



7 August 2017

I am writing this open letter to provide an update to all those who have contacted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in recent months concerning the case of British national, Andargachew Tsege, currently detained in Ethiopia.

The British Government continues to take Mr Tsege's case very seriously and it remains a high priority for us. The UK strives to offer the finest consular support to British nationals overseas. This particular case is no different, and we continue to be committed to offering the best consular support to Mr Tsege and his family.

I have personally raised Mr Tsege's case on numerous occasions with the Ethiopian Government. In May the Prime Minister and I raised the case with Prime Minister Hailemariam and Foreign Minister Workneh during their visit to London. And our Ambassador continues to raise the case at the highest levels in the Ethiopian Government, most recently in July. The Ethiopian Government are in no doubt of UK concern over Mr Tsege and his welfare.

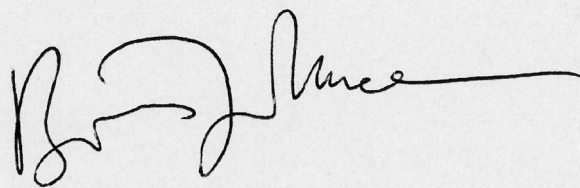
Our consular priorities continue to be Mr Tsege's wellbeing, his access to legal representation, and to ensure that the death sentence is not carried out. Britain does not interfere in the legal systems of other countries by challenging convictions, any more than we would accept interference in our judicial system. We do, however, lobby strongly and consistently against the application of the death penalty, and against the carrying out of such sentences when they are imposed.

Prime Minister Hailemariam committed to Mr Tsege having legal access and since my last open letter Mr Tsege has met with his lawyer to further discuss his case under Ethiopian law.

I am aware of requests that the UK Government should directly call for Mr Tsege's release or to otherwise penalise Ethiopia for their case handling by reducing our bilateral relations. However, neither calling for his release nor reducing our commitment to the Ethiopian people would be helpful at this stage. It could in fact damage the progress we have made in this case, including consular access to Mr Tsege.

Our Ambassador last visited Mr Tsege on 27 July to check on his welfare, discuss his legal access and pass on messages from his family. Mr Tsege was doing well and was in good spirits.

We are in close contact with Mr Tsege's family, and our Ambassador has also recently met with Mr Tsege's partner to discuss the complexity of this case. We continue to keep our approach to this case under review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP