

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2023

Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20010

Linda Thomas-Greenfield
Ambassador
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

Dear Secretary Blinken and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield,

We write to urge the Department of State and United States Mission to the United Nations to renew the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) at the current 54th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and to actively advocate with other Council members on its behalf.

While the November 2022 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was an important step toward silencing the guns in Tigray, ICHREE's September 2023 report suggests that the conflict there has not ended. Grave human rights abuses and atrocities have continued in Tigray, new evidence of potential war crimes in Amhara has come to light, and serious conflict-related abuses have continued in Oromia and other parts of the country. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, among others, has raised alarm in recent months with the increasing incidence of forced disappearances and incommunicado detentions, and with the mass detention of ethnic Amhara. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also highlighted the deteriorating human rights situation in August.

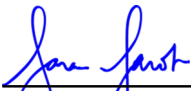
Therefore, it is vital to maintain the only independent investigation mechanism with the mandate to investigate abuses across all of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights recently made the decision to terminate its Commission of Inquiry on the Situation in the Tigray Region, further reducing the number of independent bodies focused on this issue. As new human rights abuses continue to come to light, the international community must protect this mechanism and fight for justice and accountability for all those who have suffered human rights abuses not only in Tigray, but also in other parts of the country as well as experiencing violence and serious abuses.

All of Ethiopia's warring parties have been implicated in serious human rights abuses and atrocities. The federal government, its forces, and its allies have been implicated in human rights violations that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

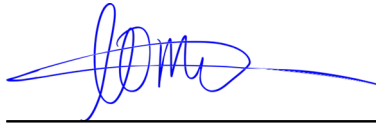
We are skeptical that there will be a credible domestic accountability process in Ethiopia while the perpetrators of some of the most egregious abuses remain in positions of power. It is essential to our interests that Ethiopia recover its stability, and it is essential to our values that perpetrators of gross human rights violations are brought to justice. ICHREE is a critical element of both and as such should be a priority for the United States. To that end, we urge you to use all of your diplomatic leverage to bring along our European and African allies and ensure that the ICHREE's mandate is renewed.

Without active US support for the mandate and high-level diplomatic engagement of partners, the ICHREE will not be renewed this year. It is imperative the Biden Administration center its policy toward Ethiopia on justice and accountability for all of the Ethiopian survivors demanding it.

Sincerely,



Sara Jacobs
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Africa



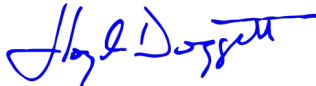
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress