



# HARARI ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE & EQUALITY

(H.A.J.E)

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Harari Alliance for Justice and Equality (H.A.J.E): **Press release**

06-July 2020

A Turning Point! Ethiopia - from where to where?

The recent developments in Ethiopian politics does not bode well for the advancement of democracy and freedom in the nation. The assassination of a prominent and popular political artist, Hachalu Hundessa, in the capital last week in broad daylight saddened and surprised Ethiopians from all walks of life. So far, the government has acknowledged that it was a pre-meditated criminal act and has held some suspects in custody. Immediately following the assassination of Hundessa, the government has also apprehended some very well-known opposition political figures. In the aftermath of the killing of Hundessa, more than one-hundred-sixty-one civilians have lost their lives, hundreds more were put behind bars and the numbers are climbing by the day.

For anyone who has been following Ethiopian politics in the last three decades, this is deja-vu all over again. Ethiopian political observers are saying here we go again. After 2005 contested national election, the government rounded up the leaders of the opposition party and threw them in jail and gave each one of them lengthy prison sentences for merely challenging the outcome of the election. Again in 2012, seventeen members of Muslims leaders were jailed for exercising their rights and were tortured for years before they were set free during the emergence of the current administration. And the current roundup of prominent political figures in connection with Hundessa's assassination does not serve the democratic process that was unfolding in the nation. On the contrary, it sets back the great hope of Ethiopians for opening the political space and the unfolding of groundwork for vibrant civil society.

We will give the government the benefit of the doubt to do its job and investigate this heinous crime and come with sensible and reasonable solutions as soon as possible. But the government should be careful of not taking advantage of this sad moment to silence the opposition to gain a political foothold and thereby create a condition for a continuous civil strife within the population. At this point in time, we have no other sources of information regarding this incident except what is provided by the government since all social media and the internet was shut down. Therefore, it is wise and prudent to hear credible information from all sources before arriving at a decision in the matter.

Ethiopians have suffered and struggled for decades to change the very hard and difficult political reality and bring peace, stability and justice for all. In the last two years alone, we have gone through so many challenges during the birth bang of the new political order in the nation. Millions of Ethiopia were displaced, and thousands have lost their lives because of internal strife. Some regions of Ethiopia are not stable even to this day. It takes a great deal of effort and patience on the part of the political leadership to bring peace and stability for all. Right now, we believe we are at a turning point in the direction the country is travelling.



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*Hararis working together towards a common goal!*



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Therefore, we at HAJE, strongly urge the government to set free all opposition leaders in custody without and conditions and pre-requisites. Likewise, the media outlet belonging to the opposition group should be allowed to operate freely and all confiscated equipment belonging to it should be returned immediately. We strongly recommend that an impartial group of Ethiopians should be established to investigate the assassination of artist Haachalu Hundessa and that of hundreds of innocent lives following the aftermath his killing. It is the responsibility of the government to be impartial and secular in carrying out its duties without favoring anyone. There is a rule of law in the land and everyone, including the government, should adhere to it if we want our country to be a part of the civilized world.

In these trying times, Harari Alliance for Justice and Equality (HAJE) advises all stakeholders to make deliberate and concerted effort to take the right path to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. And we hope and pray it does not come to that.

Harari Alliance for Justice and Equality (H.A.J.E):



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