

**Press release;**

Monday February 10, 2020

Ethiopian Canadian Muslim Community in Toronto, Canada, in solidarity with ten fellow Ethio-Canadian advocacy group & community organizations sent a letter to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada who is on a trip to some African countries including Ethiopia.

In the letter sent to The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the communities expressed their grave concern on events unfolding in their native country of Ethiopia and seeking his attention to convey their message to his counterpart the Ethiopian Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

The letter states over the past couple of years, that Ethiopia has been going through some difficult political challenges and unrest throughout the country that led to the death and injuries of thousands of protesters simply for seeking justice, end to human right violations, corruptions, the eviction of farmers from their land without fair compensation, and the displacement of their families negatively affecting their livelihood. The public relentlessly protested and took to the streets seeking for a reform and the transitioning of the country into democracy, good governance, creating employment and ending of poverty.

In 2018 as the result of civil unrest, finally the ruling party publicly admitting its failures and promised to reform, and as a result Dr. Abiy Ahmed was propelled to the helm of power. After his inauguration speech in the parliament, the public cheered believing hope of change is finally underway. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed immediately started taking major credible positive steps that were encouraging, diffusing public anger seemingly to a peaceful transformation. The Prime Minister released all political prisoners, called upon political groups locally and from Diaspora to return and work together, allowed free press in the country and encouraged more women to get involved in the leadership of higher government offices including his cabinet and the country's presidency. These encouraging steps not only gained him the most popular support by the people of Ethiopia but his effort was also recognized at the world stage in receiving the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize that made Ethiopia and Ethiopians very proud.

However, in recent developments as many human right observers, both locally and internationally concluded the country is alarmingly sliding back to civil unrest and lawlessness due to ethnic based conflicts.

Recently we have been witnessing the conflict evolving into violence and destructions across the country shifting to religious level accompanied with extremist hate mongering by using social media in spreading Islamophobic rhetoric against Ethiopian Muslims including inciting violence against the Muslim Community. These violence led to the death of several people, the destruction of 35 mosques and targeted Muslim owned businesses. Once peacefully coexisting citizens of Ethiopia is shaken up to uncertain future. If PM. Abiy Ahmed's government fails to act as his priority for the country's peace and stability to protect the security of its nations and nationalities, we are afraid that this might lead to catastrophic situations as it was witnessed in Somalia and Rwanda.

**December 21, 2019, in the town of Motta City; Gojjam, Amhara Region**

In Motta city, an organized groups set fire to four mosques and several Muslim owned businesses causing millions of dollars worth of damages. No one is brought to justice so far though some arrests were made by the regional police and later released which angered the Muslim Community further.



*In the town of Motta, the terrorist setting ablaze on a Mosques & seen celebrating as no security personnel to stop them*

To add an insult to injury, those who were involved the burning down of mosques and Muslim owned business were seeing cheering and celebrating their violent action whilst the security personnel look on in the town of Motta. The helpless Muslim minority in the town and surrounding region are still living in a constant fear, as they do not believe that the Amhara regional government is serious in protecting them from such action in the future.

**Further more, the group describing the event of January 20, 2020 in the city of Harar, stated that the public witnessed the destruction unfolding before their eyes helplessly with dismay as security personnel were not taking prompt security measures to prevent the rampage.**



*The belligerent act of organized extremists vandalized properties in the city of Harar.*

“As our community has been informed by people that were witness to the event and has gathered from several reputable sources, the trigger to the events was the wanton and irresponsible hanging of the imperial Ethiopian flag on the day of Timket in provocative ways by the organizers of the Timket Ethiopian Orthodox Epiphany celebration. While it is the right of any recognized religious group to organize and celebrate holy days is and will always be a protected right in Harar, as it should be in any part of Ethiopia, it is also the responsibility of the organizers not to provoke the majority Muslims in the city by hanging the imperial flag within the vicinity of a Mosque, a symbol of repression and tyranny to most Muslims in Ethiopia, particularly to Muslims in Harar.

Organized Christian youth went on a rampage and destroyed properties and businesses owned by Muslims on that day. There is no question that Muslim businesses were targeted, buildings and property belonging to Muslims were disgracefully vandalized, destroyed and symbol of Christian crosses were spray-painted on buildings and vehicles, showing without a doubt the identity of the perpetrators. Multiple news sources and private videos and pictures provide the evidence. This unprovoked act of lawlessness was orchestrated by people who are determined to disrupt the coexistence between Muslims and Christians who live in the city. To add insult to injury, the federal armed forces, sworn to protect the peace were observed watching passively as these shameless acts of vandalism were committed.”

**The group organizations condemning the violence and destruction wrote, “We the Ethiopian Canadian Muslims in solidarity with our fellow organizations listed condemn in its strongest term any violence against any human being, religious institutions, and business properties and seek the Ethiopian government to put an end to such violence and provide safety and security to its citizens that is living in fear before the situation becomes irreversible”.**

The group also conveyed their message to Honorable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau requesting his counterpart the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed to look into this serious matter seeking actions:

The group organizations raised their concern to the Canadian Prime Minister in collaboration with the Ethiopian Muslim Community in Toronto include among others, Harari Alliance for Justice & Equality, Harari Heritage Centre, Afar Community, Oromo Islamic Community, Somali Regional community, Bilal Islamic Centre, the FBCGA & H.A. Historical Society based in the Greater Toronto Area.

1. The Federal government to assign an Independent investigation team to address the root cause of violence, for any human life lost, the destruction of mosques and Muslim owned business
2. The government to bring the perpetrators of the violence, death and destruction to face justice in the court of law.
3. The regional governments to compensate the families of those who lost their lives and rebuild religious institutions, privately owned businesses and homes
4. To investigate the security personnel that fail and abdicated its duties and responsibilities in protecting citizens with being selective and disclose the finding to public.

With the letter, the group included an independent study conducted by the Institute for Security Studies to provide the Prime Minister with the current political and security situation. The study was authored by Dr. Semir Yusuf (Phd), and was published December 2019.

**ECMCA-Pr.**

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**END**

The Ethiopian Canadian Muslim Community calls upon all Muslims in Greater Toronto Area to join the fundraiser event to stand shoulder to shoulder with our community back home striving to rebuild what they have lost in such sadistic event.

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SAGANTAA GARGAAS MUSLIMA MOOXAA  
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**Guest Speakers:**

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Ustaz Jemal Ismail  
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