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Press Release

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For immediate release

The Executive committee of ONLF held its ordinary meeting in Jigjiga, Somali state, between September 7-10, and 16, 2021 and pondered on the dire situation that is developing in Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, and the Somali state.

The EC reiterated its firm commitment to non-violence and the pursue of its political aims through dialogue and peaceful process despite the many challenges and unfair treatment ONLF has be subjected to, since the peace agreement between the ONLF and the Ethiopian government. However, to keep the current peace and stability in the Somali state all sides must be genuine about keeping the peace. Since peace cannot be kept alone in a single state while war rages in other states of Ethiopia, ONLF also keeps calling all parties to the current wars to opt for peaceful settlement of the conflicts and spare the lives of millions that are harmed by the continuation of this destructive war.

The EC evaluated the ONLF's participation in the coming election and consulted extensively with its members and supporters. After this careful deliberation, The EC **decided that ONLF withdraw from the 2021 election**. ONLF EC deeply regrets this decision. However, despite the repeated appeals to NEBE to rectify the widespread voter registration process fraud by the PP party with concrete suggestions by the opposition parties, it has failed to put in place the conditions necessary for free and fair election in the Somali state. The people's hope created by postponing the election for three months, was shattered by NEBE's decision to maintain the fraudulent process.

The EC did not easily take this decision. Since ONLF's core reason to stop the armed struggle was to pursue the rights of the Somali people through peaceful democratic means. However, the circumstances that the ruling party imposed on ONLF and other opposition parties, from blocking candidate registration, attacking or harassing candidates and members, and finally obstructing proper voter registration of the people with no recourse to genuine justice, has finally forced ONLF to the withdrawal today from the elections.

EC is gravely concerned about the worsening situation on the Somali Afar Border. ONLF believes that if there is the will and the genuine desire of the Federal government, that issue could be resolved through the constitution and legal framework. It is very ironic that paramilitary forces controlled by the same party fight each other. The issue cannot be solved through dubious administrative agreements reached by respective administrations. The constitution stipulates that where dispute occurs between two nations on a border area, a referendum will be held. Why is this not applied to the disputed territory? ONLF calls upon the federal government to stop shunning its responsibility and address this issue in a fair and transparent manner. ONLF further calls other nations in Ethiopia to stop meddling in the affair between Somalis and Afar. Such meddling could instigate ethnic tensions that may have dire consequences among communities living in peace. In addition, ONLF calls upon the international community to supply meaningful aid to the displaced people from the Somali Afar Conflict, specially, the Somalis who are habitually marginalized.

ONLF reiterates its call for a Somali consultative national conference to unite the Somali people to develop a common stance in order to strengthen their unity and effort to maintain the stability and a peace achieved so far. Such a unity will facilitate working together to promote the effort to develop a genuine democratic process that establishes a representative governance which will be the basis of a stable peaceful society that are at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Finally, ONLF once again reiterates its strategic choice to pursue the rights of the Somali people through peaceful proactive struggle and is willing to engage in any genuine national dialogue.

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