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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Office of the Prime Minister

25 December 2012

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

I refer to your letter of 17th December 2012. I welcome all efforts for a transparent and constructive dialogue with all partners, including with members of the European Parliament. I believe this is critical for mutual understanding and objective appreciation of the major progress made and the challenges we face in establishing a vibrant democratic system in Ethiopia.

Your letter has raised a case that has followed to the letter all legal procedures in Ethiopia.

Mr. Eskindir Nega was found guilty by a court of law for his involvement in a conspiracy to commit a crime of terrorism, as an accomplice to a clandestine terrorist organization. Mr. Eskindir Nega was not imprisoned for his activities as a journalist or for writing critical pieces against the Government. No one in Ethiopia can be deprived of his or her liberty for exercising the fundamental freedom of expression or for being a critic of the government. We are committed to ensuring that the Constitution of Ethiopia, as the supreme law of the land, is scrupulously respected by all individuals irrespective of their political persuasion or their profession.

We are committed to see that our laws are consistent with Ethiopia's international commitments. Accordingly, the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation is consistent with the Constitution of the country and Ethiopia's obligations under human rights treaties. This Proclamation was also drafted drawing from best practices of similar legislations of countries known to be democracies and implements Ethiopia's obligations under the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Ethiopia, during the leadership of my esteemed predecessor, H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, has made major strides in the advancement of human rights in the country. The Ethiopian Government is determined to build on his legacy and further entrench democratic institutions and good governance in Ethiopia.

I have taken the liberty of attaching herewith a detailed account of my Government's position on the matter.

I thank you all for your interest and partnership in supporting Ethiopia to achieve further results in democratization and good governance.

Please accept, Honorable Members of the European Parliament, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely

Hailemariam Dessalegn
Prime Minister

Hon. Anna Gomes
Brussels