

Brussels, **02 MAI 2018**
A(2018) 427643-1595642

Ms Ana Gomes MEP
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear Ana,

I would like to thank you for your email dated on 14 February regarding the deportation of British journalist William Davidson, and the arrest of prominent blogger and university lecturer Seyoum Teshome.

We are well aware of these cases and we have been following the situation closely. Fortunately Mr. Seyoum Teshome has in the meantime been released on 16 April.

The EU Delegation in Addis, in close cooperation with EU Heads of Mission (HoMs), regularly highlights the importance of pursuing positive reforms to address the grievances of the population to the authorities. The issues related to human rights, media freedom, and rule of law are part of our dialogue with Ethiopia. The EU Head of Delegation to Ethiopia, Johan Borgstam, addressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Workneh Gebeyehu, and State Minister Hirut Zemene, on behalf of the EU and EU Member States at the briefing of the international community on the State of Emergency, on 20 February 2018. He called not only for the State of Emergency to be limited in time and respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but also ensured EU encouragement for all actors to work towards a democratic and stable Ethiopia. He stressed that only an inclusive dialogue with all concerned stakeholders would allow for a peaceful and durable resolution of the crisis in the country. He furthermore noted that all sides should refrain from violence, and that the security forces bear a particular responsibility in this respect.

EU HoMs are transmitting coherent messages on the need to ensure rapid and peaceful transition of power, to show restraint in the use of force facing potential protests, and to encourage a positive engagement between the government and the opposition. The EU emphasizes the fact that the grievances driving the protests have to be addressed in order to calm the situation and ethnic tensions. Additionally, the EU is clear that respect for the constitution and upholding the rule of law are cornerstones of democracy.

The EU is reaching out incessantly at all levels of the Ethiopian government, as well as the opposition, in order to call for moderation. In this context, new opportunities for High Level EU strategic engagement on human rights and democracy in Ethiopia, as you underline, are being fostered.

As you recommend, and in line with our statement, we are contributing to better coherence and consistency of Union policies and actions in the area of protection and promotion of human rights, and we continue to firmly encourage Ethiopian authorities to improve the media landscape.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini