



DEFEND ETHIOPIA TASK FORCE EUROPE

8 June 2022

We, the undersigned organizations in Europe and North America, with members including Ethiopians and citizens of European and North American countries, address this letter to the High Commissioner and Member States of UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to provide an explanatory note on the established International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia through [Resolution S-33/1 on the 17th of December 2021](#).

As Ethiopians living abroad, we are deeply concerned by the Human Rights violations on our compatriots and, at times, close relatives. As such, our voices should be given priority and due consideration on how any alleged Human Rights violations should be looked into in Ethiopia. We believe that those accountable for any violation should be brought to justice, that our country's judicial sovereignty and independence be preserved, and that our national institutions should be strengthened with increased independence and capacity to promote and protect human rights.

The [new mechanism established](#) by the UN Human Rights Commission on Ethiopia is inappropriate. It is inappropriate because it does not positively contribute to consolidating the collaborative relationship between the UNHRC and a member state (Ethiopia). Indeed, since 2018, Ethiopia has been engaged in genuine and exemplary transformation of its human rights institutional capacity as demonstrated by the reforms undertaken before, during and after the conflict erupted in the North of the country.

In addition, the establishment of an [International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia](#) is tantamount to unnecessary interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign country and undermines its fledgling national institutions. We think that the most appropriate way to apply such mechanisms should be complementary to rather than replacement of national bodies, including the [Ethiopian Human Rights Commission](#), that have demonstrated their readiness to independently carry out the task at hand. Besides, there is no reason to doubt that Ethiopia is able and willing to hold individuals or institutions criminally responsible, if and when they are found to be implicated in activities that are contrary to national and/or international (human rights) laws.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Attorney General, Military Court Prosecutors, Regional and Federal Police Prosecutors have conducted their own independent investigations of all the allegations and have prosecuted more than 50 individuals including military personnel. Furthermore, an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Human Rights has been established to undertake comprehensive and impartial investigations into all instances of serious violations to bring perpetrators to justice. The National Task Force has been engaged in swift and independent assessment of allegations of violation in Tigray, Afar and Amhara and it has been empowered to prosecute and take remedial measures. All these demonstrate the commitment of the government of Ethiopia to advance respect of Human Rights and Accountability in the country, in a transparent and coordinated manner.

In consideration of the points mentioned above, and since all member states are preparing to meet in Geneva for the [50th regular session of the Human Rights Council](#) for an oral briefing on the situation in Ethiopia on the 30th of June 2022, we, the undersigned organizations established in Europe and North America :

1. Call for the decommissioning the [International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia](#) as its establishment is counterproductive and inappropriate when Ethiopia is undertaking the implementation of the recommendations contained in the [EHRC-OHCHR Joint Investigation on Tigray](#), and demonstrating its readiness to further institutionalize the protection of Human Rights and accountability for any violations thereof;
2. Call for the UNHRC member states to rather use such a budget to finance the strengthening of Ethiopia’s judicial institutional capacity to investigate on the atrocities committed in the Afar and Amhara regions by the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) with the same rigor and [mechanisms established for the EHRC-OHCHR Joint Investigation in Tigray](#) whilst respecting Ethiopia’s judicial sovereignty as a longstanding member state of the UNHRC.

Initiated by:

- Network of Ethiopians in Geneva for Action Task Force ([NEGAT](#))
- Defend Ethiopia Task Force in Europe ([DETF-EU](#)) organized in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

Endorsed by:

- American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee ([AEPAC](#))
- Ethiopian-American Civic Council ([EACC](#))
- Ethio-American Development Council ([EADC](#))
- Ethio-Canadian Network for Advocacy and Support ([ECNAS](#))
- Ethio-Czech Community z.s. ([ECC](#))
- Ethiopian Community in Spain ([ECSP](#))
- Ethiopian Diaspora Associations in Belgium ([EDAB](#))
- Ethio-France Association for Development of Ethiopia ([EFADE](#))
- Ethiopian Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in Germany (EFDCG)
- Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Network ([EPDN](#))
- GETFACTet ([GETFACTet](#))
- Global Ethiopian Advocacy Nexus ([GLEAN](#))

