Tigray, they allied with Menelik in Shawa, who was consolidating his power. During this period, the Egyptians and the Mahdists of Sudan were also fighting Yohannes.⁶¹ On March 9, 1889, at the battle of Matamma, the Mahdists killed Yohannes,

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, (New York: Barner and Noble., Inc., 1965), p. 106.

⁵⁹P. W. Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromos," *African Affairs*, Volume 77, Issue 308, July 1978, Pages p. 286, pp. 2283–296,

⁶⁰Richard Greenfield and M. Hassen, "Interpretation of Oromo Nationality," *Horn of Africa*, 1980. p. 8, 3/3: 3-14.

⁶¹Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & E Ethiopia*, *ibid.*

creating the requisite political space for Menelik to expand his power and control. With the support of Great Britain, France, and Italy, Menelik's colonization of non-Abyssinians, particularly the Oromo, allowed him to gain access to the abundant human and material resources that he mercilessly exploited so that he could purchase the modern weaponry and expertise necessary to create and maintain the Ethiopian Empire.⁶²

Imperialism and Colonialism and their Consequences

The partitioning of the Horn of Africa was part of the Scramble for Africa, after which European colonial powers divided Africa among themselves. France, Britain, Italy, and Abyssinia/Ethiopia divided the Horn region during the second half of the nineteenth century. The alliance between the European imperialists and the Ethiopian colonialists enabled the Abyssinian warlords to build their Empire by colonizing their main enemy, the Oromo, and other nations. The French, Italians, and British continuously supplied Menelik with various weaponry, ammunition, and technological expertise,⁶³ all which Menelik parlayed into the foundation of the central state. The firearms from European powers made the Ethiopians "by far the strongest native power in Africa" and the "best armed native race in Africa."⁶⁴ With Oromo resources, Menelik "rewarded his generals, paid his soldiers, and bought, first from the French and then from the Italians, huge supplies of arms and ammunition wherewith to equip his ever-growing armies."⁶⁵

"To obtain the necessary finances," Marcus says, "Menelik and his advisors decided to organize a caravan to carry various . . . products to the coast for transshipment to Europe."⁶⁶ Czeslaw Jesman notes that Menelik "personally controlled most of the trade of his state. . . . he was a merchant King, besides being a millionaire."⁶⁷ In a letter to European powers, Menelik expressed his intention to participate in the scramble for Africa: "I have no intention of being an indifferent spectator if far distant Powers make their appearance with the idea of dividing Africa."⁶⁸ Explaining how Menelik began to establish his administration in Oromia, John Murray writes, "Convinced that much more was to be made out of the helpless [Oromo] by their permanent exploitation, he began in the early [18th] seventies to occupy the districts that he overran with permanent garrisons of his troops, providing at the same time for their

⁶²*Oromia & E Ethiopia, ibid.*

⁶³Harold G. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States, 1941-1974* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1983), p. 13.

⁶⁴Richard Pankhurst, "Menelik and Utilisation of Foreign Skills in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, vol. v, no. 1(1967), pp. 65-66.

⁶⁵The Early Lytton, *The Stolen Desert* (London: 1967), p. 160.

⁶⁶Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II, Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 44.

⁶⁷Czeslaw Jesman, *The Russians in Ethiopia* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), p. 60.

⁶⁸Quoted in Robert P. Skinner, *Abyssinia of Today* (New York: Negro Univ. Press, 1969), p. 145.

administration under a hierarchy of his officials."⁶⁹ Menelik sent a large expedition to the Oromo country (Oromia) to solve Abyssinia's economic and famine problems. Marcus argues that "Expeditions were often organized during times of famine when numerous refugees went along to settle in newly conquered lands with the soldiers who stayed behind to garrison the fortified villages (*katamas*) erected as control points."⁷⁰

Menelik and his soldiers terrorized and colonized the Oromo and other peoples to obtain enslaved people and commodities such as gold, ivory, coffee, musk, hides and skins, and lands. Menelik controlled the slave trade (an estimated 25,000 enslaved people per year in the 1880s), owned with his wife 70,000 enslaved Africans, and became one of the wealthiest capitalists in the region and the world: "The Abyssinian ruler had extended the range of his financial operations to the United States and [was] a heavy investor in American railroads ... with his American securities and his French and Belgian mining investments, Menelik [had] a private fortune estimated at no less than twenty-five million dollars."⁷¹ The colonialists used guns (*nafxi*) and established a system of dispossessing mainly Oromo lands and exacting their labor and agricultural products. The colonial settlers—soldiers, clergypersons, and administrators, all known as *nafoxanyas*—exploited *gabbars* (semi-slaves) who were coerced to provide them food, labor, tribute, and tax revenues both in cash and kind.⁷² The Ethiopian colonial expansion resulted in mass killings, destruction, and expropriation of property, plundering, enslavement, and genocide.

