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June 15, 2009

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of state
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

International Oromo Women's Organization
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Dear Hillary:

I am writing this letter on behalf of International Oromo Women's Organization (IOWO), a Non-Profit Organization, established in June 2007, in Washington DC, United States of America, to promote gender equality and be the voice for the voiceless Oromo women in Ethiopia.

When I write this letter to you, I am confident that you are dedicated to the advancement of women's rights. And NOW's president Kim Gandy also expressed on her press release on December 1, 2008 in relation to your nomination to the Secretary of State, by saying: "I am confident that the well-being of the world's women will be on her mind." (1 page attached). 1

I fill proud of supporting Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign since April 2007. (2 pages NOW confirmation letter attached). 2

I strongly believe that you keep your promise that you gave us on June 3, by saying: "I made you-- and everyone who supported me -- a promise: to stand up for our shared values and to never back down. I'm going to keep that promise today, tomorrow, and for the rest of my life." – From NOW National Action Center (now@now.org), under the Title Send a Thank You Card to Hillary Clinton! June 6, 2008. (1page attached). 3

Having all these confidence, we need your interference in human rights violation in Ethiopia, especially in the cases of the following Oromo women prisoners release from prison.

We write this application to your Honor, not for the sake of media consumption, but we need your real action to save those prisoners' life as well as their families life.

1. Lalise Wodajo, journalist and wife of exiled television journalist Dhabasa Wakjira, himself a former detainee. Currently forced to take care their three young children in exile, where he himself living in life threatening situation.
2. Urge Ababa, her husband Girma, their three years old child and her brother, Dargu (information from Oromia Support Group web site)
3. Chaltu Takela

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4. Atsede Imana
5. Dirribe Itana
6. Meseret Taddese
7. Abarash Yadeta and others.
(2 pages of their appeal attached). 4

The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, which constitute 40% of the population, out of which 50% are women (2007 population census of Ethiopian central Statistic).

Women are the bases of a family where every child is shaped to make up a good citizen. Take the example of Dr. Gebisa Ejeta's mother contribution to get his education. (1Page attached).5

Gebisa Ejeta of Purdue University, an Oromo/Ethiopian named "2009 Laureate", on which you were the featured speaker during the World Food Prize announcement ceremony of June 2009. The base of his success was his mother.

www.worldfoodprize.org/press_room/2009/june/announcement.htm).

So if women's peace is disturbed on a large scale, the future of the nation to which they belong will be at risk.

To have some ideas about the human rights violation by current Ethiopian Government, look at the following examples:

-Currently, there are thousands of Oromo women and men under indefinite detention of the present Ethiopian regime, Out of which only 53/200 men and women cases are officially reported. Ref. 2008 US Human Rights Report: Ethiopia, Page 3, 3rd paragraph from last.

- Washington Post Foreign Service report of Tuesday, August 21, 2007; A10 (3 pages attached).6

-www.jimmatimes.com, "The life of former VOA Afaan Oromo Service Correspondent, Published 03/18/2009" (Page 3 attached). 7

-At home girls can not continue their education, because they have no security for their lives. Just in one case, a 14 years old Ayishaa Alii has been raped, killed and her body given to hyenas with other twenty Oromos.

(3 pages of detail story of Voice of America News of Saturday, March 10,2007 attached). 8

The impact of such prolonged political detention and instability in the country is influencing thousands of Oromo family to flee the country losing hope for democratic change. On the other hand, Oromo refugees as the whole, have no security even outside their country. Especially women are the most vulnerable, take an example of Oromo woman refugee in Somalia who has been raped and robbed. (1 page Voice of America Afaan Oromo report of 03/19/2009 attached).9



These are only few examples, there are many cases which are not yet disclosed due to lack of security in the country. And the situation is still continued.

Therefore, we appeal to your honorable office to put pressure on the Ethiopian government to respect human rights and release Oromo women prisoners.

We are looking forward to your kind response.

Sincerely Yours,

Dinknesh Deressa Kitila
Board Director, International Oromo Women's Organization