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Dear Mr. Westcott,

We would like to express our deep concern about the arrest and arbitrary detention of seven Ethiopian citizens, who were arrested on March 16, when leaving the country to attend a workshop on seeds in Nairobi. All of them have been working on food security issues and access to land in the past. According to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, they all are to be considered Human Rights Defenders. However, in order to avoid exposing them additionally, we advise to refrain from using this term publicly or towards the Ethiopian authorities.

Among the detainees is Pastor Omot Agwa Okwoy. During the February 2014 visit of the World Bank investigation, he assisted in the World Bank's Inspection Panel. This investigation looked into the World Bank's role in the relocation / villagisation program in Gambella, which has been associated with serious human rights violations. Mr. Omot has been under increased scrutiny by Ethiopian security personnel since the completion of the inspection panel process.

The other six detainees are:

- Mr Admuasu Lokoley Kidewa, SNNPR
- Mrs Arbaminch Elias Lasbouk, SNNPR
- Ashinie Astin Titoyik, Gamella
- Amanuel Worku Baharu, Benishangul-Gumuz
- Jemal Oumar Hojele, Benishangul-Gumuz
- Rev. Shibiru Oljira Tolessa, Oromia

It was recently confirmed that all seven are currently being detained by the Ethiopian Federal Police at the Makalawi Detention Centre. According to our sources, they have not been brought to a judge, do not know the charges made against them, have not had access to a lawyer, and therefore are arbitrarily detained. We are deeply concerned for their lives and well-being. Evidence of ill-treatment, in-

human detention conditions and other human rights violations at the Makalawi facility were documented in the past by human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch.

In light of the very serious allegations above and the mediate threat of ill-treatment of the detainees, we would like to request

- that the operational provisions of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders are fully applied to the cases mentioned above;
- that the human rights focal point within the EU Delegation in Addis Ababa visits the detainees at the Malaki facility to verify the situation of the seven detainees held there and to increase their protection;
- that the EU Delegation urges the national authorities to allow family visits to the detainees, to treat them with dignity and to provide adequate detention conditions.
- that the EU Delegation contacts national authorities to enquire as to the charges against the detainees. If the results of this enquiry show that the detention is clearly arbitrary, we urge the EU to take every possible action to obtain their release;
- that the EU Delegation urges the national authorities to bring the detained persons before a judge as soon as possible to protect his/her security, and according to the due process of law;
- that the EU Delegation participates as observer in any judicial hearing regarding the cases against the mentioned detainees, especially those in which charges are formulated against them;
- that the EU Delegation urges the national authorities to give the detainees access to legal representation;
- that the EU Delegation considers using its emergency fund to assist with the fees of lawyers for the detainees should their families be unable to pay for legal representation;
- that the EU addresses this issue in its highest political dialogue with the Ethiopian government.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns and your assistance in this matter.
Many thanks.

Looking very much forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara Lochbihler



Ana Gomes