

29 April 2016

Your reference: ML.N0108. MJ.14.04.16

Our reference: MIN/96481/2016



Foreign &
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Caroline Lucas MP
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Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 14 April to Hugo Swire about the Oromo people in Ethiopia. I am replying as the Minister for Africa.

I am deeply concerned about the handling of protests in Oromia and the reported number of deaths, including many students. I raised these concerns with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr Tedros at the African Union Summit in January, stressing the importance of authorities exercising restraint and addressing the root causes of the protests. The Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, raised the issue with Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on 21 January and our Ambassador did the same in a meeting on 26 April.

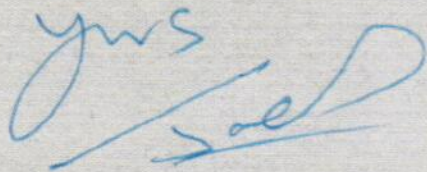
The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is currently undertaking an investigation into the allegations. Our Ambassador has stressed the need for transparency and that any members of the security forces who are found to have used excessive force be held to account.

We have also coordinated efforts with partners, including through support of an EU statement which made clear that only constructive dialogue among all affected parties would lead to a peaceful and sustainable resolution, and that all parties should refrain from recourse to violence and inflammatory statements.

As part of continual efforts to ensure an informed response, the Head of Africa Department (East and West) will meet Human Rights Watch in early May to discuss the ongoing situation in Oromia.

I share your concerns about Ethiopia's commitment to civil and political rights, including in relation to the use of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, Charities and Societies Proclamation, and other measures to restrict space for the opposition, media and civil society. We register these concerns with the Ethiopians at the highest levels to encourage the opening of political space and strengthening of

public debate. This would safeguard Ethiopia's considerable development achievements, to the benefit of all Ethiopians.



James Duddridge MP
Minister for Africa, the Overseas Territories, and the Caribbean