



THE FOUNDING MANIFESTO OF GLOBAL GUMII OROMIA (GGO)

BACKGROUND

The Oromo were a glorious, powerful, and independent people prior to the colonization of their country, Oromia, in the last decades of the 19th century by Abyssinian/Ethiopian colonialists allied with European imperialists. They were organized culturally, politically, and militarily through the *gadaa* system (Oromo democracy) and they maintained their civilization, wellbeing, security and sovereignty for centuries. The Oromo were known for their complex democratic laws, an elaborate legislative tradition, well-developed methods of dispute settlement, and a system of checks and balances that was at least as complex as the systems used in Western democracies. Their version of constitutional government, *gadaa*, existed before the emergence of contemporary democracy in the West. "What is astonishing about this cultural tradition is how far the 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 that is at least as complex as the systems we find in Western democracies."¹ The *gadaa* system had the principles of checks and balances (through periodic succession of every eight years), division of power (among the 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 principles of the system included balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions and confederacies, accountability of leaders and followers, the settlement of disputes through reconciliation and respect for basic rights and liberties.

There were five parties in the *gadaa* system. All *gadaa* officials were elected for eight years. *Gadaa* has been an all-encompassing institution of politics, military, defense, economy, religion, ethics, culture and tradition. The *siiqqee* or *siinqee* institution was/is used by Oromo women as a check and balance system to counter potential male-domination. The *siiqqee* institution has given a political and social platform for Oromo women to effectively voice their concerns and address their social justice issues. The *gadaa/siiqqee* system² helped maintain egalitarian democracy. When various peoples were fighting over political power and economic resources in the Horn of Africa, the Oromo were effectively organized under the *gadaa* government, and until "the mid-nineteenth century [they] were dominant on their own territories; no people of other cultures were in a position to exercise compulsion over them."³ The Oromo democratic institution functioned as an egalitarian socio-political system by preventing oppression and exploitation and by promoting peace, security, sustainable development, and political sovereignty. With the imposition of Ethiopian colonialism on the Oromo "the peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed. Their peaceful way of life [was] broken; freedom [was] lost; and the independent, freedom loving [Oromo] found themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors."⁴

The Oromo civilization, democratic governance, and worldview have been built on overarching principles that are embedded within Oromo traditions and culture and, at the same time, have universal relevance for all peoples because they have promoted 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, in recent years, many Oromos have become adherents of Christianity and Islam, the concept of *Waaqaa* (God) lies at the heart of Oromo tradition and culture. In Oromo tradition, *Waaqaa* is the creator of the universe and the source of all life. The universe created by *Waaqaa* contains within itself a sense of order and balance that is to be manifested in human society. The principles of Oromo indigenous religion, *Waaqeffannaa*, and Oromo democratic traditions reject and challenge the glorification of monarchs, chiefs, warlords or dictators who have collaborated with European slave traders and colonizers and destroyed Africa by participating in the slave trade and the projects of colonialism and neo-colonialism. As successive phases of the Oromo national struggle demonstrate below, there are fundamental contradictions between Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters and Oromo liberators that aspire to regain freedom and restore Oromo democracy and traditions that have emerged and become entrenched. Oromo social and political systems and Oromo religion are home grown, not adopted from other societies; hence, the Oromo people must cherish them.



Before the imposition of Ethiopian colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Oromo democratic institution functioned smoothly as a socio-political system by promoting peace, security, sustainable development, and political sovereignty. There have been five successive and sometimes overlapping phases in the Oromo national struggle for liberation, statehood, sovereignty, and egalitarian democracy. The first phase began during the turn of the 19th century, when various Oromo groups such as the Tuulama, Raya, Asabo, Wallo, and the Yejju Oromo repulsed Abyssinian/Ethiopian colonial forces, which were supported by the British and French governments. During the last decades of the same century, various Oromo groups relentlessly fought against the Ethiopian colonial state, which was backed by European powers at places such as Gullallee, Finfinnee, Calanqo, and Aanole. During the first half of the 20th century, the second phase of the Oromo struggle developed mostly through periods of open resistance⁵ and everyday social and cultural activities. Such activities have sustained *Afaan Oromoo*, culture and the underlying unity and survival of the Oromo people. The Oromo language, culture, and history have been the manifestation of basic *Oromummaa*⁶ from which Oromo nationalism developed.

The third phase of the Oromo national struggle was characterized by the birth of the Macca-Tuulama Self-Help Association, the Bale Oromo armed uprising, and the initiation of an Oromo cultural renaissance such as the Afran Qalloo musical group in the 1960s and writings of Oromo revolutionary intellectuals such as *The Oromo: Voice Against Tyranny* in the early 1970s. During this decade, underground networks of activists worked hard to form study circles and cultural groups in many cities across Oromia. In the mid-1970s, dedicated and farsighted Oromo nationalists created the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to liberate the Oromo people and their country, Oromia, from Ethiopian settler colonialism. Some of the best nationalist Oromo musicians emerged during this period and produced revolutionary songs that helped in the development of Oromo nationalism and motivated thousands of Oromo to join the Oromo national struggle. These historical events marked the fourth phase of the Oromo national struggle, which has cultivated the development of national *Oromummaa*⁷ (Oromo national culture, identity and ideology).

There have also been Oromo civic, professional and political organizations that emerged in Oromia and in the diaspora that have contributed to the Oromo national struggle in various ways. Through these processes, the blood and bones of Oromo heroines and heroes who sacrificed themselves for liberation of the Oromo and their country have become the foundation of the Oromo national movement.

After 1991, when the Ethiopian military regime was overthrown Oromo political organizations, namely, the OLF, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, the Oromo “Abbo” Liberation Front, and the United Oromo People’s Liberation Organization, joined the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian transitional government, the number of revolutionary Oromo singers in particular and Oromo nationalists in general expanded. These revolutionary artists and other nationalists have immensely contributed to the development of Oromo nationalism. Furthermore, the Oromo Liberation Army has maintained the spirit of Oromo nationalism.

Thousands of Oromo heroes and heroines have given their lives in Oromo forests and cities, Ethiopian prisons, and neighboring countries to maintain the survival and liberation of the Oromo nation. At the same time, there have been Oromo politicians who have engaged in peaceful struggle to bring about a genuine democracy in Oromia and Ethiopia. The ongoing Oromo protest movement is the continuation and culmination of all forms of the Oromo national struggle. As the fifth and probably the final phase of the Oromo national movement, an Oromo youth movement, popularly known as qeerroo-qarree, has transformed the national movement into a grassroots rebellion against the Tigrayan-led regime and has established a new chapter in the Oromo history of the national struggle for liberation and democracy.

THE QEERROO-QARREE PEACEFUL UPRISING

Starting in November 2015, Oromo youth intensified the mass-based, *qeerroo/qarree*-led resistance, which has spread like a wildfire throughout Oromia and has ignited other protests in other regions of the Ethiopian Empire. Until now, little has been said about the role of Oromo youth in the leadership of resistance against state-



sponsored injustices and the challenges they face in their everyday lives such as marginalization, political exclusion and constant persecution directed at them by the state structured violence-coercive devices such as the police, court, security, and state-controlled media. Our youth have demonstrated that they are historical agents of revolutionary social change by their role in leading protests and participating in the Oromo national movement.

In the social history of Oromo resistance, the Autumn Revolution of November 2015 to the present represents the continuation and culmination of resistance from below; this protest was initially galvanized against the so-called Master Plan that Oromo call “the Master killer.” The movement is an escalation of Oromo national liberation and political confrontation with the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian colonial state. Young Oromo protesters have been equipped with the ideology of national *Oromummaa*, which has uprooted the divisions that the enemies of the Oromo society created among different Oromo branches, religions and regions, and have declared the natural unity of the Oromo nation. The accumulated grievances, the recent intensification of land grabbing policies, particularly the so-called Integrated Addis Ababa Master Plan, and the development of national *Oromummaa* and the rise of Oromo political consciousness that resulted from the national struggle of the last five decades and beyond are the actual catalysts of the current Oromia-wide peaceful protest movement.

In addition to the yearn for freedom from Ethiopian colonialism, poverty and destitution, violence, disease, unemployment, displacement and the break down of the family are driving Oromo youth to intensify the Oromo national struggle. The *qeerroo-qarree* uprising has already produced far-reaching results. The protest has reenergized the Oromo people and galvanized support for the national movement. In the mean time, some Oromo who are suffering from the internalized victimization are forced to start rethinking about their Oromo national identity and the Oromo national struggle. Particularly, some Oromo in the diaspora have started learning about national *Oromummaa* and rallying behind the Oromo national struggle in Oromia. The Oromo all over the world have showed their solidarity with Oromo protesters by demonstrating and supporting them financially and diplomatically.

Furthermore, Oromo collaborators and opportunists who have been evicting Oromo farmers from their ancestral lands by joining the Tigrayan colonial elites have been shocked and have started to feel a national shame. The Oromo protest movement is demonstrating that it can destroy Oromo intermediaries or mercenaries who work for the enemy at the cost of the Oromo nation. That is why the Tigrayan military rule has imposed a military command post on the so-called Oromo People’s Democratic Organization, which was created and has been controlled by the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The Oromo youth are practically showing the world that they cannot accept submissive and subservient leaders that the enemy created for them.

The Tigrayan-led regime has labeled Oromo peaceful protesters “terrorists” and has used so-called anti-terrorism laws to legitimize the practices of state terrorism and its violent crackdown against Oromo protests. Since Oromo protesters have only targeted their immediate enemy, diverse national groups in the Ethiopian Empire have somewhat changed their attitudes toward the Oromo people and their national struggle. What is amazing is that many Amhara elites who used to suspect and hate the Oromo struggle have become neutral or sympathetic to the Oromo activists and protesters. Many of them in the Amhara region have openly denounced Tigrayan state terrorism and started their own protests and expressed their solidarity for the ongoing Oromo protest movement. Oromo protesters have practically demonstrated that they struggle to establish a democratic system that will exercise the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian democracy.

Overall, those Oromo who lost hope in their national struggle have restored their dreams of liberation, freedom, and democracy. Peoples like the Amhara, Konso, Sidama, Gedeo, Hadiya, Benashangul, and Annuak have sympathized with the Oromo people and emulated the struggle to dismantle the fascist minority regime of the TPLF. Furthermore, globally and diplomatically, the Oromo protest movement has won worldwide attention because of its political maturity, determination, inclusiveness, and for totally disproving the ideology and political program of the Tigrayan-led minority government of Ethiopia. For the first time in Oromo history, world media outlets such as the Washington Post, Al Jazeera, BBC, Newsweek, AFP, the Guardian, and others have reported on the Oromo protest movement and the brutal crackdown by the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government.

This peaceful movement, for a limited degree, has broken international silence on the Oromo struggle. For instance, on January 21, 2015, the European Parliament condemned the violent crackdown of Oromo protesters and called for the establishment of a credible, transparent, and independent body for investigating the murder and



imprisonment of thousands of protesters in Oromia. Similarly, UN Human Rights Experts have demanded that Ethiopian authorities stop the violent crackdown on Oromo peaceful protesters. The US Department of State vaguely expressed its concern about the violence associated with the protest movement. These are great psychological, ideological and diplomatic victories for the Oromo national movement. All these victories are achieved by Oromo blood and suffering.

The Oromo movement for control of their economic and cultural resources, statehood and egalitarian democracy is gaining momentum. It has also demonstrated the capacity of the Oromo to defend their national *Oromummaa*, determination, and their potential to confront and defeat the TPLF policies of “violent development” and ultimately decide their destiny. Consequently, the ongoing Oromo protest movement has shaken the foundation of the Tigrayan authoritarian terrorist regime and its surrogate organization, OPDO, in Oromia and beyond. So, a new Oromo-based system is emerging and replacing the dying Tigrayan colonialism and its terrorist and repressive political structures.

GGO is organized to support Oromo activist networks and the Oromia-based Oromo protest movement in Oromia. It will reinforce efforts to further build national organizational capacity in collaboration with other progressive communities and peoples in order to sustain the momentum of the national struggle and to expedite the journey to freedom. The *qeerroo-qarree*-led protest movement in particular, and the Oromo national movement in general, are challenging the Tigrayan-led authoritarian-terrorist regime and its violent development strategy, which promotes genocide on the Oromo and other peoples. These movements aim to promote national self-determination, the restoration of an egalitarian democratic system, and an alternative form of development.

THE INTENSIFICATION OF BRUTALITY AND CRIMINALITY AGAINST WOMEN AND THE VULNERABLE

The Tigrayan-led colonial regime is using so-called anti-terrorist laws and a state of emergency to continue terrorizing by imprisoning, torturing and killing thousands of Oromo and other peoples. It has been intensifying the massacring of the Oromo people all over Oromia, including children, the elderly, and pregnant women. At the same time, the regime is denying medical and other services for those who have been shot, mutilated and seriously injured by the Agazi and other security forces to break the spirit of the people and crush the Oromo movement. As a result, thousands of Oromo are suffering in prisons and secret concentration camps, and hundreds of Oromo political prisoners have perished due to the lack of adequate food, clothing, healthcare and other essential needs.

The Tigrayan-led tyrannical Ethiopian Government is bent on annihilating the Oromo people and confiscating and distributing their land mainly to the Tigrayan settlers and to others who are collaborating with the regime. Mass resistance to such land grabbing and other policies has resulted in the mass arrest, torture, extrajudicial killings, and the displacement of Oromo people as well as the banning of freedom of press, assembly, and protest. However, such crimes and injustices have emboldened the Oromo population to intensify their resistance and to continue their struggle for freedom, sovereignty and dignity.

All age groups of the Oromo are being victimized, from eight-year old school children to eighty-year old seniors and pregnant women. Government soldiers have shot and killed primary school children and high school and university students for voicing their outrages regarding government abuses. Government forces have hauled away any person, regardless of age, that they find voicing their critique to prison, including feeble seniors, and have denied health care and food, thereby contributing to their deaths. Instead of enjoying their golden age in peace with family and friends, Oromo seniors are being imprisoned and treated inhumanely within prisons. Human rights organizations and the US State Department have repeatedly revealed that 75-90 year old seniors have been languishing for decades in notorious government jails.

No age group of the Oromo is spared from the tyranny of the Ethiopian government, especially Oromo women. The persistent pattern of state violence has touched the lives of Oromo women in variety of ways. For example, Mrs. Tadelu Temam, the mother of Hailu Ephrem, the sixteen-year old who was killed by government security forces, was beaten while crying over the corpse of her son. While listening to her interview on the Voice of America radio station, many people across the world cried with her. According to the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency, in 2011, 26.1 percent of Ethiopian households were female headed. Mrs. Tadelu is one of them.



Her beloved son and lifetime's investment had been taken away from her with a single bullet fired by government security forces.

Another horrifying incident happened during the Irrecha celebration in 2016: a mother lost two of her children, Balaachoo and Teshome Hirphaa, in a single day. Motherhood comes with a higher cost for Oromo women. Given the level of poverty, 33.5% earn under \$ 2.00 a day, the financial burden and the emotional suffering of Oromo women have increased as state violence continues to intensify and the security situation worsens. Many women whose husbands are being imprisoned or killed and/or whose breadwinner sons are being imprisoned or killed have to fill the gap by becoming breadwinners, homemakers and caretakers for their entire family. Many have to travel long distances to visit their jailed husbands and children while endangering their own safety. In summary, the gender impact of state violence can be seen from the following perspectives.

Economic burden: Children are lifetime investments for parents in poor states like Ethiopia. Parents spend their limited funds on the education of their children and in turn, such children can, as educated and/or working adults, provide their parents with support as they age. For many poor parents, their children are the only ones who can provide physical and financial support when they reach old age. When government security forces kill their children, they are losing their children, their lifetime investments, and the support they need when they age. Thus, state violence robs parents of not only their beloved children, but their lifetime investments and their future wellbeing. Furthermore, there is a financial burden that such parents are carrying when they have to care for their children who have been shot, beaten, tortured, or killed. For poor parents, this is an especially heavy financial burden. Mothers of imprisoned children spend whatever meager financial means they have to travel and visit their children in prison.

Emotional burden: The extreme level of violence and the way their children have been killed, beaten and tortured and disappeared results in emotional trauma of an unprecedented levels for Oromo mothers. The emotional and physical wellbeing of Oromo mothers has greatly deteriorated with the State of Emergency proclamation of 2016, which added new dimensions of dangers and violence against their children. Many young people have been killed, and thousands have been imprisoned and tortured. Many mothers have children that have been killed or have disappeared, and they are unable to find out their whereabouts for months and at times years.

After the Qilinto prison fire, in which several prisoners died in a prison fire, security forces refused to disclose the whereabouts of prisoners for five days, and to this day, have failed to report the names of those who perished in the fire. The emotional trauma of parents is further exacerbated by the high presence of security officers during funerals of the loved ones killed by such officers. A private mourning is now forbidden, and parents fear an open, public mourning for their children because it may lead to further imprisonment of young people in attendance at such funerals.. The emotional pain parents are experiencing reverberates from the individual, to the family and society. The loss of children, the future of society, coupled with the inability to freely mourn such losses, is emotionally devastating.

Physical burdens: In addition to the financial and emotional burden, the mothers of young people carry the burdens of caring for the sick and working to provide for their family when breadwinners of their households are imprisoned or killed. It has to be noted that the Ethiopian government is responsible for any bullet fired by security forces that has killed Oromo children. This responsibility includes government leaders individually and collectively. Generally they are accountable for human rights violations in Oromia. The process of healing will not be complete without accountability for such crimes and justice for those killed, imprisoned, tortured and/or disabled.

In addition, thousands of Oromo youth and others are fleeing their country because of unbearable political repression by the Tigrayan-led regime and absolute poverty, and are dying or being murdered or sinking in oceans and perishing. Young Oromo girls are trafficked to serve as maids in neighboring countries in the Middle East, some times being reduced to slaves. At this moment, the Oromo are a stateless people who are suffering in the Ethiopian Empire, Africa and the Middle East. They are living in a war zone without access to effective humanitarian assistance or in safe zones in their own country. The Oromo are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance for shelter, food, medicine and other necessities for survival and the Tigrayan-led regime and its supporters are endangering the survival of the Oromo people and their country.

Despite the fact that governments around the world have shown concern about the victimization of the Oromo and other peoples by recognizing the crimes the regime has been committing, they have continued to



provide material and diplomatic support to the regime and have not held the regime accountable. Oromo victims of brutal state violence have no one to assist except us, the Oromo in the diaspora. Hence, we, the Oromo in the diaspora, must strengthen our movement and unity, which was built by the sacrifices of selfless Oromo nationalists, and work hard to protect and support Oromo victims of Ethiopian political repression and terrorism.

THE WAY FORWARD

To counter the inhumane and violent government schemes, Oromo political organizations, civic groups, religious organizations, professional organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, and individuals all over the world are coming together to help establish *Global Gumii Oromia* (GGO) in order to rally behind the *qeerroo/qarree*-led mass movement to free our country. *Oromummaa*, Oromia and its resources, Oromo fraternity (*waa'ila*), Oromo sorority (*addooyyee*), love of freedom, and self-determination, and a common enemy are the common factors that bind the Oromo people together irrespective of ideology, creed, and subgroup loyalty. We all stand together for our liberty and God-given freedom.

Decentralized and scattered Oromo forces, civic, professional and political organizations, and religious institutions are incapable of effectively and efficiently fulfilling the Oromo people's humanitarian needs and our national responsibilities. The Oromo need to come together against the common enemy, to rebuild their unity, and to empower themselves and defeat the enemy. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to create a non-profit, and non-partisan national civic organization, GGO, to develop our national organizational capacity to raise funds, to provide humanitarian support for Oromo victims of Ethiopian state terrorism, and to assist in seeking a permanent solution for the Oromo political problem by strengthening basic and national *Oromummaa* and Oromo unity. It is only through our inclusive and unified efforts that we can achieve our goals of liberty, freedom and democracy.

As the enemy is intensifying its criminal activities to destroy the Oromo people and their country, Oromia, Oromo of all walks of life should intensify their united efforts under the ideology of national *Oromummaa* and apply all means of struggle to be free once and for all. Now is an existential juncture for all Oromo. United we stand and can defeat our enemy by restoring the bravery of our ancestors.

PURPOSE

The first and immediate purpose of forming GGO is to financially, ideologically, politically, and diplomatically support the ongoing protest movement in particular and the Oromo national movement in general.

The second purpose of forming GGO is to critically understand and confront our ideological, leadership and organizational shortcomings and to develop central organizing ideas and strategic plans at the grassroots level for our national movement. In this endeavor, all members of GGO networks will establish and maintain the structure and cohesion of the Oromo movement by regulating tensions, dealing with adversarial conditions that destabilize our movement, and by disseminating valuable information within the movement and throughout Oromo communities.

