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## The implication of the displaced Oromo people from the state of Somalia as a comfort in affliction: Reckoning from the year of 2017/18

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### Abstract

It is a precise fact that hundred thousand of the Oromo peoples had evicted from the State of Somalia in the Ethiopian federation in the year of 2017/18. The causes of these large-scale evictions and internal displacement might be many; however, during those days, the criterion behind recruiting the displaced people was the Oromo identity or ethnicity. Hence, the question why displacement was occurred in general and why only the ethnic Oromo had been displaced selectively in particular at the time have remained a critical problem and therefore a subject of investigation till this date. Accordingly, the objectives of this research are to critically investigate and analyze the historical, political and legal causes, as well as, the repercussion of this massive eviction of Oromo people from the State of Somali in the present-day Ethiopian federation in the year of 2017/18. Thus, to fulfill its objectives, this research has employed a historical research design, as well as, a critical political and legal analyses method. As a conclusion, this research argues that despite its unpleasant economic and social consequence, this displacement can be considered as a comfort in affliction for the Oromo people in other perspectives in the post displacement time.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Oromo, Somali, Ethiopia

### 1. Introduction

The displacement of Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the years of 2017/18 can be considered as the case of Internal Displacement or the case of Internally Displaced Persons (Here after abbreviated as IDPs). In history and in practice, the causes of internal displacement may be many. For instance, peoples may be uprooted from their home and livelihood internally or in their country because of war, civil strife, natural disaster, and infrastructural projects. Accordingly, 'internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border' (United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 2004, Scope and Purpose, No.2). Deducing from this definition forwarded for IDPs at international level; the case of the Oromo people who had been displaced from Somalia Region was exactly categorized as internal displacement. Since the displacement had occurred in the same federation or in Ethiopia; they have never crossed the international borders.

Of course, internal displacement is not a new phenomenon in the political history of human beings. Internal displacement is very common since the end of the cold war (UNHCR Report on Internally Displaced Women in Seliah Camp, West Darfur, 2004) <sup>[12]</sup>. Accordingly, recognition of internal displacement emerged gradually in late 1980s and became prominent on international agenda in 1990s. Dynamics of displacement worldwide has shifted; assistance and protection is no longer restricted to refugees (those who have crossed international borders) but has also been extended to those who have been displaced within their own borders-otherwise known as IDPs (UNHCR, 2005 c) <sup>[13]</sup>. Furthermore, internal displacement has been widely identified a post-Cold-war phenomenon due to changing patterns of conflicts from intra-state to inter-state (UNHCR, 2005 Report) <sup>[13]</sup>.

For instance, during the war in Afghanistan, especially in 2001, the number of IDP increased up to 2 million; and in 2003, during the war in Iraq, hundreds of thousands of displaced peoples were remained at risk in the country itself (UNHCR Reports on Refugees in 2001). Currently, millions of peoples have been internally displaced in African countries, like Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ukraine and others.

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One can simply consider the traumatic tragedy of massive internal displacement ongoing in Syria and Yemen under the guise of war on terrorism. As explained hereinabove, the cause of internal displacement may include: war, civil strife, mega projects, and natural disasters. Recently, internal displacement in the Middle East and North Africa has snowballed since the wave of social uprisings known as the Arab Spring in late 2010 and the rise of the Islamic State (also known as ISIL or ISIS). Outside the Middle East and North Africa, the countries with highest numbers of people fleeing the effects of conflict and violence and internally displaced live in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Colombia and a number of sub-Saharan African nations in recent years (GRID, 2016) <sup>[1]</sup>. The vast majority of internal displacement in South and East Asia, as well as, the Pacific Regions is frequently caused by extreme weather and potential geophysical hazards events such as storms and flooding, earthquakes and other related natural catastrophe.

However, there are internationally recognized Guiding Principles to protect the IDPs. Accordingly, these Guiding Principles address the specific needs of internally displaced persons worldwide. They identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration (OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Introduction No.1, 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>. The OCHA Guiding Principles on IDPs of United Nations consists of the following general and specific principles:

General principles which include the rights of equality of IDPs with others, these principles of IDPs shall be respected by government and non-government (by all authoritative, groups and persons irrespective of their legal status and applied without any adverse distinction; national authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction; IDPs have the right to request and to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these; these Principles shall be applied without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, legal or social status, age, disability, property, birth, or on any other similar criteria; and certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their condition and to treatment which takes into account their special needs (OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, General Principles 1-4, 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Following these general principles under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; important specific principles have been recognized under the same instrument as follows:

“The Principles Relating to Protection from Displacement [Principle 5-9], the Principles Relating to Protection during Displacement’ [Principle 9–23]; the Principles Relating to Humanitarian Assistance [Principle 24-27] and the Principles Relating to Return, Resettlement and Reintegration [Principle 28- 30]” (OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, General Principles

Section I-V, 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Truly speaking hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who have put their lives at risk to reach European shores were Ethiopian citizens in our past and recent history. Accordingly, focus has been given to this international level migration because of various reasons among which political and economic reasons are at the top. However, surprisingly, massive and unexpected internal displacement has been taken in Ethiopia in the year of 2017-2018. This has just resulted in as a reason of uprooting around one million ethnic Oromo from the Somalia Region which is one among the nine regional states of the present-day Ethiopian federation.

Therefore, this study has the purpose to analyze the implication of the internally displaced Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the year of 2017-2018 in Ethiopian federation in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Moreover, it strives a lot to evaluate the same case aligned with the national laws of Ethiopia on the matters of IDPs. Furthermore, it assesses the historical impacts on this internal displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the present-day federalist Ethiopia.

## 2. Objective of Study

The objective of this study was to appraise the implication of the internally displaced Oromo people in the year of 2017-2018 from the state of Somalia in line with history, law and politics. Accordingly, it has examined the position of international guidelines and national laws with respect to IDPs in general and the case of internally displaced Oromo people from the state of Somalia. Consequently, this study has strived a lot in order to answer the following specific questions:

- What types of historical implications one can deduce for the cause of this internal displacement?
- What is the position of international and national law remedies or protections are available for these IDPs in general and for the internally displaced Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the present-day Ethiopian federation?
- To what extent these international guiding principles and national laws have been utilized appropriately to assist the uprooted Oromo people?
- Why the Oromo peoples only and selectively evicted in the year of 2018/18 from the state of Somalia in the contemporary federalist Ethiopia?

## 3. Methodology

To achieve its objectives and to answers its research questions, this study has employed various methods. Among these methods, review of related literatures, legal and document analyses, as well as, historical investigation have been widely utilized. For this reason, the techniques of data gathering may include: legal analyses, document analyses, practical/situational analyses (measure taken by the government and non-government organs during displacement), investigating records and analyzing events at the moment of displacement, after the displacement and in the earlier period, as well as, observations. Hence, its research methodology was a qualitative one.

## 4. Result and Discussions

### 4.1 General Overview about IDPs

The world has been engulfed with forcibly displaced peoples: refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs). For instance, as per the report of UNHCR, in the year of 2016, our world hosted over 65.6 million people worldwide are in need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement. Forcibly displaced populations include refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum-seekers. Globally in 2017, over 40.3 million people are internally displaced as a result of conflict (source: IDMC 2016 Global Overview Report), while 22.5 million are refugees and 2.8 million are asylum-seekers (source: UNHCR 2016 Global Trends Report). An estimated 31.1 million people were internally displaced in 2016 alone due to conflicts and natural disasters; this is the equivalent of one displaced person every second; 51% of the global refugee populations are children under 18- the highest proportion in a decade (European Commission on Forced Displacement – ECHO FaECHO Factsheet – June 2017)<sup>[5]</sup>.

The majority of today's refugees live in the developing world, which means that they flee to countries already struggling with poverty and hardship (European Commission on Forced Displacement – ECHO FaECHO Factsheet – June 2017)<sup>[5]</sup>. The EU is a leading international donor in forced displacement situations (European Commission on Forced Displacement – ECHO FaECHO Factsheet – June 2017)<sup>[5]</sup>. For instance, in 2016 it gave over €1972 million for humanitarian assistance dedicated to refugees and IDPs (European Commission on Forced Displacement – ECHO FaECHO Factsheet – June 2017)<sup>[5]</sup>. This funding covers projects that help the forcibly displaced access shelter, protection, food and other basic services such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation and education (European Commission on Forced Displacement – ECHO FaECHO Factsheet – June 2017)<sup>[5]</sup>.

However, differentiating the term “Refugees, an internally displaced person (IDP) and Asylum-seekers” has paramount importance for this discussion. According to the UNHCR the following definitions are given for these three terms as follows:

- ‘A Refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home country and is unable or unwilling to return due to fear of persecution. The 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees gives refugees legal protection under the international refugee law. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to respond to refugee needs.’
- ‘An Internally Displaced Person (IDP) is someone who was forced to flee his/her home but who did not cross a state border. IDPs benefit from the legal protection of international human rights law and, in armed conflict, international humanitarian law.’
- ‘Asylum-seekers are those who have made a claim that they are refugees and are in the process of waiting for it to be accepted or rejected. ‘Stateless’ people are not considered as a national by any state (‘de jure’) or don't enjoy fundamental rights in their homeland (‘de facto’).

Currently these millions of forcibly displaced peoples including, Refugees, IDPs and Asylum-seekers are rampant around our globe. The best example is illustrated here-under to see the worldwide distributions of these three types of forcibly displaced peoples:

- Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Greece; Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan; Somali refugees in Kenya; Congolese refugees in the Great Lakes region; Palestinian refugees; Myanmar refugees in Thailand; Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh; and Sahrawi refugees in Algeria.
- IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons- are suffering, particularly in Syria, Colombia, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen and Ethiopia;
- Millions of Asylum-seekers are surviving under serious political and socio-economical conditions in the western countries and other parts of the world.

### 4.2 The Condition of IDPs in Africa

African governments have signed Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention in 2009. This convention calls for a new approach to displacement that addresses its causes and longer-term implications, as well as its more immediate humanitarian consequences. Now days, internal displacement is a persistent and serious problem in Africa, despite strong commitments on the part of national governments to prevent, address and resolve it.

Pursuant to Internal Displacement Monitoring Center’s (IDMC) second report on internal displacement in Africa highlights the severity of the continent’s continuing displacement crisis. There were at least 12.6 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of 2016, and 3.9 million new displacements were recorded during the same year; at least 37 of Africa’s 55 countries across every region were affected (Africa Report on Internal Displacement by Norwegian Refugee Council-IDMC, 2017)<sup>[1]</sup>. Conflict caused 70 percent of Africa’s new displacements in 2016. The continent also accounted for 40 percent of conflict displacement globally, more than any other, and the scale and relentless nature of the phenomenon are beyond the scope of humanitarian action (Ibid).

The horn of Africa is the most disturbed part of Africa as a result of prolonged inter-state and intra-state conflicts, droughts, floods, and other related violence. The case of IDPs has soaring in the horn of Africa presently. Massive internal displacement and crises in Darfur-Sudan which began in 2003, Civil war in South Sudan in post-independence, Crisis in Somalia for more than three decades, the recent massive displacement of the Oromo people in Ethiopia very critical in these parts of Africa. However, this discussion restricted its emphasis to the recent internal displacement of Oromo people from the state of Somalia under the Ethiopian federation.

### 4.3 The Causes of Internal Displacement in Ethiopia

Historically a combination of drought, conflicts (both inter-state and intra-state wars), floods and inter-communal conflicts over resources like on grazing lands and rivers can be considered as the main causes of internal displacement in Ethiopia as per the reports of UNHCR. Throughout her history, Ethiopia has suffered from recurring droughts and floods and related famines. For instance, since the mid-1985s, Ethiopia was affected by one of the worst famines in her history and this drought and famine resulted in large-scale resettlement program, moving some 600,000 people from the famine-stricken northern highlands to the more fertile south-western lowlands of Gambella and Oromia regions (Addressing the rights and needs of people

displaced by conflict in Ethiopia, Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (iDMC, 2007)). The most recent waves of drought-related displacement occurred in 2000 and 2003, mainly in eastern regions of Ethiopia affected by this drought.

Massive flood-induced displacement occurred in November 2006. Ethiopia was also affected by the August 2007 floods. Specially, the lowland parts of Ethiopia have been affected by floods; specially, cities like Diredawa, Adama, and other parts of Rift valley regions in Ethiopia are seriously prone to floods, which resulted in serious internal displacement.

Besides natural disasters and internal inter-ethnic or separatist conflicts, international conflicts have also long affected the Ethiopian population. Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden (today's Somali region) in 1977 and the 1998-2000 border war with Eritrea triggered significant internal displacement, the latter conflict alone forcing around 300,000 people to flee their homes (Addressing the rights and needs of people displaced by conflict in Ethiopia, Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (iDMC, 2007)). Additionally, the recent massive eviction of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the Ethiopian federation in the year of 2017 and 2018 has resulted in the displacement of around one million ethnic Oromo (Conflict Displacement Situation Report on Ethiopia by OCHA and the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), 23 January 2018)<sup>[4]</sup>.

Historically and now days, inter-ethnic rivalry is the main cause of conflict-induced displacement in Ethiopia; it is often based on competition for scarce resources particularly on land and water. A large part of Ethiopia's population in the south and east is pastoralist, and over the past few years, existing tensions among pastoralist societies; between pastoralists and agricultural or agro-pastoralist societies have intensified (Ibid). For instance, the Nuer-Anyuak conflict in Gambella, of cattle raiding in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), conflicts between the Oromo and Somali people in the eastern and southern parts of Ethiopia, the Afar- Issa conflict in Afar region.

Ethiopia has experienced displacement over the years, but the number of people affected rose sharply in 2016 and the first half of 2017 as a result of both disasters and conflict (Africa Report on Internal Displacement by Norwegian Refugee Council-IDMC, 2017)<sup>[1]</sup>. The drivers of displacement have historically been a combination of slow and sudden-onset disasters, competition for resources and ethnic tensions, factors which often overlap and mutually reinforce each other (Ibid). As a result, a combination of floods, drought and violence in Ethiopia led to the displacement of close to 644,000 people during 2016 in Ethiopia (Ibid).

However, hereunder, I would like to appraise the historical, legal and political implications of the massive internal displacement of the Oromo people in the Ethiopian federation in the year of 2017 up to 2018.

#### **4.4 Appraising the Historical, Legal and Political Implications of the Displacement of the Oromo People from the state of Somalia**

##### **4.4.1 The Displacement Oromo People from the State of Somalia: Its Historical Implication**

The Oromo and Somali are highly intermingled people genealogically, linguistically, geographically, culturally and

share the same religion in history. Both the Oromo and Somali are Eastern Cushitic speakers; hence they are from the same language family. Geographically they are neighbors; living in the Eastern and South Eastern parts of Ethiopia, since the time immemorial. They share the same religions, 'Islam', almost all Somali are the followers of Islam religion while majority of the Oromo people living in Somali region and along the Somali borders are the followers of Islam religion. Both peoples are pastoralists in the eastern and south eastern parts of Ethiopia, hence culturally they are very similar. Consequently, centuries of interaction between the two groups of people have created a complex pattern of ethnic and linguistic groups' relationships.

Accordingly, in history, the Oromo and Somali are brothers. Therefore, they were neither subjugated one another nor enemies of one another in history. Historically, these two brotherly people have entered into conflicts on the scarce resources like grazing lands and to access to land and water. As a result, rarely this act of conflicts resulted in small scale internal displacement. The other causes of internal displacement in this region are natural calamity which includes: drought, famine and floods, and it displace both the Oromo and Somali people repeatedly in history.

Even during these conflicts on scarce resources and internal displacement because of any cause; the Oromo and Somali peoples have nurtured and utilized strong traditional wisdom to restore peace and harmony among themselves. They have utilized these traditional mechanisms to restore peace among themselves and to strengthen up on pastoral cooperation. For instance, the contribution of the Oromo Gada system has paramount importance in this affair. Therefore, conflicts within and between the Somalis and Oromos pastoral tribal groups of the Southern and Eastern parts of Ethiopia are not a new phenomenon. Since, these peoples have entered into conflicts at different times as a reason of scarce resources and drought as happened in any pastoral life throughout African in history.

To sum up this discussion, the Oromo people and Somali peoples are brothers, both of them were subjected by the centralistic Ethiopian government in the past; hence they never colonized or subjected one another in history. Accordingly, the massive eviction of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the year of 2017 and 2018 has no historical implication at all.

##### **4.4.2 The Legal Implications of the Displaced Oromo People from the State of Somalia**

As discussed hereinabove, the conflict and internal displacement between the Oromo people and Somali people is not a new phenomenon as we infer from history. However, in the year of 2017 and 2018, the Oromo people have been uprooted from the state of Somalia in Ethiopian federation massively in very different manner from what have been learned in the history of this region. Truly speaking, the massive evictions and displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia is exceptional in its nature; when compared with the historically known internal displacement in Ethiopia; at least because of two reasons:

Firstly, we have never ever witnessed such massive internal displacement in the history of Ethiopia. According to the preliminary data from the latest round of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix1 conducted in November 2017 indicates that around 1 million persons have been

displaced due to conflict along the Oromia-Somali regional border (nearly 700,000 in 2017 alone, with a significant spike after September 2017). Additionally, the displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia can be considered as one among the world's worst internal displacement in human history. Hence, as per the number of people that has displaced and the area it has covered; this displacement is number one in the Ethiopian history. Secondly, the eviction and displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia is also unique; since it have been conducted by different perpetrators including the government officials forcibly. Therefore, the manner of uprooting and displacing the Oromo people from Somali Regional State is different from the historically known one. The uprooting of the Oromo people has been conducted forcibly in the manner that degrades their human dignity. It is therefore, not similar with the types of displacing people in this region because of conflicts on scarce resources, access to grazing land and water, drought and famine. Rather the massive uprooting of the Oromo people in the year of 2017 and 2018 from the state of Somalia has xenophobic character in itself. According to Addisu Arega, the Oromia Regional Communication Director, speaking to VOA Afan Oromo program; he accused the 'Liyu Police' (special police- in Amharic) in the Somali Region has been crossing into the Oromia region and killing a number of people during the displacement. He continued to say that people were captured during the fighting, and "based on that information, we have now realized, three entities are taking part on attacking our people: Somali region Liyu police, Somali region militias and a man holding a Somali republic regular Army Identification Card, whom we are investigating."

Consequently, this massive uprooting of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia has resulted in multiple legal implications both at national and international level. Thus, hereunder I would like to appraise the following questions in line with this massive internal displacement of the ethnic Oromo from the state of Somalia:

What types of international guidelines are available for such types of IDPs? To what extent these international guarantees have been practiced during the internal displacement of the Oromo people? Do we have some protections for the IDPs under the national law of Ethiopian federation? Are there any legal gaps or conditions that exacerbate this condition under the Ethiopian legal system/government system?

#### **4.4.2.1 International Guidelines on IDPs: The Case of Displaced Oromo from the state of Somalia**

##### **I) Highlights of the International Guidelines on IDPs**

Whatever the case may be, the responsibility for the protection of IDPs rests first and foremost with national governments and local authorities; however, it is important for the international community to see how best it can contribute to enhancing the protection of IDPs in conflict and crisis situations. Since, the case of IDPs deeply related with humanitarian assistance. For that reason, within the United Nations system, significant steps have been taken to enhance an effective and timely response to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Consequently The UN adopted a resolution on these guiding principles on IDPs in 1998. These Principles, which are based upon existing international humanitarian law and human rights instruments, are to serve as an international standard to

guide governments as well as international humanitarian and development agencies in providing assistance and protection to IDPs. Specifically, this International Guidelines on IDPs identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration. Let I assess them in line with the case of the displaced Oromo people from the state of Somalia in the present-day federalist state of Ethiopia as follows:

##### **a) General Principles**

As a general principle, the International Guiding IDPs claims that "Internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced."

If we consider the case of internally displaced Oromo from Ethio-Somali region, this general principle was grossly violated. For instance, the Oromo people have been selectively uprooted, solely based on their ethnicity; while either ethnicity like Tigere, Amhara, and others were never uprooted. The Oromo peoples were deprived from enjoying freedom and the right to equality in this region because of their identity. In this manner, around one million ethnic Oromo has been uprooted from their homes, property, businesses, works and educations barely escape the massacre of 'Liyu Police' during the evictions. Therefore, this general principle of equality and nondiscrimination during displacement was violated.

##### **b) Principles Relating to Protection from Displacement**

The government and non-government, as well as international organizations and actors have the duty to prevent displacement. Pursuant to UN Guiding Principles on IDPs, "All authorities and international actors shall respect and ensure respect for their obligations under international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, in all circumstances, so as to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to displacement of persons."

When we see the displacement of the Oromo, let alone preventing and protecting the displacement, the regional governments of Somalia has involved and exacerbating the case. Various sources pointed out that government armies and special police forces have been participated actively during the displacement. For example, the Somali 'Special Police force', Somali militia, and even some military supports from the Republic of Somalia (The Oromia Regional State Communication Affairs, Addisu Arega speaking on VOA, other Mass Media and Social medias reported this case repeatedly during the displacement). Additionally, the Federal government accused and warned the Regional Medias and Regional officials through Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation at that time.

Furthermore, the federal government fails to prevent this massive displacement beforehand. Of course, the Ethiopian defense forces have been invited for intervention in various countries like Somalia, Sudan, and Ruanda other African countries to ensure peace and security. Nevertheless, why they remained silent while millions of the Oromo people have been inhumanly uprooted in their own country Ethiopia remains an anomaly. Thus, both regional

governments and the federal government cannot escape from responsibility for the human and material causality that was materialized directly or collaterally during this displacement.

