

## **Statement of Vision Ethiopia on the Assassination of Artist and Activist Hachalu Hundessa**

June 30, 2020

The Board of Vision Ethiopia, an independent and nonpartisan network of Ethiopian academics and professionals, expresses its deepest sorrow over the vicious killing of Mr. Hachalu Hundessa, and sends its condolences to his family and the peace-loving people of Ethiopia. Regrettably, the young singer's death is but the latest in a series of assassinations of politicians and high-ranking civilian and military leaders witnessed in the recent past.

Vision Ethiopia notes that the brutal killing took place at a critical moment in the history of Ethiopia, when the country is dealing with existential threats, including foreign aggression, a pandemic outbreak and internal conflicts.

Vision Ethiopia believes that the killing was schemed and carried out by extremist and criminal groups to thwart the ongoing negotiations surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project, and to create chaos and instability in the country by inciting inter-ethnic pogroms. Bewilderingly, the actions of these criminal elements have been facilitated by non-state actors that have penetrated the structures of government and public services, rendering the bureaucracy and judiciary ineffectual and lacking credibility and trust in the eye of the public.

Vision Ethiopia deeply laments the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of properties and national heritage in the aftermath of the deplorable assassination of Mr. Hachalu Hundessa, and asks the people of Ethiopia to exercise wisdom and constraint, and not to succumb to the traps of the criminal and extremist groups behind this tragic event.

Therefore, Vision Ethiopia:

1. Unequivocally condemns the brazen assassination of this great Ethiopian;
2. Calls upon all the people of Ethiopia, without regard to ethnicity, religion or political affiliations, to stand together and avoid further bloodshed and violence;
3. Calls upon the Government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to commission an independent and reliable body to transparently and credibly investigate the motives behind the assassination, the communal violence, and the glaring human rights violations reported in various parts of the country, and to take swift actions against the responsible individuals and criminal groups;
4. Calls upon the Government to enforce the pertinent media laws of the country and to curb the incendiary activities of political and social actors;
5. Calls upon all international organizations and human rights groups to intervene and prevent a looming genocide and mass displacements in that country; and
6. Calls upon Western governments to bring to justice criminal activists, who reside in their respective countries and remotely incite sectarian violence in Ethiopia.

Sincerely,



Getachew Begashaw, PhD

Professor of Economics and President of Vision Ethiopia

William Rainey Harper College

Palatine, IL 60067