Some of the Oromo groups openly resisted and fought against the colonialists. For instance, between 1882 and 1886, the bloodiest colonial wars were conducted against the Arsi Oromo because they resisted Ethiopian colonialism under their *gadaa* government. Menelik colonized them in 1886 after conducting six savage campaigns. In addition to mass killings, the hands of thousands of Arsi Oromo men were cut off, and the breasts of thousands of women were mutilated by the order of Menelik at Annole in 1886. About the colonized regions, Harold Marcus says, "Not only were these territories effectively occupied and policed, but they were also being economically and politically integrated into . . . Ethiopia."⁷³ Ethiopian settler colonialism developed five types of social arrangement: the *katanas* (garrison of towns), slavery, the *balabat* system (the collaborator class),

⁶⁹ John Murray, "Abyssinia Under Menelik and After," p.35.

⁷⁰ Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, pp.64-5.

⁷¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/1909/11/07/archives/king-menek-has-investments-here-abyssinians-ruler-said-to-be-a.html>, accessed on 01/05/2025. "King Menelik has Investment Here,"

⁷² A *ras* (a head of a group) or *dajazmach* (war leader) could receive 1,000 *gabbars*, a sub-governor 200 or 300, a *fitawrar* (another war leader) 300, a *kangazmach* (lower war leader) 150, and ordinary soldiers, depending on their ranks, 20, 15 or 10. The Amhara-led colonial government claimed absolute rights over three-fourths of the Oromo lands and provided portions for its officials and soldiers in lieu of salary. One fourth of the land was granted to the Oromo collaborators, who became the agents of the *nafoxanya* state. Even though some changes occurred in the Ethiopian Empire during 1974, 1991, 2018, the *nafoxanya* of all kinds have come to power and continued to protect the same system. The current regime led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is characterized as the neo-*nafoxanya* government because it tries to modernize the Ethiopian state by glorifying Menelik.

⁷³ Harold G. Marcus, "The Black Men Who Turned White: European Attitudes Towards Ethiopia," *Archiv Orientalni* 39 (1971), *Academia, nakladatelstvi, Ceskoslovenka Akademie ved*, p. 165.

the *nafxanya-gabbar* system, and the colonial landholding system. The colonial settlers hierarchically organized the *katamas* in Oromia as their main geopolitical centers for practicing political domination through various control agencies, wealth and capital accumulation, and religious and cultural dissemination.⁷⁴ The *katamas* served as nerve centers of the Ethiopian colonial system through which colonial political, economic, and ideological programs were formulated and implemented; they were hierarchically organized as the principal, provincial, and subdistrict towns so that chains of command would flow from the center to the local level without any interruption. These garrison towns were established strategically and politically secured places and became centers of regional rule and trade networks connecting parts of Oromia to Ethiopia and Europe. As such, they constituted nodal points of a more extensive countrywide network of towns that, woven territorially, organized the relational structure of Ethiopia's political economy, including the colonialist rule and the flow of products.

The garrison cities were geopolitical headquarters from which Ethiopian soldiers were dispatched to impose colonial rule through enslavement, subjugation, and expropriation of the essential means of production, such as cattle, land, and other valuables. Through these centers, expropriated goods flow to local consumption and international markets. The Oromo branches who resisted colonialism were massacred or fled or became enslaved people, servants to, or manual workers of the colonialists. Still, a few who accepted Ethiopian dominance were culturally assimilated and incorporated into the Ethiopian colonial system. Centralizing their political power in Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) with the help of their modern army and communication networks, the colonialists continuously expanded their territories until they reached areas effectively occupied by Britain, France, and Italy. The Ethiopians raided the crops and the cattle of the Oromo and other peoples to feed the famine-stricken Ethiopians. By colonizing the Oromo country, the Ethiopian ruling class transplanted their fellow Ethiopians, mainly Amharas, to Oromia and forced the Oromo to work for them. The Ethiopian "migrant soldier-peasant had formed the flesh and sinew of ... armies of expansion in the south and west, but revenues from northern [Ethiopian] peasant farms never were a significant source of revenue for Ethiopia's growth into a modern state."⁷⁵

Abyssinian soldiers and other famine-stricken Ethiopians continuously occupied the Oromo lands, devastated their properties and lives, looted their grain and cattle, and enslaved those whom they captured in fighting or those who could not pay taxes. The institution that entitled the colonialists and their intermediaries to exact labor and agricultural products from the Oromo and others was the *nafxanya-gabbar* system. The Ethiopian settlers—soldiers, clergypersons, and administrators (all known as *nafxanyas*)—exploited *gabbars*⁷⁶ who were coerced to provide them food, labor, tribute, and tax revenues both in

⁷⁴See Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*, pp. 88-93.

