

2 March 2020

URGENT ACTION: OROMO OPPOSITION LEADER AT RISK OF TORTURE



Ethiopian authorities detained the leader of the Oromo Liberation Front, Abdi Regassa, on 29 February 2019. He was held incommunicado for 72 hours and remains imprisoned without charges. Mr Abdi Regassa has been held in detention for reasons that remain unknown. He has not been informed of the charges against him.

Under international human rights standards, anyone who is arrested or detained must be informed of the reasons why they are being deprived of their liberty at the time of their arrest. International standards also require that individuals are brought before a judge promptly after arrest or detention. However, based on the information available to Advocacy for Oromia, as of 29 February the authorities had not formally informed Mr Abdi Regassa of the grounds for his detention nor had they brought him before a court.

Furthermore, authorities did not provide Mr Abdi with access to his family or a phone call until 72 hours after his detention. People held in custody are entitled to notify a third person that they have been detained. Ethiopian authorities have imprisoned, harassed and intimidated Oromo politicians and activists for more than fifteen decades due to their political activism. We believe that such detention without access to the outside world facilitates torture.

The Ethiopian security forces picked Mr Abdi from his home after he returned home with the OLF leadership on Sept 15, 2018. Mr Abdi is a selfless man who chose to give all he has for Oromo cause for more than thirty years. Advocacy for Oromia affirms Mr Abdi Regassa is a prisoner of conscience who was imprisoned solely for remains committed to the Oromo cause.

Reports suggest he may have been tortured while in detention, something Advocacy for Oromia has not been able to verify in a context where the judiciary are fully controlled by the Executive. Advocacy for Oromia requests the government to unconditional release and access to legal counsel and family while in custody. Mr Abdi doesn't belong in jail. Mr Abdi is an Oromo hero; he is the future of Oromo leadership.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION

Mass mobilisation is needed to ensure that the Ethiopian authorities release him, and refrain from potentially taking actions that may amount to ill-treatment against him. Please show your **SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT** for him in every way you can: changing your social media profile, and campaigning for justice. If you are in Oromia, show up at the police station. Be peaceful. Have his picture. Demand his release. If you are elsewhere, use your social media platforms and demand that justice be done.

Free Abdi Ragassa, now!

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