### c) Principles Relating to Protection during Displacement

Every human being has the inherent right to life. The right to life is the mother of all rights. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life. Accordingly, internally displaced persons shall be protected in particular against: Genocide; Murder; Summary or arbitrary executions; and Enforced disappearances, including abduction or unacknowledged detention, threatening or resulting in death.

Though it is difficult to know the exact number of the killed, the detained and tortured peoples, it is very clear that all these cruelties have done to the evicted Oromo people from the state of Somalia. During the displacement, it was very common to hear that Somali Liyu Police killed three persons, five persons, seven person, two persons and the like daily on the media.

According to this UN Guiding Principles on IDPs, ‘Attacks or other acts of violence against internally displaced persons who do not or no longer participate in hostilities are prohibited in all circumstances.’ Nevertheless, the Oromo people have been attacked without any sin in towns by regional ‘Liyu Police’ while they were sleeping, learning, doing business peacefully and etc.

Furthermore, as per the same Guiding Principles, ‘No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of property and possessions. Property and possessions left behind by internally displaced persons should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use.’ However, violating this people, the Oromo civilians were robbed everything they have, including their home, car, shops, and any other materials even including their mobile phone; all the properties and possessions that they have produced and gained throughout their life.

‘All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living; and every human being has the right to education’ as per this UN Guiding Principles. The right to an adequate standard of living includes: Essential food and potable water; Basic shelter and housing; Appropriate clothing; and Essential medical services and sanitation. Here, before the government itself, the Oromo people helped the displaced Oromo from the state of Somalia. Though the affliction was so great, the huge and generous support from their people make these displaced people to feel more comfortable. Moreover, the right of education for the Oromo children from Primary level up to higher educational has been violated because of this displacement.

### d) Principles Relating to Humanitarian Assistance

‘All humanitarian assistance shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of humanity and impartiality and without discrimination. Humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons shall not be diverted, in particular for political or military reasons.’

Even though the primary duty and responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons lie with national authorities; international assistance is also very important. But to get the attention of international humanitarian response, Mass media and the

report from the national government has paramount importance. Despite its disastrous economical, political, and social consequences on the Oromo people, this internal displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia to the state of Oromia have not appropriately broadcasted both by national and international Mass Medias.

The displacement of the Oromo people didn’t get enough media coverage. Especially federal media was rarely report about this massive eviction for unknown reasons. Sometimes, the federal authorities warn other Medias to stop broadcasting about this displacement. Therefore, it is possible to conclude the displaced Oromo people not received sufficient humanitarian assistance on all aspects of life.

### e) Principles Relating to Return, Resettlement and Reintegration

‘Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavor to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons.’

On this area the Oromo people as a whole and the regional government of Oromia has done unforgettable history in resettlement and reintegration works. As we see from the prevailing practices, there is no chance of returning to the Somalia Region at least at this moment. The Oromia government has been building hundreds of homes for the displaced Oromo in the town like Adama, Sabata, Bishoftu, Mojo, in other towns around Addis Ababa. However, more work is left to resettle and reintegrate the evicted Oromo people at this time.

## II) The Position of Ethiopian Laws Concerning International Guidelines on IDPs

The 1995 FDRE Constitution has recognized fundamental human and democratic rights. It claims that ‘Human rights and freedoms, emanating from the nature of mankind, are inviolable and inalienable’ (1995 FDRE Constitution, Article 10(1)). Furthermore, this Constitution says ‘The fundamental rights and freedoms specified in this Chapter shall be interpreted in a manner conforming to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and International instruments adopted by Ethiopia’ (Ibid, Article 13(2)). Thus, Article 14-44 of this Constitution deals with the principles of human rights and democratic rights in which the rights of IDPs is also part and participates. Therefore, the Ethiopian government has the duty to enforce, protect and fulfill the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs rights explained hereinabove.

In the same manner, “Every Ethiopian has the right to engage freely in economic activity and to pursue a livelihood of his choice anywhere within the national territory” (Ibid, Article 41(1)). Furthermore, this Constitutions claims “Any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, within the national territory, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to” (Ibid, Article 32(1)).

Therefore, the most important question is that which level of the government is responsible for this massively displacement in violation of the international laws and national constitutions under the present-day Ethiopian legal system?

As per Article 13 (1) of the FDRE Constitution both level of governments is responsible and accountable. It says, "All Federal and State legislative, executive and judicial organs at all levels shall have the responsibility and duty to respect and enforce the provisions of this Chapter." Here, this Chapter means chapter three of the same Constitution in which the rights and guarantees for IDPs are included indirectly.

Furthermore, as the problem of this internal displacement was taken place between two different regional states (Somalia and Oromia), the federal government has the duty to intervene and settled this problem timely. For instance, the Federal government, specifically the House of Federation shall order Federal intervention if any State, in violation of this Constitution, endangers the constitutional order (Ibid, 62(9)). Moreover, the House of Peoples' Representatives "shall on its own initiative, request a joint session of the House of the Federation and of the House of Peoples' Representatives to take appropriate measures when State authorities are unable to arrest violations of human rights within their jurisdiction. It shall, on the basis of the joint decision of the House, give directives to the concerned State authorities" (Ibid, 55(16)). Also, the Federal government "shall deploy, at the request of a state administration, Federal defense forces to arrest a deteriorating security situation within the requesting State when its authorities are unable to control it" (Ibid, 51(14) and Proclamation No.359/2003).

Despite all these existing constitutional guarantees and laws to interfere and suppress this massive eviction, the Federal government has failed to do so timely; hence the Federal government responsible morally, legally and politically too.

#### **4.4.3 The Political Implications of the Displaced Oromo People from the State of Somalia**

The Oromo people had nurtured strong political system named as Gada system at the time immemorial. Though Gada systems comprises of all aspects of life in Oromo; the politics of the Oromo is also originated from the context of this complex system. For instance, in 16<sup>th</sup> century, when human beings were hunted, made slave and sold like property, the Oromo people had been committed to the protection of human rights based on Gada oriented politics (Makoo Bilii Laws of 1580, (Article 13, 41, 55).

Nevertheless, the Oromo people were surrounded by their enemies in all directions as we see from political history of the Horn Africa. For example, Onesimos Nasib [the so-called Abba Gammachis] and the First and Great Oromo Christian Missionary who was translated the Holy Bible to Oromo language for the first time in history said:

The Oromo people were surrounded by their enemies in all directions. From the North, the Christian kings were fought the Oromo people to expand their kingdom to the south; from the East and the West directions; the Muslims were seriously put their pressure on the Oromo; and from the Southern front, the country of the Oromo was surrounded by very thick forests. As a result, the Oromo people were surrounded by their enemies for centuries from all directions

[Tasgaraa Hirphoo, 1999; emphasis translated by the Author].

However, following the Menelik expansion to the Southern, Eastern and Western parts of the present-day Ethiopia, the modern state of Ethiopia was formed in the second half of the nineteenth (Mesfin,2006). Both the Oromo and Somali had been alienated during the centralistic state system of Ethiopia (1889-1991). Their language, religion, culture had never recognized at national level. Hence, both peoples were alienated politically. They were evicted from their lands or reduced to the status of tenants, especially during monarchies (1889-1974).

However, the era of absolute monarchies was ended up by the 1974 Revolution with the slogan of '*Land to the Tiller*'. The Derg government had disturbed the Oromo people seriously by its resettlement and villagisation program. Both programs were presented internationally as development programs and supported by donor governments; on the other hand, resettlement and villagisation programs had Political objectives, in particular to curb popular support to rebel movements in Tigray, Eritrea and Oromia regions (Sandra, 1987). Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden (today's Somali region) in 1977, both the Oromo and Somali were evicted from their home places; however, at that time these people were never fought one another as a people. The fighting was between the Ethiopian central government and the government the Republic of Somalia.

During the EPRDF and ethnic federalism, since 1991, the politically escalated internal displacement had been taken place on both the Oromo and Somali people in the Ethiopian federation. For instance, in order to avoid or destroy the secessionist movements, notably in the regions of Somali and Oromia, the EPRDF government has frequently take measures on the ONL and OLF (Oromo Liberation Front). This has resulted in internal displacement at different time.

The 2004 border referendum between Oromia and Somalia had resulted in significant internal displacement on both sides. It was conducted in October 2004 along parts of the regional border between Oromia and Somali to determine the preference for administrative status of border '*kebeles*' served only to raise levels of violence between the two ethnic groups instead of providing clarity. It forced an estimated 80,000 people on either side of the border to leave their homes during the last months of 2004 and at the beginning of 2005 (Addressing the rights and needs of people displaced by conflict in Ethiopia, Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (iDMC, 2007)).

The recent one which affects the Oromo people massively and resulted in the displacement of one million Oromo was occurred in the year of 2017 and 2018. Of course, many evidences can be produced to ensure that the displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somali is politically afflicted. Among these, during the eviction, the government sects were actively involved. For instance, the so called '*Somali Liyu Police*', has massively mobilized to attack innocent ethnic Oromo living in the state of Somalia and along the borders. On the other hand, some government officials have controlled the federal police force as suspects of this crime on both sides. This shocking uprooting of the Oromo people has never broadcasted appropriately by the national media. Specially, the federal Medias were almost rarely covers about this issue in their news and programs. Moreover, the Federal government's reaction to this

disastrous internal displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia was too slow.

#### 4.4.4 The Displacement of the Oromo people as Comfort in Affliction

The Oromo people were selectively recruited, chased and deported to their region as an enemy from the state of Somalia. Those who were targeted and uprooted from Somali region was only ethnic Oromo. Therefore, the act of selectively attacking and uprooting the innocent Oromo civilian from Somali region created the question why only the Oromo? The Oromo people were forcibly transported leaving their home, business, property and everything they have during the night in the manner that degrade their humanity. The same family was separated, as well as, rape, mutilation, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment was accompanied during the eviction of Oromo people from Somali region.

However, this horrific condition which was happened to the Oromo people never recognized or disclosed to the world people appropriately. Both national and international Medias haven't given enough coverage on their news. As adding to insult to injury, the federal government of Ethiopia failed to intervene in this horrific condition timely. Despite all these evils and complexities, the Oromo people, both inside and outside the country stand together to help their people at the zeal of utmost good faith. When the national and international humanitarian actors fail to give due care and attention; the Oromo people stand firm to help one another. All the Oromo people contribute for support their brothers, mothers, and sisters suffering from this trick and sinful act happened to themselves. Although it has affected the Oromo and left unforgettable scars on the life of all the Oromo people; on the other hand, it revolutionized the political struggle and thereby granted and wrapped up the economic and social bonds of the Oromo people. It established unshakable unity among all the Oromo people. That's why I would like argue it as the implication of the Oromo displacement from the state of Somalia as comfort in affliction.

#### 5. Conclusion

The displacement of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia was really happened to the Oromo as a sorrowful nightmare for all the Oromo and other Ethiopian's nations, nationalities and peoples.

The cause of this massive displacement had no historical background; since it was happened between brotherly people; the Oromo and Somali. Furthermore, it was grossly different from the internal displacements previously happened to this region frequently in history. It was enormous, which resulted in millions of evicted peoples; hence it can be taken as the first in the history of the Horn of Africa. Additionally, it is unique in the manner it was conducted, since the perpetrators of this internal displacement, was the government affiliated actors, like Liyu Police, local militias, national armies and conducted up on the millions of Oromos civilians and Somalis.

Though it is difficult to identify the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity, the duty bearers have remained the Ethiopian government as a whole. Accordingly, both the officials of the regional governments and federal government at the time shall remain responsible and accountable morally, political and legally for those inhuman

uprooting of the Oromo people from the state of Somalia and along the Oromia and Somalia regional state borders.

Despite the decisive attempts to divide, weaken and suppress the Oromo people in that sinful act of uprooting and robbing the Oromo, the displacement strengthened up the spirits of 'Oromumma 'and thereby conveyed the thirsted unity for centuries politically and economically.

#### 6. Recommendation

As a recommendation, both the federal government and regional states must work cooperatively reintegrate, resettle and assist internally displaced peoples as soon as possible as per the international and national guiding principles and laws; in case, such massive displacements occur in the country.

Moreover, the government both at federal and regional of Ethiopia must fulfill its constitutional and international duties through bringing the suspected criminals/ perpetrators of this massive displacement to justice; hence, the government should take lessons from this distractive displacement to avoid such recklessness.

Furthermore, the government should commit itself to teach, educate and train the people about culture of tolerance, humanity, diversity, togetherness in the future.

Both the Oromo and Somali peoples, especially the elites must work for cooperation, peace and unity in order to escape any trap prepared for them again in their future time.

Finally, potential researchers must put their emphasis on this area during their studies, to identify the causes and consequences such repeated internal displacements in Ethiopia till this date.

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