⁷⁵James McCann, *From Poverty to Famine in Northeast Ethiopia: A Rural History 1900-1935* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), pp. 57-58.

⁷⁶*Gabbars* were treated as serfs and, in some instances, as enslaved people. They provided labor, tribute, and tax revenue to their new lords.

cash and in kind.⁷⁷ Stahl states, "The lords demanded one-third to one-half of the harvest. In addition, they had to provide chicken, eggs, sheep, and beer for lords' banquets on important holidays."⁷⁸ The Oromo farmers and herders were also forced to work on estate farms, building roads, and other construction projects. The control of *gabbar* labor and the expropriation of lands were inseparable phenomena. Initially, land without labor had no value, so the colonialists needed *gabbars* who would work for them. The state expropriated the best lands and appointed stewards (called *misilenes*) to manage *hudads* (estate farms) and *gabbar* labor.

In addition to paying tributes, taxes, and tithes, the *gabbars* produced food and raised cattle, horses, and other animals for the emperor and his officials. The emperor and royal households owned extensive tracts of the best lands that supplied necessary provisions. Local and regional state officials had estate farms that were worked by the *gabbars*. These farms produced all the required products for consumption and market. The rural household economy remained the basic production unit despite such farms and a few concession farms. In Oromia, the primary sources of revenue gradually became *gabbar* labor and land for the colonial state and its officials. The survival and evolution of the Ethiopian client state depended mainly on the dual bases of landownership and articulation with European imperialism. Initially, this colonial state financed itself with revenues obtained from looting, enslavement of the colonized peoples, and control of trade. However, *gabbar* labor and land gradually became the primary state revenue sources. "The system of land ownership was crucial to the country's economic and social life," writes Richard Pankhurst, "for besides determining questions of social class, it was the basis of administration, taxation, and military service."⁷⁹

Oromo lands were turned over to the state's governors, military commanders, soldiers, and settlers to safeguard Ethiopian control and produce extraction. The Ethiopian colonialists settled fellow villagers in Oromia to perpetuate their dominance. The colonial state claimed absolute rights over three-fourths of the Oromo lands and provided portions for its officials instead of salary. The Ethiopian nobility and ecclesiastical, civil, and military officers were rewarded with grants of lands called *maderia* and *rist-gult*. The *nafoxanyas* and foreign mercenaries who participated in the colonization of Oromia as soldiers, settlers, messengers, priests, spies, and correctional officers were also granted land as a reward for their service. The amount of land (whether granted temporarily or permanently) depended on rank or position. An ordinary soldier received from one to three *gashas* (a *gasha* is approximately forty hectares), a captain of fifty soldiers was granted up to five *gashas*, and a leader of three hundred soldiers received up to twenty *gashas* of land. The state also commodified and sold some lands to individuals. The Oromo farmers and pastoralists faced a similar fate everywhere. One-fourth of the land was granted to the Oromo collaborators, and one person from each subgroup

⁷⁷McClellan, *Reaction to Ethiopian Expansionism: The Case of Darasa, 1895-1935*, (Ph.D. dissertation: Michigan State Univ., 1978), p. 121.

⁷⁸Michael Stahl, *Ethiopia: Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development* (Stockholm: Raben & Sjogern, 1974), p. 46.

⁷⁹Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I Univ., 1968), p. 135.

took charge. Such persons collected taxes and then paid them to the colonial settlers and the state. Gradually, they developed into landlords and collaborated with the colonialists for the oppression and exploitation of the Oromo.

Successive Habasha regimes have engaged in terrorism and genocide⁸⁰ and exploited the resources of the Oromo, Afar, Anuak, Nuer, Shinasha, Berta, Gumuz, Sidama, Walayita, and others, and racialized and suppressed their national movements to maintain a racial/ethnonational hierarchy and continue exploitation and subjugation. While engaging in state terrorism in the form of war, torture, rape, and genocide to control the Oromo and others and loot their economic resources, the Ethiopian state elite, and their collaborators have recently claimed that they have been promoting democracy, multinational federalism, and national self-determination. Of course, Amhara elites are even against these cosmetic changes and accuse these subjugated groups, particularly Oromo activists, as "narrow nationalists," or "racists," or "terrorists."⁸¹ The Ethiopian state elites have used various techniques of violence to terrorize the Oromo, who have been engaged in the struggle for liberation and democracy. The Ethiopian soldiers and security networks have committed the following crimes against Oromo activists. They have been whipped or tortured; locked in steel barrels, or forced into pits where the fire was made on top of them; fixed large containers or bottles filled with water to men's testicles; or, if their victims were women, bottles or poles were pushed into their vaginas.⁸²

In addition, the soldiers have openly shot thousands of peaceful people in Oromia, leaving their bodies for hyenas, burying them in mass graves, or throwing their corpses off cliffs. Other methods of killing included burning, bombing, cutting throats or arteries in the neck, strangulation, and burying people up to their necks in the ground. For example, as Mohammed Hassen estimates, between 1992 and 2001, about 50,000 killings and 16,000 disappearances (euphemism for secret killings) occurred in Oromia alone.⁸³ Furthermore, he estimates that 90% of the killings were not reported. To hide these state crimes from the world community, the government did not "keep written records of its extrajudicial executions and the prolonged detention of political prisoners."⁸⁴ The regime killed or imprisoned thousands of Oromo students because they engaged in peaceful demonstrations. Saman Zia-Zarifi, the academic freedom director at Human Rights Watch, notes, "Shooting at unarmed students is a shameful misuse of government power" in Ethiopia.⁸⁵

⁸⁰"Two Liberation Movements Compared: Oromia & Southern Sudan," *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, Vol. 27, No. 1: 152-174.

⁸¹<https://yooyyaa.com/2019/11/26/10-glaring-irrationality-of-nafxanyaas/>, accessed on 2/16/2021; <https://zehabesha.com/delusion-of-oro-mo-and-pseudohistorical-of-emperor-menelik/>, 2/16/2021.

⁸²Fossati, B., Namara, L., and Niggli, P. 1996. *The new rulers of Ethiopia and the persecution of the Oromo: Reports from the Oromo refugees in Djibouti*. Frankfurt, Germany: Dokumentation, Evangelischer Pressedienst Frankfurt am Main.

⁸³Mohammed Hassen, "Is Genocide against the Oromo in Ethiopia Possible," Paper Presented at the Fourth International Biennial Conference of the Association of Genocide Scholars, Radisson Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10, 2001.

⁸⁴Quoted in Mohamed Hassen, *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁵Zia-Zarifi, S. (2004) 'Ethiopia: Halt Crackdown on Oromo Students', Human Rights Watch [<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/ethiopia052202.html>].

The political agenda of the destruction of Oromo society is not a new phenomenon. The West has been supporting this political agenda. With the emergence of 9/11 terrorism in the U.S., the U.S. government and other Western governments have used the discourse of Islamic fundamentalism to support the Ethiopian regime and to suppress the struggles of the Oromo and others for self-determination, social justice, and democracy. This implies that since some Oromo are Muslims, they are "Islamic fundamentalists" and are not entitled to democracy and national self-determination. In the past, the colonization of the Oromo and others was rationalized and justified by various ideological discourses. It was explained that since these peoples were "pagans" and "uncivilized" and that Habashas were Christians and "civilized," the Habashas were entitled to colonize these peoples and impose their civilization and Christianity on them. State terrorism, hidden genocide, and massive human rights violations are used to keep the Oromo and other peoples subordinated and exploited.

Today, the Ethiopian colonial settlers have dominated cities and towns in Oromia. They have segregated the Oromo people both in urban and rural areas and have kept them under "Ethiopian political slavery" by using the army, modern weapons, the media, the telephone, the fax, the Internet, and other communication and information apparatuses and networks, as well as global connections. Using political violence, the Ethiopian government has denied the Oromo and others the freedom of expression and organization, as well as access to the media and all forms of communication and information networks. Consequently, the Oromo are denied the privilege of self-definition and self-development and are forced to provide their economic and labor resources to the Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters while living under deplorable conditions in the twenty-first century.

The Neo-nafxanya Government and Why Menelik's Ghost Devastates the Oromo People

After becoming prime minister in 2018, Abiy Ahmed positioned himself as a man of peace and democracy who would transition Ethiopia from its troubled past to democracy. This initially won him many supporters, both domestically and internationally. He was also applauded for signing a peace deal with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, granting amnesty to political prisoners, and reducing press censorship. As a result, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. But, within a short time, Abiy reversed most of the reforms he had introduced. He started to show his second and real face, one of cruelty, manifested in state terrorism and massive human rights violations. While much attention was given to his administration and allies' atrocities in Tigray, state terrorism in Oromia has become rampant.

Within months in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed organized a clandestine committee called *Koree Nageenyaa* (Security Death Committee).⁸⁶ The prime minister created the committee and assigned Shimelis Abdisa, Abiy's former chief of staff and the president of Oromia, to lead it; members of the committee included Fekadu Tessema, Oromia's Prosperity Party leader, Ararsa Merdasa, head of security for Oromia, Awalu Abdu, vice president of Oromia, and many political and security officials. The security committee "has ordered extrajudicial killings and illegal detentions to crush" the leadership of the Oromo national movement led by the OLF and the OLA, which have struggled for Oromia's self-determination and democracy for almost a half-century.⁸⁷ Fearing the revolutionary potential of the Oromo youth, the clandestine security committee cracked down on new protests in 2019, displacing hundreds of thousands in Oromia. It also killed or arrested hundreds of people and tortured them.

The security committee "not only eliminates suspected enemies. It also acts preemptively to keep protesters off the streets. In 2019, the committee ordered that people deemed a security threat be arrested or their prison terms prolonged."⁸⁸ The Abiy government has violated its laws, arrested people without a warrant, and blamed its violent crimes on the OLA.⁸⁹ Abiy's brutal repression in Oromia and against Oromos is not new. Oromo nationalists have believed that Abiy, like many of his predecessors, is running a neo-*nafxanya* administration that exalts the glories of Ethiopia's imperial history and seeks to continue its oppressive, brutal, and exploitative practices. Defining what a neo-*nafxanya* administration requires understanding the historical *nafxanya-gabbar* system. As discussed above, Menelik and his collaborators created the *nafxanya-gabbar* system as a form of settler colonialism during the last decades of the 19th century by settling Amharas, Tigrayans, and other groups—mainly highlander Orthodox Christians—in Oromia and beyond.

The colonizing army looted cattle and grain and committed horrifying acts of mutilation, such as cutting the breasts of women and the male organs and the hands of men.⁹⁰ The Menelik's army then established a system of control over the rest of the population by dispossessing them of their land, exploiting their labor, and taking their agricultural products. Emperor Haile Selassie's government expanded and consolidated the *nafxanya-gabbar* system before changes occurred in the Ethiopian empire-state in 1974. Although the failed 1974 revolution nationalized land and changed the status of the *gabbar* in the central and southern regions, the fundamental nature of the state was not changed. The new militarized socialist state intensified the brutalization of marginalized groups, including Oromos. The same is true about the change of government in 1991. Despite the Tigay-dominated government adopting some aspects of multinational federalism, it primarily

⁸⁶<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ethiopia-violence-committee/>, "A REUTERS INVESTIGATION: In Ethiopia, a secret committee orders killings and arrests to crush rebels," accessed on 02/27/2024.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰<https://brill.com/display/title/24518?crawler=true&lang=en&language=en&mimetype=application%2Fpdf>

existed only on paper. This government was never committed to the self-determination rights it gave lip service to.

The Tigrayan elites and their collaborators from other ethnonational groups were dominant and, in line with their neo-*naafxanya* predecessors, exploited marginalized groups. Therefore, the Abiy government is considered as "neo-*naafxnaya*" because it tries to modernize the Ethiopian state by glorifying imperial leaders and the history of the Empire while denigrating the history of marginalized communities, particularly that of the Oromo. Habesha elites under successive regimes have denied the colonization of the Oromo and presented them as "invaders" of Ethiopia, referring to the so-called Oromo migrations of the 16th and 17th centuries. The neo-*naafxanya* system defenders use portrayals of Oromos as expansionist invaders to justify the brutal colonialism of the Ethiopian state. In his various historically void speeches, Abiy lectures the long-marginalized peoples of Ethiopia to forget how the Ethiopian empire-state brutalized the Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Qimant, Agew, Wolayta, Gambella, Berta, Gumuz, and others.⁹¹

When Abiy articulates the greatness of Ethiopia and its leaders, what comes to mind for many members of these groups is brutality, state terrorism, and human rights violations. Despite Abiy and the Ethiopianist camp that supports him trying to discredit the historical narrative of these victimized groups and legitimize the crimes of successive Ethiopian governments, the people will never forget their actual history. Abiy's neo-*naafxanya* administration has also started ideological warfare on *Oromummaa* (Oromo nationalism) by glorifying Amhara nationalism disguised as *Ethiopianism*. As the Abiy administration tried to revive the assimilationist nation-building project, one aspect of the strategy involved the systematic attack on Oromo's political and cultural institutions. Despite his administration giving lip service to the importance of *Gadaa/Siiqqee* leaders, it is oppressing *Gadaa* leaders who are the custodians of Oromo culture, institutions, and democracy. For instance, on 1 December 2021, federal and Oromia government forces attacked a *Gadaa* religious ceremony in Karrayu, East Shewa Zone.⁹² They beat and abducted the *Abbaa Gadaa*—the traditional head of spiritual, social, legal, and economic affairs—other community leaders and innocent young men. The bodies of fourteen people, including the *Abbaa Gadaa*, were found the next day, while 25 others were unaccounted for and are believed to be dead.

Abiy's government has been centralizing power in a way reminiscent of Ethiopia's imperial past. Abiy used his Oromo cultural affinity, the *Qeerro/Qaarree* (Oromo youth) movement, and the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP, formerly the OPDO) to manipulate the Tigrayan-led government and become prime minister. Once he took power, he used the narrative of democracy, reconciliation, and transition to convince the wider public.⁹³ These conditions gave him time to establish his total control of state structures and consolidate power by surrounding himself with loyalists and creating an alliance against the Oromo Liberation Front

⁹¹<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2020/10/08/why-did-ethiopias-prime-minister-blame-african-americans-for-their-victimization/>

⁹²https://addisstandard.com/news-abba-gadaa-union-says-missing-member-of-karrayyu-gadaa-leadership-dead-dozens-under-custody/#google_vignette

⁹³<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/25/abiy-ahmed-ethiopia-qeerro-oromia-betrayed/>

(OLF), Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), and Tigray's regional government—all perceived to be threats to his centralization plans. Like its predecessors, this administration has effective control over the country's political economy and uses the military, police, and other security forces to suppress dissent. Ethiopian prisons are now mainly filled with *Afaan Oromoo* and Tigrigna speakers, and the offices of many private media, such as the Oromia Media Network (OMN), are closed in Ethiopia.⁹⁴ Abiy's government has continued the policy of land dispossession from farmers and pastoralists in Oromia and the other colonized regions.⁹⁵

Any Oromo who does not conform to the neo-*naafxanya* revisionist history, cultural destruction, economic exploitation, and land dispossession is liable to be subject to state violence. That violence has been used to impose fear on the public as a ploy to change their political behavior of resistance and make them support the current administration. The Ethiopian government has never refrained from attacking the OLF and OLA, along with the Oromo public, to destroy the Oromo struggle for self-determination. Starting in 2018, when Abiy came to power, members of OLA and the *Qeerroo/Qarree* movement have been hunted and killed or detained in many places across Oromia.⁹⁶ Soon after he came to power, Abiy established military command posts in some parts of Oromia, such as Wello, Wallaga, Guji, and central Oromia, giving them a free hand to kill Oromo youth and other civilians who were suspected to be Oromo nationalists and sympathizers of the OLF and the OLA.

To destroy the OLA, the Abiy government has intensified state terrorism and genocidal massacres in Wallagga, Tulama, Guji, Wallo, and other areas.⁹⁷ Government forces and security agents have focused on identifying and executing people related to OLA and *Qeerroo/Qarree* in politics and blood, claiming they support or sympathize with them.⁹⁸ The Abiy government and its political party, the Prosperity Party, do not hide their plans and actions of "ethnic cleansing" in Oromia. Fekadu Tessema, Prosperity Party head, Oromia branch, was heard at the Oromia Regional Parliament meeting, Adama, on February 27, 2021, saying, "If you want to get rid of the fish completely, you need to dry up the ocean."⁹⁹ He meant that to eliminate the OLA, the government needs to destroy the Oromo people who are supporting the organization. Having declared war on Oromia and the OLA, the administration

⁹⁴<https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-sub-saharan-africa-amid-democratic-turbulence-deep-seated-corruption>

⁹⁵<https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/regionalprofile/english-version-country-profiles/318392/the-ethiopian-path-to-development-land-grabbing-displacement-and-internal-migration/>

⁹⁶<https://oromoliberationfront.org/english/the-prosperity-party-regime-of-ethiopia-must-stop-inhuman-and-cruel-massacres-and-detentions-of-family-members-of-oromo-opposition-parties-particularly-the-olf/>

⁹⁷Oromia Support Group (2021) Report 56. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-56-June-2021.pdf> Oromia Support Group (2021). Empire Strikes Back: Catastrophic Consequences. Report 54. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report54-January-2021.pdf>

⁹⁸Oromia Support Group (2021). Sacrilege in East Showa: Ethnic Cleansing by Amhara Supremacists as Ethiopia Collapses into Chaos. Report 58. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-58.pdf>

⁹⁹Oromia Support Group (2021). If You Want to Get Rid of the Fish Completely, You Need to Dry up the Ocean. Report 57. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-57.pdf>

massacred or imprisoned mainly Oromo students and farmers in Wello, Wallaga, Guji, central Oromia, and other areas.¹⁰⁰ The Prosperity Party system also has given at least tacit support for Amhara Fano militias attacking Oromo civilians.

