

CATHERINE ASHTON

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

B-1046 BRUSSELS
+32-2-298 85 90

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A(2014)2223225-2435592

Ms Ana Gomes MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Ana,

Thank you for your letter of 3 July concerning the extradition of UK citizen Andargachew Tsege from Yemen to Ethiopia.

We are indeed deeply worried about his situation and remain in close contact with the UK Government which has repeatedly raised his case with Yemeni and Ethiopian authorities, including at the highest levels. Discussions have in particular focused on concerns about his extradition to Ethiopia, about due process, about the death sentence imposed in absentia, as well as about consular access. The EU will continue to closely monitor his situation and to provide assistance to UK authorities on request.

In the past months, the EU has been witnessing worrying political developments in Ethiopia, including the arrests of bloggers, journalists and members of the Ethiopian opposition. As mentioned in our earlier correspondence, on 6 May, the EEAS Spokesperson released a statement expressing our concern about these arrests and reiterating the importance of protecting space for genuine political dialogue. The statement also called on the Ethiopian authorities to ensure that proceedings are carried out according to Ethiopian law and respecting international and regional norms, including granting access to legal counsel and family, as well as the right to apply for bail.

In July, we raised similar concerns with Ethiopian authorities regarding the arrests of several members of registered political parties (Unity for Democracy and Justice – UDJ, Blue Party and Arena). The EU Heads of Mission in Addis Ababa also deemed it necessary to release a local statement on 30 July expressing these concerns¹.

The EU will continue to follow the human rights situation in Ethiopia closely, especially with regard to the restrictions on political space and on the freedoms of speech, association and the press.

¹ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ethiopia/index_en.htm

As regards the court proceedings, rest assured that the EU Delegation will continue to monitor the, in close coordination with the EU Member States present in Addis Ababa.

We remain ready to raise our concerns directly with the Ethiopian authorities, including at the highest levels, and to react publicly whenever the situation should require such a step.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Ashton'.

Catherine Ashton