The third purpose is to implement the objectives of our national movement at the grassroots level by establishing short and long-term goals. The fourth purpose is to help identify and channel the talents and energies of our network members effectively and efficiently. The fifth purpose is to expand membership and mobilize the members' support for further building our national movement at the grassroots level and intensifying the struggle by appealing to the collective interests of the Oromo people. The sixth purpose is to further deepen *Oromummaa* and unity of purpose and to create a new understanding of contemporary conditions.

MISSION

GGO's primary mission is to establish a platform for attaining an Oromo national consensus through dialogue and democratic means in order to support the ongoing Oromo protest movement in particular and the national struggle for statehood, sovereignty, and egalitarian democracy in general. The Oromo are the largest national group in the Ethiopian Empire and the Horn of Africa, and their capital city, Finfinnee, which colonialists and their supporters



call Addis Ababa, is the heart of Oromia and the seat of the Ethiopian colonial state, the African Union, and many international organizations.

Oromia is located in the heart of the empire, and the Oromo people have already created a cultural corridor with the different peoples of the region. The foundation of this corridor is the Oromo democratic tradition, which with other indigenous democratic traditions can be a starting point for building a genuine democracy based on the principle of national self-determination. GGO will strive to advance the fundamental human rights principles of self-determination, freedom, and democracy for all colonized and oppressed peoples within the Ethiopian Empire and beyond. To achieve this political objective, the Oromo people are currently playing a leading role by working to dismantle the Tigrayan-led regime and supporting all peoples that are presently suffering under Tigrayan colonial dictatorship.

VISION

GGO envisions to:

- (1) Mobilize the resources of Oromo for building a strong Oromo national organizational capacity;
- (2) Support and empower the Oromo people in order to liberate their nation and country;
- (3) Rebuild the *gadaa/siiqqee* system and practice it in our organizations;
- (4) Create a democratic society in which all human, political and economic rights are respected and justice prevails under the law; and
- (5) Form an alliance with regional and international forces that respect and accept the principle of national self-determination, and are interested in promoting mutual interests, reciprocity, security, democracy, human rights, and peace.

VALUE

Basic and national *Oromummaa*, which emerged from the *gadaa/siiqqee* democratic tradition, serve as the main pillars of our cultural values. National *Oromummaa* is an overarching principle, an ideological representation of who the Oromo are irrespective of region, religion or political perspective—a creed of African persona who lives by the *gadaa/siiqqee* institutions of democratic governance. GGO strives to restore our democratic cultural traditions and values that have been suppressed by colonialism through the following steps:

1. Learning about our democratic tradition and heritage and other democratic values and principles that are congruent with ours;
2. Practicing openness, transparency, honesty, and truthfulness;
3. Respecting diversity and promoting the Oromo culture of inclusion, tolerance, unity, and basic and national *Oromummaa*;
4. Developing the ideology of basic and national *Oromummaa* to maintain our vision, identity, culture, multicultural knowledge, and equality;
5. Engaging regionally and globally with forces of democracy and global security; and
6. Promoting social justice, equality, and democracy for all sectors of our society and other societies

MOBILIZATION, EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GGO objectives will be accomplished by the following mechanisms:

1. Pooling and effectively mobilizing Oromo human, financial, cultural, and ideological resources in support of the struggle for liberation, democracy, liberty, and peace;
2. Engaging and involving all civic, religious, professional, and political organizations without exclusion to build fraternity and raise national consciousness;



3. Engaging and involving all civic, religious, professional, and political organizations for the promotion of Oromo political, social and cultural agendas, and using national *Oromummaa* as a core ideology;
4. Building consensus among the Oromo people through open and honest dialogues by using the principles of the *gadaa/siiqqee* system to prevent and resolve conflicts at all levels;
5. Organizing seminars, conferences, and workshops around a common agenda for our national liberation and for strengthening fraternity among the Oromo people;
6. Formulating research-based strategies for struggle and developing policies for liberating and developing our country;
7. Overcoming the low and uneven development of basic and national *Oromummaa* in the diaspora;
8. Learning how to solve the problem of blind attachment to borrowed political cultures and ideologies by further building national *Oromummaa* from diverse Oromo experiences;
9. Fostering Oromo unity by establishing broadly based inclusive democratic leadership and developing strategies for developing coherent and organic leadership by focusing on common core values;
10. Reducing the problem of the lack of accountability of leaders and followers in the diaspora;
11. Strengthening the unity of formal (political) and informal (social) leadership;
12. Developing a national principle of engagement with other peoples diplomatically and politically; and
13. Promoting the political aspiration of the Oromo nation to live in peace with its neighbors and the global community.

GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

GGO shall be guided by the following fundamental principles of freedom:

LIFE

Life is a gift of *Waaqaa* and a natural right of all beings, and GGO advocates no one shall be deprived of this right by anyone.

LIBERTY

Liberty is a natural right of all human beings. This right has no limits unless the acts of an individual or a group may violate the rights of others or harm public interest. GGO believes that liberty is an inviolable quality of life and essential to human dignity and sustainable development.

EQUAL RIGHTS

GGO believes that no individual is entitled to rights that exceed or supersede the *Waaqaa* given individual rights of other citizens. Hence, all citizens, regardless of age, gender or lifestyle, have equal rights and protection under the law.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

Freedom of expression is inviolable. All citizens of Oromia have the right to openly express their opinions through speech, writing, or illustration or other means and to peacefully assemble without infringing on the rights of others.

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

Every citizen has an inalienable right to worship or not to worship. All Oromo religions have equal status. All Oromian citizens and faith groups have the freedom to exercise their faiths, religious expressions, and to perform



their religious rites, including prayers, in both private and public without infringing on the rights of other citizens. No law shall be passed prohibiting free exercise of any religion or to establish a state religion.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

All citizens of Oromia have freedom of movement. They have an unrestricted right to move within their country and to change their place of residence or work. They can travel abroad or leave the country and return to it.

THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

GGO believes an informed citizen is an empowered citizen. Therefore, this organization stands for the right of all citizens to access information, which will enable them to make informed choices and decisions.

ELECTION TO PUBLIC OFFICE

All citizens of Oromia have equal rights to run for public offices and to vote for their candidates of choice. Unless citizens elect through free and fair elections, no individual legally and legitimately occupies public office.

TERM LIMIT

Public officials shall serve according to specified term limits. No citizen shall insist to stay in public office beyond the specified term.

THE RIGHT TO WORK

All citizens of Oromia shall have the right to work and shall have the right to choose the type of work they engage in.

THE RIGHT TO OWN PERSONAL PROPERTY

All citizens of Oromia shall have the right to own personal property earned through their own labor. No citizen shall have the right to appropriate personal property of another citizen without the owner's consent.

ENVIROMENTAL PROTECTION

The Oromo people believe that there is a close relationship between the environment and society. GGO believes that the Oromo people have the right and obligation to protect their environment by any means and to hence stop those who attempt to destroy it.

INNOCENCE UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

Innocence is the original right of all citizens of Oromia. An Oromian citizen accused of a crime is considered innocent until proven guilty in an independent and legitimate court of law. GGO considers all accusations and actions taken by occupiers as illegitimate and illegal instruments aimed at silencing Oromian citizens. Therefore, GGO opposes and reject all accusations and actions taken by occupiers against Oromian citizens that have not been proven in an independent and legitimate court of law.

TORTURE AND ABUSE OF BODY AND SOUL



GGO opposes and condemns the use of torture. No person can resort to torture or order the torture of another person who may be under prosecution, arrest, imprisonment, or convicted to punishment.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ORGANIZATION

Each citizen of Oromia has the right to form or join organizations that are free and independent from the occupying forces in order to advance the spiritual and material conditions of the people of Oromia.

EVICITION

All forms of displacement inside Oromia by colonial forces are illegal and criminal acts.

SELF DEFENSE

GGO recognizes the need for self-defense when an individual citizen or the whole nation is under attack. Therefore, this civic national organization supports the right of all Oromian citizens to bear arms for self-defense, to protect their lives, families and property.

EDUCATION

Every citizen is entitled to free education. *Afaan Oromo* shall be maintained as the main language of instruction and administration in Oromia.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND HUMAN SERVICES

GGO believes that the primary responsibility for meeting basic human needs rests with the individual and the family. Nevertheless, GGO recognizes there are special social needs, which must be addressed through voluntary charitable organizations and other human service programs such as *guddifachaa*, *dhaala*, and *soora*. GGO supports and encourages all Oromian citizens to form such human service-oriented organizations, especially today, when Oromia doesn't have a national infrastructure that serves this role.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

GGO supports the right of all Oromian citizens to protect the security and safety of the population and the country. GGO We respects, acknowledges and supports all those who fight for the freedom of Oromia. Oromia should have a defense force for the collective security of the Oromo nation.

