

December 11, 2023

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh,**

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations  
315 E 46th Street New York, NY 10017, United States

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba,**

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, D.C.  
3522 International Ct NW #100, Washington, DC 20008, United States

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Fahad Saeed Al Raqban,**

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Ottawa, Ontario  
125 Boteler St, Ottawa, ON K1N 0A4, Canada

**Subject: Urgent Appeal to Halt UAE's Drone Supply in Ethiopian Crisis**

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned organizations, extend our heartfelt congratulations to the people and government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for successfully hosting the historic COP28UAE. The warm welcome extended to diplomatic attachés and ministerial representatives during this event exemplifies the hospitality and inclusiveness that the UAE is renowned for. The UAE's efforts in facilitating this global gathering in Dubai demonstrate its commitment to addressing critical global issues and fostering international collaboration.

However, it is with a heavy heart that we, collectively, express profound concerns regarding the violations of the International Convention on Human Rights by the Government of Ethiopia, specifically in connection with its use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) provided by the UAE. The Ethiopian diaspora community, rooted in appreciation for the friendship between our two peoples, is troubled by the potential implications of such actions.

Regrettably, Ethiopia has been ensnared in a protracted conflict characterized by active hostilities over the past five years spanning across multiple regions, with brief periods of ceasefires. In August of this year, the government of Ethiopia declared a total state of emergency on the entire Amhara region, suspending the constitution and imposing martial law. This suspension of constitutional rights has left civilians urgently vulnerable. The government has deployed security forces into the region with unchecked powers, allowing state-sponsored violence against Amhara civilians.

Access for journalists is restricted in the region, with the government enforcing a blackout on internet and telephone communications. Under the blackout, disturbing reports are surfacing, detailing extrajudicial killings, sexual violence against civilians, and instances of hunger being used as a weapon.

It is under these conditions that over 100 reported incidents of drone attacks were implicated in indiscriminate killings, including women, children, and the elderly in places of worship, farms, primary schools, and homes throughout the Amhara region. Such actions directly contravene the Geneva Convention's provisions, particularly Article 13.2 (Protocol II: Protection of the civilian population), which explicitly prohibits attacks on civilians and acts intended to spread terror among the civilian population.

Moreover, attacks on objects deemed indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs and agricultural areas, as well as on cultural and spiritual heritage sites, are violations of Articles 14 and 16 of the Convention. War crimes, including the destruction of ambulances and hospitals, coupled with the deprioritization of civilian institutions for military offensives, constitute further breaches of Articles 21 and 57.

Various global institutions and human rights watchdogs, such as the United Nations, the European Center for Law and Justice, and the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, have expressed deep concern about mass atrocities in Ethiopia, notably indiscriminate drone bombings targeting civilians in the Amhara region. In a statement released on November 17, The United Nations Human Rights Office spokesperson, Seif Magango, said that it is "troubled by the devastating impact of drone strikes and other violence on the population in the Amhara region."

Additionally, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to Secretary-General António Guterres, emphasized in a statement, "I want to draw particular attention to the continued presence of risk factors for genocide and related atrocity crimes in the country." The special adviser cited reports of entire families being killed and whole communities displaced.

In light of these grave concerns, we, the undersigned organizations, collectively urge the government of the United Arab Emirates to reassess its military ties with the Ethiopian government. The reported violations of international humanitarian law demand a reevaluation of support for a regime that stands accused of committing genocide against its own civilian population.

Additionally, we bring to your attention the sentiments expressed by the Ethiopian diaspora community. Over the years, our community has witnessed and appreciated the enduring relationship between the people of Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirate, marked by cultural exchanges and shared experiences. Ethiopians working in the UAE have contributed to the vibrant multicultural tapestry, and those who have visited have marveled at the remarkable advancements in science and culture.

It is our sincere hope that the United Arab Emirates, as a longstanding friend to the people of Ethiopia, will consider the sentiments expressed by our community seriously. We believe that the UAE can play a positive role in the promotion of peace, stability, and the protection of human rights in the region. We appreciate your attention to this matter and are hopeful that diplomatic efforts will contribute to a positive resolution.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to fostering positive relations between the people of UAE and Ethiopia.

Sincerely,

*Signatory organizations*

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**Signatory organizations:**

American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee ([AEPAC](#))

Ethiopian Canadian Network for Advocacy and Support ([ECNAS](#))

Ethiopian American Development Council ([EADC](#))

Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Network ([EPDN](#))

[etHub](#)

NY Tri-State Hope For Ethiopia (H4E)

