



# OGADEN REFUGEES COMMITTEE

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## **Kenya: Ogaden refugees' sanctuary under aggression!**

### ***The Conflict & Refugees' Suffering:***

**Ogaden** conflict incinerates its third century amid incessant suffering as it started from late of 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, this conflict has been driven by Ethiopian rulers' provocative imperial expansion of defeating or dominating "a perceived threat" from eastern lowlands including Ogaden.

Moreover, Ethiopian [at the time Abyssinia] rulers were the only black-skinned that had participated the initiatives of Berlin Conference 1884, where they openly lobbied of getting their share of Africa's scramble. Then, Ogaden and many other territories were among claims of Ethiopian rulers, and face heavily-handed brutal subjugation since they're annexed.

Furthermore, apart from the Ogaden people's resistance against Ethiopia's imperial expansion or domination, Ogaden had been also suffering from Africa's scramble or colonization by Berlin Conference 1884, World Wars I & II, the Cold War and today's so-called Global Jihadism or Counter-terrorism campaign.

Therefore, refugees or asylum seekers have been the most expected or recognizable outcome from those confrontations. However, because of Ethiopian rulers' meddling role, Ogaden refugees and asylum seekers have not been protected or treated well by the hosting countries.

Nonetheless, since 1990s, refugees remain seeking asylum from the ongoing struggle between Ethiopian government and ONLF – a separatist movement established one hundred years from the Berlin Conference of 1884.

Despite escaping from persecution, Ogaden refugees have been facing various abuses including killing, kidnapping, illegal extraditions, intimidations, harassments and others; such crises remain occurring in the Horn of Africa countries.

### ***The only assumed haven;***

However, since Ethiopia's invasion to Mogadishu in 2006, and almost - all territories inhabited by Somali populations [including Djibouti and Somalia] came under Addis Ababa control fully, Kenya became the only "nearby safe haven" for Ogaden refugees.

Unfortunately, since 2010, the assumed haven was threatened by Ethiopia's refugee-hunting exercise as daylight murdering or assassinations had been carried out. Key figures of Ogaden community, among them – ONLF officials, were brutally murdered or kidnapped from while in Kenya's sovereign territory – namely Dadaab refugee camps and Nairobi, in between 2011 and January 2014.

Moreover, because of security-related crises in Kenya, and also military or political developments in southern Somalia, the Ogaden refugees' only save haven in the Horn of Africa has become, from 2012, more unfavorable for the refugees in general and Ogaden in particular. Therefore, both Dadaab and Nairobi services for the refugees or asylum seekers became restricted as registration or documentation services remain hardly accessed or inaccessible.

### ***The kidnapping of two Ogadeni refugees;***

On January 26 of 2014, Ethiopian security forces, along with alleged Kenyan Police officers, abducted Mr Sulub Abdi Ahmed and Mr Ali Ahmed Hussein who were members of the ONLF negotiation team. According to witnesses, men claiming that they are from Anti-Terror Police Unit of Kenya abducted them, forcefully throwing them on to Land-cruiser, and taken to Moyale - a border town between Kenya and Ethiopia. Since then, their whereabouts is still unknown although the Jigjiga-based Somali regional state in Ethiopia website claimed that Ethiopian Police Militia, namely Liyu Police had captured them.

However, this move was supposedly intended to frighten Ogaden refugees in Kenya amid violating Kenya's sovereignty and right of offering asylum. Moreover, Ethiopian regime wants to inform Ogaden people that no country in the region can give them protection as refugees.

On the other hand, Kenyan government's reaction to the kidnapping, following Police investigation and announcement of the suspects, shows that Kenya government responds this incident more appreciable approach by the Ogaden refugees. It's a move, giving Ogaden refugees more hope of living peacefully in Kenya as long as hosting country is committed their protection amid punishing any culprit who plays role to violations of Kenya's sovereignty and refugees' protection rights.

At last, we appeal to Kenyan government and international community to ensure the protection of Ogaden refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya, particularly as emphasised by both Kenyan laws and international refugees protection tools, namely the Geneva Conventions or Protocols for refugees. Furthermore, we appeal to both Kenyan government and international community to employ efforts of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the January 26 abductees despite they're in the custody of a country with torturing record historically.

**Kenya – the only nearby sanctuary for Ogaden refugees!!**

**Ahmed Farah Mohamud  
Chairperson; Ogaden Refugees Committee<sup>1</sup> (ORC)  
Nairobi, Kenya**

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*1- ORC, since its set up of 2011, has been working through advocacy and publications on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers from Ethiopia's Ogaden region.*