Regional forces from Amhara, Somali, and other regions, and Eritrean troops, have engaged in brutality against the Oromo people.¹⁰¹ Amnesty International notes, "Ethiopian security forces committed horrendous human rights violations, including burning homes to the ground, executions, rape, arbitrary arrests, and detentions... in response to attacks by armed groups and inter-communal violence in Amhara and Oromia."¹⁰² Public executions have also taken place. These actions are intended to terrorize Oromos so that they abandon their struggle for self-determination. However, the opposite is happening across Oromia as Oromo nationalism has further developed. More and more young people have joined the OLA, and many support the fight for survival and freedom, including many youths who were part of the *Qeerroo/Qarree* movement. Abiy has ordered the defense forces, security, police, and government officials to openly fire at suspected Oromo nationalists and relatives or friends of OLF members at public or secret places and display their corpses to the public.¹⁰³ Recently, the fano militia has cut the throats of young Oromos in Wallaga and Salale in northern Shawa and bragged and danced, butchering Oromos.¹⁰⁴ The government and Amhara media, religious and civil institutions, and political parties have said nothing about this barbarism and heinous crimes against humanity.

Furthermore, as soon as it came to power, the Abiy government started state terrorism and genocide in Oromia, and later, it continued in Tigray and Amhara regions. Its effective weapons of warfare have been drones from Turkey, Iran, China, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁰⁵ These countries have ignored human rights and only cared for money. "Since the government began deploying drones in [November 2020](#), aerial strikes have ravaged communities, including in ruthless civil war in Tigray (2020-2022) as well as lower-scale ongoing conflicts in the regions of Oromia (2019) and Amhara region (2023-)."¹⁰⁶ 5.1 million people were displaced in 2021 alone in Ethiopia.¹⁰⁷ About 600,000 people were killed by the war in Tigray from 2020 to 2022;¹⁰⁸ at least 120,000 Tigrayan women and girls were raped to humiliate and dehumanize the Tigrayan people.¹⁰⁹ Since international organizations, powerful

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp0y5ezZjo0>

¹⁰¹ <https://eritreahub.org/report-eritrean-troops-despatched-to-omoria>

¹⁰² <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ethiopia-security%20forces-must-face-justice-horrific-human-rights-violations-new>

¹⁰³ See all volumes of Oromia Support Group, <https://oromiasupport.org/>, accessed on 01/06/2025.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Zekaria Zelalem, "Deadly skies: Drone warfare in Ethiopia and the future of conflict in Africa," <https://ecfr.eu/publication/deadly-skies-drone-warfare-in-ethiopia-and-the-future-of-conflict-in-africa/>, accessed on 3/6/2025.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ HUMAN RIGHTS, AFRICA, "The ordeal of Tigrayan women in Ethiopia: 'Whether you shout or not, no one is going to come and rescue you'," https://www.lemonde.fr/en/le-monde-africa/article/2023/09/06/the-ordeal-of-tigrayan-women-in-ethiopia-whether-you-shout-or-not-no-one-is-going-to-come-and-rescue-you_6126301_12, accessed on March 6, 2025.

governments, and human rights organizations gave less attention to atrocities in Oromia, we do not have data on the crimes against humanity in Oromia.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Abiy government has continued the *Habasha* settler state, which Menelik started by maintaining its main features. Successive Ethiopian governments have built and maintained this settler state without changing its essence through fostering the supremacy of the Amhara language, Amhara-Tigray culture, Orthodox Christianity, and the colonial ideology of *Ethiopianism* by using the colonized population groups, such as the Oromo, as raw material and firewood. Abiy Ahmed boasts on TV and social media that he is ready to kill anybody who tries to restructure and change the current Ethiopian state. He calls the Tigrayan and Oromo movements "the cancer of Ethiopia," which must be militarily destroyed.¹¹⁰ Abiy is continuing the colonial nation-building project initiated by Menelik and continued by Haile Selassie and others.

The 2018 regime change was more disastrous than the previous two regime changes of 1974 and 1991 for the Oromo because Abiy Ahmed opened a new war on them as soon as he captured state power. When the *Qeerroo/Qarree* protest movement destabilized the Tigraya-led government, the leaders of its puppet organizations appointed Abiy Ahmed, a member of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization, as the prime minister to replace Haile Mariam Desalegn to introduce a cosmetic change and keep the system the way it was. Even though Abiy Ahmed became Ethiopia's prime minister mainly because of his relation to and the Oromo youth movement that dislodged the Tigrayan-led government and the assumption that he was an Oromo, he first targeted the movement for destruction.¹¹¹ Abiy has attacked the Oromo national movement to suppress Oromo nationalism and obliterate Oromo's history, culture, and identity.¹¹² Considering the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) as an integral part of the Oromo youth movement and the Oromo national struggle, Abiy Ahmed's government has labeled the OLA "*Terrorist Shanee*" to dehumanize and destroy Oromo nationalists and others who manifest Oromo cultural markers, such as clothing, hairstyles, Oromo belief systems, *gadaa* values, and identity.

