

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 10, 2023

Dear Secretary Blinken and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield,

We are writing to strongly urge the Department of State and United States Mission to the United Nations to protect the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) at the United Nations Human Rights Council, and to actively advocate with other Council members on its behalf. As you are aware, the Government of Ethiopia has threatened to present a resolution to terminate ICHREE's mandate at the upcoming HRC session.

We join [more than 60](#) civil society and human rights organizations in our strong opposition to this unprecedented move by the Ethiopian Government, and urge you to use the United States' voice, vote, and influence to protect ICHREE from premature termination, as well as to ensure that its mandate is renewed later this year.

The scale of the compounding and multifaceted tragedies in Ethiopia over the last few years is almost incomprehensible, and reports suggest that grave human rights abuses continue in parts of the country. The only way for Ethiopia to move forward as a free, democratic, pluralistic country is to have a truly comprehensive approach to transitional justice. The only way to achieve that is to have an honest and independent accounting of the systemic human rights violations that have been reported, not only in Tigray, but elsewhere in the country, including in Oromia, where conflicts continue. ICHREE is already doing this critical work, and we must allow them to finish.

The plain fact is that no domestic process in Ethiopia can be credible while the perpetrators of some of the most egregious abuses remain in power. All of Ethiopia's warring parties have been implicated in serious human rights abuses and atrocities. The federal government, its forces, and its allies have been implicated human rights violations that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Office and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, which preceded ICHREE, reported that "the seriousness of [the] allegations call for independent investigations and appropriate prosecutions of those responsible." That report contributed to the calls for the ICHREE's formation. The peace agreement in Tigray acknowledges the need for accountability and justice, so arguments that ICHREE is impeding the peace process ring especially hollow.

ICHREE's mandate is also comprehensive, and not limited solely to Tigray. As tensions continue in Oromia, Amhara, and other regions of Ethiopia, an independent commission with a remit to investigate human rights violations in their totality is a crucial component of a peaceful future for the country.

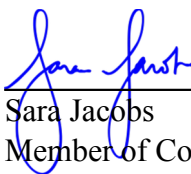
It is essential to our interests that Ethiopia recover its stability, and it is essential to our values that perpetrators of gross human rights violations are brought to justice. ICHREE is a critical element of both and as such should be a priority for the United States.

Sincerely,



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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



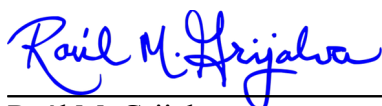
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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress