

Call for Papers: Oromo Studies Association Mid-year Conference 2023  
March 18-19, 2023 - Berlin, Germany (Hybrid)

## **Building toward Stability in the Face of Violence, Turmoil, and Disinformation in the Horn of Africa**

The aim of the 2023 OSA Midyear conference is to bring evidence-based scholarly work that provides the kind of data, analysis and recommendations required for successful policy and scholarship. This entails bringing into focus a critical discrepancy between public projections and perception of Ethiopia on the one hand and conditions that can be verified through scholarly research on the other. By providing empirically rooted and situated knowledge and understanding of the local conditions, effective policy can be crafted and constructive partnerships with a range of public and private entities be envisioned and implemented.

The Horn of Africa is struggling through violence, natural and human-made disasters, and socio-ecological crises that have erased livelihoods, disrupted social relations, and undermined peace and stability of the region. In Ethiopia, despite a partial representation of the country as an anchor state in the Horn of Africa, realities on the ground are quite different. Violence and atrocities at the local level have been hidden and denied visibility to the extent that policies designed for Ethiopia exacerbate the conditions they intended to alleviate. While the world expected a transition to democracy in the post-2018 period; instead, Ethiopia descended into political upheaval, state-directed violence, and war with broad regional and international ramifications. These conditions were worsened by severe drought which affects vast parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya, and leading to a crippling of producers' means of coping.

Since 2018, wars in Ethiopia have worsened the security situation in both north and south, leading to instability throughout the Horn of Africa. Wars have disenfranchised the society, led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands, and the displacement of approximately 3 million persons. Particularly precarious conditions prevail in Oromia – the most populous region. The international community has not been exposed to these atrocities nor did it properly address the impact of the multi-layered forms of violence. The cruelties in Ethiopia's broader South have been either underreported or framed solely from the perspective of the political center, largely urban elites, a framing which silences the voices of different nations and nationalities and neglects their experience.

The level of unreported deterioration and crisis that has occurred in the country comes at a time when the geopolitical and strategic significance of the Horn of Africa is on the rise, unfortunately preventing the kind of nuanced, evidence-based geopolitical analysis necessary to offer informed policy directions to the global community. Consequently, policies and humanitarian interventions are made without thorough empirical research.

With the aim of offering evidence in which nuanced analyses and policy recommendations can be grounded, OSA plans a Mid-year conference on the theme “**Building toward Stability in the Face of Violence and Turmoil in the Horn of Africa.**”

The Call for Papers invites submissions that address the following topics:

#### **War**

- Evidence and analysis of the impact of violent conflict in Oromia since 2018
- The war in Tigray and its political and humanitarian ramifications countrywide
- Studies of paramilitary infiltration into Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz and other regions
- Questions of self-determination in SNNPR
- The political ecology of war and famine in the Horn

#### **Disinformation and Restrictions on Investigation**

- Impacts of disinformation via Ethiopian state narratives
- Effects of media coverage and misinformation on policy designed by international organizations in Ethiopia
- Evidence of sidelining and silencing of subaltern voices and experiences
- Case studies of misguided interventions in regions subject to travel, communication and investigative blackout and inaccessibility
- Studies of human rights conditions in Ethiopia’s broader south

#### **Prevailing Socio-Economic Conditions**

- Environmental destruction, pollution, and ecological reordering due to extractivist practices
- Violence inflicted on farmers, pastoralists, and artisanal miners through resource dispossession and displacement, lack of access to information, capital, and markets.
- Studies of urbanization, land use and appropriation

#### **The Role of International Actors**

- Growing roles of competing major actors such as China, Russia, the Gulf States, Turkey, and USA in the region and the implications for stability.
- Attention to the shifting geopolitical and strategic significance of the Horn of Africa.
- The role of international community via NGOs, faith-based groups, and economic powers in enabling and/or mitigating fragile conditions in the Horn.

OSA plans to publish a selection of conference papers for the purpose of informing policy makers, humanitarian organizations, governments, and civil society organizations of documented conditions in the Horn where programs, policy and funding are carried out.

Submissions will be received at [OSAConferences2023@gmail.com](mailto:OSAConferences2023@gmail.com)

- *Deadline for Abstract submission:* (January 31, 2023)
- *Deadline for submission of final policy paper (3000-3500 words):* February 28, 2023
- *Conference date and venue:* March 18-19, 2023, Berlin, Germany