



**International
Federation
of Journalists**

JIM BOUMELHA
President

BETH COSTA
General Secretary

July 23, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

I write on behalf of the International Federation of Journalists to acknowledge and appreciate the pressure generated by your visit next weekend to Eastern Africa which forced the Ethiopian government to release six journalists and bloggers, some jailed since June 2011.

The IFJ estimates that a dozen journalists and bloggers still remain in jail, including four bloggers who worked for the independent Ethiopian collective Zone 9. If this is to be more than a token gesture to clean up Ethiopia's image ahead of your visit, Ethiopia must release all its imprisoned journalists and bloggers.

We respectfully urge you to press the Ethiopian president to order their immediate and unconditional release.

Among the released journalists are Reyot Alemu, a columnist on the now-closed national weekly *Fitih*; Asmamaw Hailegiorgis, editor of *Addis Guday*; Edom Kasaye, who used to work for *Addis Zemen*; Tesfalem Waldyes of *Addis Standard* – all charged and convicted with incitement to terrorism.

Ethiopian journalists are working in a highly restrictive media environment and are being frequently attacked with impunity.

On behalf of its 130 member unions of journalists worldwide, the IFJ has been campaigning, for many years, to stop Ethiopia using its Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, since its introduction in 2009, to silence dissenting voices, prosecute independent journalists and force publications to close.

We hope, President, that you will add your voice to insist that more be done to ensure that journalists are able to do their jobs without fear of reprisal or censorship.

We thank you for your help and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim Boumelha", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a long, thin, slightly curved horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Jim Boumelha
President
International Federation of Journalists