By using the name *Shanee*, the Abiy government and all its *naafxanya* supporters have attacked all Oromo independent political, religious, and civic organizations to make the Oromo a people without leadership and institutions. Naming Oromo nationalists *Shanee* to target and destroy the Oromo organizations and leadership to disorganize and massacre them demonstrates the intentions and actions of the Abiy government and the Amhara elites and organizations that have allied with this government until recently. There are *naafxanayas*, or Ethiopianized Oromos, who have become a base for the Abiy government to accumulate wealth

¹¹⁰<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=123146#ref01>

¹¹¹M. M. Gemechu, (2022). How Abiy Ahmed Betrayed Oromia and Endangered Ethiopia. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/25/abiy-ahmed-ethiopia-qeerroo-romia-betrayed>

¹¹²*Ibid.*

and enjoy luxurious lifestyles at the cost of the ordinary people. The Abiy government invited OLF leaders to return to Oromia from exile and jungle, claiming they could peacefully continue their national struggle for democracy and self-determination. But, within a short time, it betrayed them. The neo-*nafoxanaya* government almost outlawed the OLF, the liberation front leading the Oromo national movement since the early 1970s.

The Abiy government had prevented the OLF and the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) from participating in the elections in Oromia and Ethiopia. Abiy's Prosperity Party claimed to win most parliamentary seats in its fake polls. As a result, the neo-*nafoxanya* government has stopped the peaceful struggle, and the only option remaining is the OLA's approach, which is the protracted armed struggle. The Ethiopian political system has no space for Oromo nationalists who struggle to dismantle Ethiopian settler colonialism and its decadent institutions and ideology. The government has implemented brutal policies to maintain absolute power.¹¹³ It arrested thousands of people for several months without charging them by violating national and international human rights laws under conditions that amounted to torture; it provided 'training' for detainees for a few months on the constitution, the rule of law, and the so-called history of the Oromo people's struggle.¹¹⁴ Government soldiers and security forces have committed many crimes, including extrajudicial killings, burning houses, raping, forced evictions, brutal beatings, and burning people alive or corpses.

The Oromo national movement has engaged in a liberation struggle to recreate an Oromia sovereign democratic state and Oromo freedom by demolishing the combined forces of the colonialists and the Ethiopianized Oromo collaborative class. The brutality and criminality of the Ethiopian colonial state, the deplorable living conditions of Oromo society, international law, and the violations of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples justify the rebirth of the sovereign and democratic Oromia state. Even though the Oromo have abundant economic resources, they live under the darkness of ignorance, abject poverty, and political slavery and are exposed to state terrorism and massive human rights violations. They are denied the freedom of expression, the media, organization, and the freedom of self-development. They are forced to provide their economic and labor resources to the Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters while living under deplorable conditions in the twenty-first century.

Oromo nationalists are convinced that the only way for the Oromo to get out of these deplorable political, economic, cultural, and social conditions is by intensifying the political and armed struggle led by the OLF and OLA. In the capitalist world system, might is right. The neo-*nafoxanaya* government, the imperial interstate system, the African Union, the U.N., and Western and other states cannot stop the Oromo if they rise in unison to eliminate all political forces that deny them their universal human rights and capabilities. Most colonized nations worldwide have achieved their freedom and sovereignty by engaging in protracted political and armed struggles, which are self-defense rights. The OLF and OLA need to build

¹¹³Oromia Support Group (2021). Empire Strikes Back: Catastrophic Consequences. Report 54. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report54-January-2021.pdf>

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

national organizational capacity by integrating political and military activities and preparing a ground for the rebirth of the sovereign and democratic Oromia state.

Furthermore, all Oromos should pay the necessary prices of knowledge, logistics, human power, and money to support the OLF and the OLA. The Oromo youth should also join the OLF and OLA rather than become the colonial government's mercenary and kill their citizens or die while running away from Oromia to foreign countries or being massacred by the Abiy government. The Oromo deserve popular sovereignty, statehood, egalitarian democracy, and membership in the U.N. to restore their human freedoms and build their capabilities to achieve security, peace, and sustainable development. The human rights of the Oromo people will be protected if they defend themselves by any means necessary from their executioners by organizing and struggling to form their sovereign government and other essential institutions.