ENDNOTES

¹Asmarom Legesse, 1973. *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1973), p. 2.

²Gadaa/Siiqqee (or siinqee) has four interrelated meanings: First, gadaa is the grade during which an age-based group of people move into politico-ritual leadership; second, gadaa is a period of eight years during which elected officials take power from the previous ones; three, siinqee is the institution by which women, who left their own families and communities to live with their husbands' families and communities, protected themselves and each other from abuse and allowed women to control essential economic assets within the sphere of the household; and four, siinqee/gadaa is the institution of Oromo democracy.

³ Virginia Luling, "Government and Social Control among Some Peoples of the Horn of Africa," (M.A. Thesis: The University of London, 1965), p. 191.

⁴ Alexander Buatovich, *Ethiopia through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition*. Translated by Richard Seltzer, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2000), p. 68.



⁵ Numerous local uprisings in many parts of Oromia such as Arsi, Hararghe, Qellem, Borana, Gibe region, Wallo, Raya, and Yeju took place between 1890 and 1930. Furthermore, thirty-three Oromo leaders from Wallaga and the Gibe region held meetings in 1936 and decided to establish a Western Oromo Confederacy under a League of Nations protectorate.

⁶ Basic *Oromummaa* as the total expression of Oromo peoplehood has developed from the historical, cultural, religious, and philosophical experiences of Oromo society. As a self and collective schema, *Oromummaa* encapsulates a set of fundamental beliefs, values, moral codes, and guiding principles that shape the Oromo national identity and make Oromo society different from other societies. Consequently, basic *Oromummaa* is built on personal, interpersonal, and collective connections. Until national *Oromummaa* (the second level) emerged, basic *Oromummaa* primarily remained at the personal and interpersonal levels because the Oromo were denied the opportunity to form and maintain national institutions. The Ethiopian colonialists have also expropriated Oromo economic resources and destroyed Oromo institutions, cultural experts, and leaders. Oppressors don't only want to control the oppressed economically, culturally, and politically; they want also to control their minds, thus ensuring the effectiveness of domination. Most Oromo collaborators have lost their Oromo norms and values through the process of Amharization/Ethiopianization and suffer from an inferiority complex. The Oromo collaborative elites lack the self-confidence necessary to facilitate individual liberation and Oromo emancipation. Such elites who are opportunists or lack a sense of Oromo nationalism have become raw material in the hands of successive Ethiopian regimes and have participated in the implementation of their terrorist and genocidal policies. Ethiopian Colonialism was and is maintained by engaging in mental genocide, cultural destruction, and the assimilation of a sector of the Oromo population that has lost its basic sense of *Oromummaa*. The system has denied the Oromo opportunities to develop the Oromo system of knowledge by preventing the transmission of Oromo cultural experiences from generation to generation. All these have been designed to uproot basic *Oromummaa* in order to produce individuals and groups who lack self-respect and are submissive and ready to serve the colonialists at the cost of their own people. The Ethiopian colonialists have caused the physical death of millions, and further attempted to introduce social and cultural death to the Oromo by suppressing their basic *Oromummaa* and by preventing them from developing Oromo nationalism.

⁷The issue of developing national *Oromummaa* is unattainable where basic *Oromummaa* is still at its rudimentary stage (in the diaspora). Families need to be prompted to have meetings as an institution to confer on the basic values and principles of *Oromummaa* (language, the concept of *uumaa*, *namooma*/humanity, and *uumama*/Nature, the *safuu* moral/social order, and the philosophy behind Oromo philosophy. The theory and practice of *Oromummaa* help in exposing the ideological fallacy of Ethiopianism, universalism, progress, modernity, development, civilization, and humanity that mainstream theories and knowledge use as a legitimating discourse in order to hide the massive human rights violations of indigenous peoples such as the Oromo and other subaltern groups by contributing to the perpetuation of unfreedoms such as underdevelopment, human rights violations, poverty, and suffering. By refuting the false claims of Ethiopians, which supports and promotes colonialism, national *Oromummaa* (Oromo nationalism) advocates freedom, social justice, national self-determination, and egalitarian democracy for all peoples who are suffering in the Ethiopian Empire and beyond.