



## DEFEND ETHIOPIA TASK FORCE EUROPE

26 September 2022

### Call for the disestablishment of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE)

We, the undersigned organizations across the world organized as a Consortium, with members including Ethiopians and citizens of European countries, the United States and Canada, address this letter to the High Commissioner, Member States of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to provide our explanatory note on the report of the International Commission of Human Rights Expert on Ethiopia (ICHREE) released on the 22nd of September 2022.

In a [letter dated the 8th of June 2022](#) sent to all Human Rights Council Member states, as independent Ethiopians living abroad, we have indicated how deeply concerned we are 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. As independent citizens of Ethiopian origin living abroad, we believe that the Ethiopian government should hold accountable those who have committed Human Rights violations and bring them to justice, that Ethiopia's judicial sovereignty must be preserved, and that its national institutions should be strengthened with increased independence and capacity to promote and protect human rights.

Over the last year, Ethiopia has been subjected to a number of unjust agenda-driven scrutiny on multilateral platforms and that must stop. We believe that the United Nations Human Rights Council should not be used as a political instrument to impair relationships with any member state. We recognize the Ethiopian government's patient efforts to maintain a harmonious engagement at all levels of multilateral institutions despite the provocative actions by some.

In the [letter dated the 8th of June 2022](#), we have explained why, from the outset, the establishment of a [new mechanism](#) is inappropriate and outlined the [series of erroneous premises](#) that led to the formation of the Commission, enumerating the [concrete measures taken by Ethiopian national institutions](#) to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice. We have also called on UNHRC member states to disestablish the Commission and [use such public funds to strengthen Ethiopia's judicial institutional capacity](#) to continue its work on investigating the atrocities committed in the affected areas including Afar and Amhara regions.

Not surprisingly, the report of the ICHREE is clearly politically motivated and of a quality that's expected given the gravity of the situation and the consequential nature of the report. It [does not meet the minimum standard of proof](#) for such an investigation. A report with such a partisan posture, attempting to paint the democratically elected Government of Ethiopia as the only culprit, undermines the authority and credibility of the Human Rights Council itself. It raises legitimate questions about the impartiality and professionalism of the Commission members mandated by the Council. As such, we believe that member states should distance themselves from ill-advised influences and try to gain a thorough [understanding of the situation in Ethiopia](#) rather than signing off incomplete and partial messages that do not serve justice to the victims nor strengthen the protection and promotion of Human Rights in Ethiopia.

There are reasonable grounds to [question the impartiality of members of the ICHREE](#), in particular Kaari Betty Murungi (Kenya), Chair of the Commission, who was [echoing partisan messages about the conflict in northern Ethiopia on her personal Twitter](#) account. These tweets have since [been deleted](#), but not our understanding of her anti-Ethiopian views. Thus, in addition to the wrong premises on which the ICHREE was established, we have serious reservations on the [ability and impartiality of the commissioners](#) to deliver on the mandate entrusted to them by the Council with the objectivity, accuracy and completeness it deserves.

Furthermore, we would like to recall that the Inter-Ministerial Task Force is conducting an independent criminal investigation to comprehensively deliver on accountability and redress measures. The duty and responsibility of the task force have been explained in the [Note Verbale addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council](#), demonstrating the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to advancing respect and protection of Human Rights and accountability in the country.

Finally, as Ethiopian Advocacy Groups deeply concerned by the Human Rights violations in our country, we call on all member states and relevant stakeholders to reject the unprofessional, incomplete, biased and politically-motivated report of the ICHREE. We also reiterate our call in [our letter dated the 8th of June 2022](#) to disestablish the Commission and instead collaborate harmoniously with the Ethiopian Government in strengthening Ethiopia's judicial institutional capacity to comprehensively and independently investigate the atrocities committed in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions whilst respecting Ethiopia's judicial sovereignty as a long-standing 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, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

Endorsed by:

- American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee ([AEPAC](#))
- Ethiopian Advocacy Network and Unity For Ethiopia ([@UnityforEthio](#))
- 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](#))
- United Ethiopian Community Association in South Africa ([UECASA](#))

**To:** All Member States of United Nations Human Rights Council

**Cc:** Nada Al-Nashif, Acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Volker Türk, Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, Incoming UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

