\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Abiy Ahmed Al

**Twitter/X: @AbiyAhmedAli
Email:** **info@pmo.gov.et**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Prime Minister,

**I am concerned by the ongoing arbitrary detention of journalists in Ethiopia since the state of emergency declaration.** Amongst them is Belay Manaye, co- founder and presenter of Ethio News, a YouTube based news channel, who was arrested on 13 November 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital, by a group of uniformed police officers and other security personnel dressed in civilian clothing. He has since been arbitrarily detained and has not received any information regarding the grounds for his detention. Nor has he been granted access to a lawyer or afforded the opportunity to appear in court for formal proceedings. While no official explanation has been given or charges pressed, it is believed that Belay Manaye has been targeted by the authorities in connection to his work as a journalist who has covered the conflict in the Amhara region.

Furthermore, Belay Manaye’s family have also said it has now been three months since they last visited him as the Awash Arba military camp where he was transferred to on 6 December 2023, 240 km away from his home. They are only able to contact him via phone, sometimes weeks apart and with the prison authorities present on the call. His family has also expressed concern for his health, following injuries he sustained when strong winds demolished the detention cells in the military camp where he is held. To date, he has still not received any medical attention for these injuries.

Unfortunately, this is not a standalone case. The Ethiopian authorities have used the state of emergency – in place since August 2023- to silence the press and peaceful dissent. The widespread detention of journalists constitutes a clear infringement upon their entitlement to freedom of expression and press freedom, as safeguarded by both regional and international human rights conventions, of which Ethiopia is a signatory. It is imperative for the Ethiopian authorities to abide by both national and international human rights obligations, respecting the right to freedom of expression, including media freedom.

**I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release Belay Manaye and the other arbitrarily detained journalists unless they are formally charged with an internationally recognisable offence. In the meantime, Belay Manaye must be detained in conditions that adhere to international standards, not subjected to torture or ill-treatment, and have immediate and regular access to his family, lawyers and all necessary health care.**

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Copie**

Ambassade de la République Fédérale et Démocratique d'Ethiopie, Rue de Moillebeau 56, Case postale 338, 1211 Genève 19

Fax: 022 919 70 29, E-mail: info@ethiopianmission.ch