

Brussels, 29 NOV. 2016
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Ms Ana Maria Gomes MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1040 Brussels

Dear Ana Maria,

I would hereby like to thank you for your letter of October 12, 2016 regarding the Statement made by my Spokesperson on Ethiopia's announcement of a state of emergency.

As discussed during the DROI-DEVE hearing on the same day, the EU pays great attention to the situation in Ethiopia and follows developments closely, particularly in the Amhara and Oromia regions. I share your concerns about the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia since the beginning of the protests in November 2015. My reaction to the announcement of the state of emergency was clear, fundamental human rights must be respected at all times. It goes without saying that the state of emergency is not a measure to protect human rights, but human rights must be respected fully during the period of a state of emergency.

During my latest telephone call with PM Hailemariam Desalegn, I explicitly requested that he personally ensures that his Government addresses the grievances of the population, opens democratic space in Ethiopia and respects the population's fundamental freedoms.

During these challenging times it is essential that the EU maintains and use its relations with Ethiopian interlocutors to critically but also constructively accompany them and to offer alternatives for future government choices. A stable Ethiopia at peace with its population and able to play its important role in the region is in our joint interest. Political reforms are necessary. This includes the introduction of a more proportionate electoral system so that competing opposition parties have a fair chance to enter Parliament. An electoral reform is a condition *sine qua non* to improve the Parliament's representation of the country's political diversity. It should be the result of an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders.

Since the protests began, we have expressed our concerns on the situation, urged to respect rights for freedom of expression and association and called for the release of bloggers, journalists, and members of the opposition, condemning all acts of violence. In several public statements and in the political dialogue with the authorities the EU has highlighted the importance of an inclusive dialogue and a process of reconciliation.

Moreover, we have supported calls for independent investigations and for accountability on all acts of violence, notably at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council on 19 September in Geneva.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini