



Oromo Studies Association

**CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE OSA 2012 MID YEAR
CONFERENCE**

Conference Theme:

*“The Challenges of Human Rights, Democracy and the Role of
International Community in the Horn of Africa”*

Date: April 7-8, 2012

Venue: Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

The Oromo Studies Association (OSA), continuing its tradition of a multi-disciplinary scholarship, the current Executive Committee of OSA has selected the theme for our mid-year conference to investigate the interplay of human rights, democracy and the role of international community in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa. In past OSA conferences, scholars have studied and presented papers separately dealing with the issues of human rights or lack thereof, they presented papers highlighting the challenges of democratization process in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in general. This year in our mid-year conference, we invite all scholars with expertise in the dynamics and interplay of human rights, democracy and the role of both western and eastern powers in promoting human rights and democracy or subsidizing and/or enabling the oppressive regimes that have continuously violated the most basic human rights of peoples and their aspiration for democratic rights in Ethiopia in particular and in the Horn of Africa in general.

We have observed developments over the last 20 years, in Ethiopia and in the Horn Africa in these tri-polar interrelated issues of human rights, democracy and foreign interventions due to the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa in the fight against global terrorism.

We, at OSA, developed a tradition of scholarship for over 25 years now and would like to invite and engage scholars and experts in a scholarly setting to inform the academics, public and policy

makers concerned with the issues of human rights and democratization process in that volatile and yet very important region of Africa. It is in the spirit of our scholarly organization whose members are engaged in scholarly studies and producing knowledge that promotes social justice, individual and collective rights (e.g. the rights of people to self-determination), and democracy, that we selected this theme for our conference to be held here at Harvard University on April 7-8, 2012

We are encouraging potential presenters of papers to address the following pointed issues, but not in any ways limited to these issues, while remaining within the theme of the conference

- A. *Analysis of the interplay and dynamics of human rights and democratization process: Analytical and methodologies issues and lessons from successful and unsuccessful countries, regions etc are encouraged;*
- B. *The state and trend of human right violations in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: The magnitude, the trend and its relations to democratization process and the response or lack thereof of international community. What is the threshold of human right violations that trigger mass uprisings and response of international community? What is the threshold of human right violation record that can be considered as Genocide? Do the accumulation of state power in all its forms; economic, political, institutional, security and military in the hands of minority elite groups provide no incentive for compromise for political pluralism? Does this 'winner takes all' mentality eventually lead to gross human right violation or even genocide when other sections of society engage in mass uprisings as we have seen in the Arab Spring?*
- C. *Legalizing human right violations by the State: Analysis of Anti-terrorism laws, press laws and other regulations to "legally" suppress human rights and curtail democratization process. Relevance of an old but pertinent cliché "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" in the Ethiopian context;*
- D. *Are foreign aid (economic and military) subsidizing repressive institutions and sustain human right violations in Ethiopia? There are many who believe that the government of Ethiopia and others have exploited the strategic position of the Horn Africa in the fight against global terrorism to amass external support to subsidize their own repressive institutions and label all political descents and opposition parties as "terrorists". We invite scholars to objectively present appraisal of the magnitude of actual foreign aid (economic and military) in subsidizing repressive state institutions by foreign powers in the name of strategic partnership against the global war on terrorism;*
- E. *The use and abuse of development and humanitarian aid for political repression and human right violations and their impact on democratization process;*
- F. *The trend and lack of or narrowing of democratic political space and human right violation implications for future peace and stability in the Horn of African Region;*

- G. *Is the gross human right record of these governments a challenge and/or an opportunity for opposition forces that attempt to replace these governments? An appraisal of experiences of other countries' successful opposition parties that replaced repressive governments that grossly violated their citizen's human rights: Lessons for opposition parties in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa;*
- H. *The challenges and opportunities for unifying opposition political forces to reverse human right violations;*
- I. *The role of the Diaspora in bringing the human right violation records to the international community to inform the western public to put pressure on western governments to stop subsidizing repressive institutions in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa;*

Paper submissions:

You can send your abstracts by January 15th, 2012 to Dr. Hamza Abdurezak at abdurez@fas.harvard.edu,

First draft by February 28, 2012,

Final papers are expected by April 1, 2012.

We accept individual, group and panel papers.

Thank you,

Hamza Abdurezak, PhD

OSA President