

## Do you know these facts?

- Nearly 90% of political prisoners in Ethiopia are Oromo nationals.
- In a survey of more than 500 Oromo refugees in Minnesota, 69% of men and 37% of women had been tortured by Ethiopian government. This number is considerably more than the 5-35% for other refugee populations.
- The Oromo language is spoken by majority population in the Ethiopian empire; yet, the empire's official language is that of the minority Amhara.
- Oromia accounts for 65% of the empire's GDP and 60% of its foreign exchange earnings; Yet Oromia is the least developed region in the empire.
- Nearly 100% of Ethiopia's hydro-electric power generation originates in Oromia; yet less than 13% of Oromia's population has access to electrical power.
- Ethiopia today is an authoritarian regime with no room for independent political mobilization or debate and where political space for electoral competition, the free exchange of ideas, and independent civil society organizations is virtually nonexistent.
- Ethiopia receives US\$3.5 billion (on average) annually in development aid which it utilizes as a tool to suppress political dissent and to consolidate the power of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany are the largest bilateral donors.



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## Oromo & Oromiyaa Frequently Asked Questions

**Who are the Oromos?  
What do they want?  
Where is Oromiyaa located?**



## Oromiyaa: Geography & Economy

Oromiyaa (Oromia in English) – Oromo country – is 375,000 Square Miles (600,000 square kilometers) in size, larger than France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium & the Netherlands combined.

It is approximately located between 2 degree and 12 degree N and between 34 degree and 44 degree E. It is bordered in the east by Somali and Afar lands and Djibouti, in the west by the Sudan, in the south by Somalia, Kenya and others and in the north by Amhara and Tigre land or Abyssinia proper.



Potentially, Oromia is one of the richest countries in Africa. Agriculture is the backbone of its economy. Because of Oromia's favourable climate and rich soil, many types of crops are cultivated and normally there is little need for irrigation. By forcefully removing the Oromo people's access to land – a resource important to their livelihood – and leasing it to foreign investors, the Ethiopian government violates the internationally stated human rights to food. The main cash crops are coffee and chat (a stimulant shrub). Coffee, a major cash earner for many countries, has its origin in the forests of Oromia and is the chief export item, representing more than 60 % of the foreign earnings of successive Ethiopian colonial regimes.



Oromia has important mineral deposits. The gold mines at Adola and Laga Dambi in the Borana and around Najjo, Asosa and Birqir river valley in Wallagga regions, which were the major sources of revenue for the colonial empire, are being exploited using modern machinery. Other important minerals found in Oromia are platinum, tantalum, nickel, kaolin, feldspar, quartz, marble, limestone and silica, Soda ash, Oil shale and coal deposits.

## What do Oromos Want?

***The Oromo seek to regain their sovereignty and live in independent state of Oromia where democracy, justice and the rule of law reign supreme and with mutual respect and at peace with their neighbors.***

Oromos want to regain their fundamental freedom in line with the principles enshrined in the UNO charter. They want to live in dignity and free from subjugation and exploitation by alien occupiers. They want protection from dispossession of their ancient homeland. They want freedom to determine their own future and to control their own political, social and economic destiny. They want the freedom to act, speak and think without any form of hindrance or restraint.



The Oromos need international support and solidarity against the brutal subjugation of the Ethiopian colonial rule. They need friends and allies across the world who will work with them to protect their human rights from abuse, their brethren from arbitrary arrests, disappearances, killings and tortures, their forests from decimation, their water from pollution, their animals from starvation, their minerals from exploitation, their sons and daughters from being used as cannon fodders.



The Oromo want to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination to attain the "blessing and security of self-government" expressed in the establishment of an independent and sovereign state of Oromia.

## Who are the Oromos?

The Oromo, indigenous to East Africa, make up a significant portion of the population occupying the Horn of Africa. In the Ethiopian Empire alone, Oromos constitute about 40 percent of its 90 million inhabitants. In fact, Oromo is one of the most numerous nations in Africa, which shares a common language, history and descent and once shared common political, religious and legal institutions. During their long history, the Oromo developed their own cultural, social and political system known as the Gadaa system: a uniquely democratic political and social institution that governed the life of every individual in the society from birth to death.



The Oromos were colonized during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by Abyssinia, renamed Ethiopia in 1929, with the help of the European colonial powers of the day. Ever since, they are subjected to discrimination, subjugation, repression and exploitation of all forms in all spheres of life. The Abyssinian colonial system has been doing everything possible to destroy Oromo identity - culture, language, custom, tradition, name and origin. Through the use of violence, the Ethiopian empire has obstructed natural and historical development of the Oromo society - political, economic and social. This colonial policy against the Oromo is maintained by the current regime of the empire.



Oromiyaa Coffee