

Oromo Menschenrechts- und Hilfsorganisation (OMRHO e.V.)
Oromo Human Right and Relief Organisation
Ijaarsa Mirga Namoomaa fi Gargaarsa Oromoo



Renowned Oromo Artist Zerihun Wadaajoo Kidnapped by TPLF Security Force!

Reliable Sources from Finfinnee (Addis Ababa), the capital city, reported that the famous and most celebrated Oromo Artist Zerihun Wadaajoo has abducted on November 7, 2008 by the Ethiopian regime “security” forces. His where about is yet unknown. Artist Zerihun Wadaajoo, a husband and father of four children, is one of the pioneers who revived the Oromo music and culture which was about to wither away by cultural suppression during the successive Ethiopian regimes. And he dearly paid for his purely artistic contributions.

During the military regime of Mengistu Hailemariam, he had to spend several years in prison for no offence except for his music in Oromo language. Life has never been easy for him during the last 17 years either. He practiced his music under continuous harassment, intimidation, imprisonment and even torture like many colleagues of him.

In the last 17 years, nearly all famous Oromo artists who were not willing to serve the political purpose of the TPLF regime, have been subjected to harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture and even day light murder. We may mention among the numerous killed artists:

1. The highly popular Oromo artist Eebbisaa Addunyaa and his friend Xannaa Wayyeessaa were murdered at his own home in in Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) on August 30, 1996;
2. A renowned vocalist Usmayyoo Muusaa was arrested in 1995 and spent in prison 1 years long. He became permanently sick as the result of a prolonged and brutal torture over a period of 11 years and died shortly after he was released in November 2006;
3. Ebbisa Addunya singer and guitarist, Bilisuma Band, shot dead in Addis Ababa, August 1996;
4. Hime Yusuf singer and musician, Chafe Gada Band, killed in Hararge 1997;
5. Kulani Boru, female vocalist, Chafe Gada Band, killed in Hararge in 1997;
6. Bonsiso Challa singer, Chafe Gada Band, Hararge, killed in 1992;
7. Hordofa Barento traditional dancer, Chafe Gada Band, murdered in Hararge in 1992;
8. Sabontu Barentu, female vocalist, Chafe Gada Band, killed in Bale in 1997;
9. Ayantu Borana, female traditional dancer, Chafe Gada Band, killed in Bale in 1997;

These are just to mention the well known few; the list would be endless if we enumerate all the artists killed by the TPLF regime. Other artists who have kidnapped and where their about unknown are even more numerous to list their names. The following are few of them:

1. Jirenya Ayana, singer, Gada Band, Addis Ababa, kidnapped by regime's security force in 1996. His where about still unknown.
2. Basha Hussein, female traditional dancer, Bilisuma Band, Addis Ababa, kidnapped in 1999. Her where about remain unknown.
3. Fufa Duguma, poet, abducted in Addis Ababa in 1997. His where about still unknown.
4. Darartu Bona, female vocalist, abducted in Bale in 1997. Her where about still unknown.
5. Abdulhakim (Shefis), singer, Chafe Gada Band, abducted in Bale in 1997 and his where about remain unknown.
6. Adem Wake, singer, kidnapped in Addis Ababa in 1997 and his where about remain unknown.

There are also hundreds of artists who fled their country and languish under severe condition of refugee life in neighboring countries; save those who managed to reach the western World.

Having withdrawn on such wide spread anti-artist record of the Ethiopian regime, artist Zerihun Wadaajoo was asked a year ago by a VOA Afaan Oromo program why he decided to stay in Ethiopia

under such a risky situation when nearly all prominent Oromo artists fled the empire fearing persecution. He said “I would have liked to escape the empire if it was only about my life. But I have four kids, and my wife has no job. They cannot survive without my presence and support. Therefore, I decided to take any risk and stay here.”

Now we are witnessing the risk artist Zerihun Wadaajoo took for the love of his country and family. Having drawn on the past experience, Wadaajoo’s life is certainly in serious danger that could further jeopardize the lives of his four children and wife.

OMRHO calls upon all international human right advocates and justice loving nations to take the necessary action in rescuing Zerihun Wadaajoo’s life and thereby helping his helpless family.