



## Australian Government

### Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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14 September 2016

Ms Elaine Pearson  
Australia Director  
Human Rights Watch  
PO Box 4278  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Pearson

Thank you for your letter of 2 September 2016 regarding the visit of a high-level delegation from the Ethiopian House of Federation in June 2016, and for the information provided on alleged action by the Ethiopian Government against the relatives of your contacts who conducted protests in Melbourne against the delegation (including your email of 29 July 2016).

All non-citizens wishing to enter Australia are assessed against relevant public interest criteria, including foreign policy interest, national security and character requirements in accordance with relevant legislation [such as *The Migration Act 1958* (the Act) and *The Migration Regulations 1994* (the Regulations)]. This includes foreign officials with potential character concerns or subject to allegations of human rights abuses. Such cases involve consultation among relevant Australian Government agencies and, as appropriate, Ministers.

There are provisions in the Act and Regulations that enable the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection (or his/her delegates) to refuse or cancel a visa, including upon advice from the Minister for Foreign Affairs or his/her delegates. This is a discretionary process in which a range of factors, including those relating to the above criteria, are balanced. Australia's privacy laws prevent us from discussing individual visa application cases.

The Department met the twelve members of the delegation from the House of Federation, including Abdi Iley, on 8 June. Mohamed Shukri Nuur was not in the delegation. Abdi Iley has visited previously. Both visits were instigated and funded by the Ethiopian Government. The 2012 delegation did not visit Canberra.

The Australian Government makes human rights representations in Ethiopia on an ongoing basis as the situation warrants. We intend to raise recent events of concern with the Ethiopian Government.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Innes-Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marc Innes-Brown  
First Assistant Secretary  
Middle East and Africa Division