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# Ethiopia: The Chronic, Political, Economical and Social Crisis in Ethiopia Needs A Genuine Solution

## HRLHA Urgent Action

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January 21, 2018

The promise of the Ethiopian Authorities started to become practical on January 17, 2018 when they released 115 federal inmates, including Dr. Maria Gudina, the OFC leader. The release of a few political prisoners could be a good start- if the regime continues to release all political prisoners, including those forcefully disappeared under the current regime. A few political prisoners being released, however, is synonymous to picking a few individual grains out of a ton of grains

Haile Mariam Dessalegn, the PM of Ethiopia, opened a Pandora's Box of the EPRDF over the past twenty-five years and committed crimes against citizens under the façade of democracy. Government officials have denied repeatedly for many years that they have been holding political prisoners and having torture chambers such as Maikelawi in which the political prisoners have been tortured in the past two and half decades under the EPRDF government.

The Maikelawi detention center, also known as the **Ethiopian Guantanamo**, is situated in the center of Addis Ababa, the capital city that has been used as a torture chamber for supporters and members of opposition political organizations up to the present.

On January 3, 2018, the Ethiopian government declared that it would free all political prisoners and shut down the Maiklawi, the torture chamber. But the government didn't mention how many political prisoners the government has held since it came to power in 1991. How many citizens were forcefully disappeared? How many torture centers are there in the country?

The announcement by Hailemariam Dessalegn also said the political prisoners will be released in an effort to “create a national consensus and widen the political space”.

However, the PM didn't say anything about the fundamental issue in the country which has brought millions to the streets in the past three years: the demand for freedom, equality and justice.

During this long and persistent mass uprising in Ethiopia, over 4,000 mostly youth members have been murdered by the Federal Military Force, Killing Squad, the Agazi in Oromia Regional State, hundreds have been wounded, tens of thousands have been incarcerated in different concentration camps, military camps, police stations and tortured and disabled by the regime's military and security apparatus.

As the EPRDF acknowledged multiple times during its political cadres meetings and media briefings, the main reasons for the uprisings in the Oromia and Amhara Regional States were bad governance, corruption, nepotism and lack of democracy. After the multiple meetings with their members, the EPRDF government authorities vowed to bring about reforms within the EPRDF and all government apparatus including the military to solve the chronic, political, economical and social crisis the country encountered in the past years. But can Ethiopia reform its economic, political and military institutions?

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The government should not confuse the citizens and the world community with its empty promise that " the political prisoners will be released as an effort to create a national consensus and widen the political space". The government's release of all political prisoners, including those forcefully disappeared in the past two and half decades, cannot alone bring about a national consensus and widen the political space. The EPRDF must show a willingness to open its door for dialogue with all stakeholders, political opposition parties operating in the country and abroad to bring genuine change to the country.

The present political, economic and social situation in Ethiopia is dire. The government authorities are working day and night to abort the political turmoil in the country to stay in power through military suppression. Today, the Oromia Regional State is totally under the control of the Federal Military Force " National Security Council" that has dominated the administration, regional police, and security activities. This is the second time the Oromia Regional State has come under military rule after the state of Emergency of October 8, 2016 which stayed in effect for ten months.

Since the National Security Council was introduced in November 2017 and deployed in Oromia Regional State, many youths have been detained in different parts of Oromia Regional State. This current mass arrest in Oromia Regional State contradicts the government's promises to release political prisoners as an effort to create a national consensus and widen the political space.

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## Recommendations

### To the Government of Ethiopia:

- Disclose the number of political prisoners held in federal prisons and regional state prisons, military camps, and hidden underground prisons
- Disclose the number of forcefully disappeared supporters and members of opposition political organizations confined in secret prison camps, underground prison cells under federal security control and in regional states- especially secret prison camps for forcefully disappeared citizens in the Tigray Regional State (*See the partial list of forcefully disappeared Oromo nationals below*)
- Return the Federal Government, Military and Special Killing Squad (Agazi) camped in university campuses to their original military camp
- Bring to justice, by prosecuting in accordance with international fair trial standards any state or party officials involved in violations of human rights
- Invite all inclusive stakeholders to genuine dialogue to create a national consensus among citizens

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**The following disappeared are just a few among many**

#	Name	Disappeared	#	Name	Disappeared
1	Dabasa Guyyo	2015	17	Kasahun Terfa Muleta	1993
2	Yosef Ayele Bati	1992	18	Ararso Badhadha	1999
3	Bekele Dawano	1993	19	Jemal Husen	1994
4	Jemal Husen	1994	20	Eda'a (Dani'el)	-
5	Nadi Gameda	1994	21	Alemayhu Duguma	1994
6	Mustefa Idiris	1994	22	Temesgen (Kidnaped with Jirenya Ayyana (#10)	-
7	Sadik Umer	1994	23	Megersa Dhufa Horo	1995
8	Dereje Dame	1994	24	Amanti Abdisa Jigi	1996
9	Temesgen Adaba	1995	25	Worku Uwissa	1996
10	Jiregna Ayana	1995	26	Mulugeta Badhassa	1997
11	Kasahun Habte	1996	27	Namarsan Dadhi	1997
12	Mitiku Wadajo	-	28	Tamiru Ajama	1999
13	Xilahun Gerbi	-	29	Idossa Belayi Mumicha	2000
14	Hunduma kaba	-	30	Benti Gudeta	1992
15	Habtamu Tadesse	-	31	Takele Oljirra	1992
16	Yohannes Ektera	-	32	Girma Milkiya Dabalo	1994

The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) urges Ethiopia's principal foreign donors in the name of "Development Assistance" - the IMF, World Bank, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Commission, Key European Union Member States ( Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany) Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and Japan- to seriously consider the fact that the TPLF/EPRDF government has held on to power for years at the expense of Ethiopian peoples' lives. Therefore, the HRLHA calls upon the donor governments and government agencies to put pressure on the TPLF/EPRDF government to begin an all- inclusive political dialogue to bring about a sustainable political solution which will guarantee the citizens their sustainable fundamental and basic rights.

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