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Re: Urgent Need for Peace Talks in Oromia

The ongoing political conflict in Oromia is indeed having severe consequences for security, governance, democracy, and human rights in the region. The violence and instability have led to loss of lives, displacement of communities, and destruction of property, exacerbating the suffering of the Oromo people and undermining efforts to build a stable and inclusive political system. To address this crisis, peaceful and political dialogue among the key stakeholders—the Oromia Prosperity Party (OPP), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)—is not only necessary but urgent. Here's what is expected of these parties to hold meaningful peace talks and why such efforts are critical to saving Oromia:

What is Expected of the Parties?

1. Commitment to Dialogue

All parties must demonstrate a genuine willingness to engage in peaceful negotiations, setting aside their differences and prioritizing the interests of the Oromo people and the broader Ethiopian society.

They should renounce violence as a means of achieving political goals and commit to resolving disputes through dialogue and compromise.

2. Inclusive Representation

The peace talks should include all major stakeholders, ensuring that the voices of the Oromo people, civil society, women, youth, and other marginalized groups are represented.

This inclusivity will help build trust and ensure that the outcomes of the talks reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the Oromo population.

3. Neutral Mediation

A neutral and credible third party, such as the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), or respected regional leaders, should facilitate the talks to ensure fairness and transparency.

Mediators can help bridge gaps, manage tensions, and guide the parties toward mutually acceptable solutions.

4. Clear Agenda and Framework

The talks should have a clear agenda focused on addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as political marginalization, land rights, cultural rights, and governance issues.

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A structured framework with timelines and milestones will help maintain momentum and ensure accountability.

5. Confidence-Building Measures

To create an environment conducive to dialogue, all parties should take steps to reduce tensions, such as ceasing hostilities, releasing political prisoners, and allowing humanitarian access to affected areas.

These measures can help build trust and demonstrate a commitment to peace.

6. Focus on Long-Term Solutions

The talks should aim to address not only immediate security concerns but also long-term political and structural reforms, such as equitable power-sharing, decentralization, and the protection of human rights.

A comprehensive approach will help prevent future conflicts and promote sustainable peace.

Why Peace Talks are Necessary

1. To Save Lives and Prevent Further Suffering

The ongoing conflict has caused immense human suffering, including deaths, displacement, and destruction of livelihoods. Peace talks are essential to halt the violence and prevent further loss of life and property.

2. To Strengthen Governance and Democracy

The conflict has undermined governance and democratic processes in Oromia, creating a vacuum that exacerbates instability. Peaceful dialogue can help restore trust in institutions and promote inclusive governance.

3. To Protect Human Rights

The violence has led to widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and restrictions on freedom of expression. A peaceful resolution is necessary to ensure the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

4. To Address the Root Causes of the Conflict

The conflict in Oromia is rooted in historical grievances, including political marginalization, land dispossession, and cultural suppression. Peace talks provide an opportunity to address these issues and create a more equitable and just society.

5. To Promote National Unity

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Oromia is a critical region in Ethiopia, and its stability is essential for the country's overall peace and development. Resolving the conflict through dialogue will contribute to national unity and cohesion.

6. To Avoid Regional and International Spillover

The conflict in Oromia has the potential to destabilize neighboring regions and attract external interference. A peaceful resolution will help prevent the conflict from escalating into a broader regional crisis.

How to Move Forward

1. Immediate Ceasefire

All parties should agree to an immediate ceasefire to create a conducive environment for dialogue and reduce the humanitarian impact of the conflict.

2. Public Support for Peace

The Oromo people, civil society organizations, and the international community should rally behind the call for peace, putting pressure on the parties to engage in meaningful dialogue.

3. International Support

The international community, including the African Union, the United Nations, and Ethiopia's regional partners, should support the peace process by providing technical, financial, and diplomatic assistance.

4. Sustainable Peacebuilding

Beyond the immediate resolution of the conflict, long-term peacebuilding efforts, such as reconciliation, justice, and economic development, should be prioritized to address the underlying causes of the crisis.

The call for peace talks among the Oromia Prosperity Party, the Oromo Liberation Front, the Oromo Federalist Congress, and the Oromo Liberation Army is a critical step toward resolving the conflict in Oromia. By committing to dialogue, addressing root causes, and prioritizing the well-being of the Oromo people, these parties can help save Oromia from further destruction and pave the way for a more just, inclusive, and peaceful future. The time to act is now—before the conflict escalates further and inflicts irreparable damage on the region and its people.

Advocacy for Oromia

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