

Open Letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney

Date: May 11, 2026
SENT BY MAIL AND EMAIL

To: The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada

From: We, The Undersigned People of Canada

Dear Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada:

We are deeply concerned the Government of Canada is making diplomatic overtures to the brutal Eritrean dictatorship of Isaias Afwerki, while ignoring the country's human rights abuses.

The United Nations has called on the international community to: "Ensure that human rights issues remain at the core of all engagement with Eritrea. . ."

But according to a recent story in the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's high commissioner to Kenya, Joshua Tabah, travelled to Eritrea in mid-April "to put Canada-Eritrea relations on a more solid footing and to look for mutually beneficial partnerships."

Mr. Tabah said he had extensive discussion with Eritrean Foreign Affairs Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed. On a social media post, Mr. Tabah noted the interests of Canada and Eritrea were "aligned" on some issues, including a shared commitment to "sovereignty and territorial integrity."

What does that even mean?

How are Canadian interests aligned with a country whose human rights abuses (including forced disappearance, torture and arbitrary detention) have caused one-third of its population to flee?

How are Canadian interests aligned with a country that has not allowed elections in more than 30 years? Or freedom of expression? Or the right to peaceful assembly?

How are Canadian interests aligned with a country with forced military conscription (including children), indefinite military service and rampant sexual and gender-based violence?

We, the undersigned, fully support diplomatic efforts. But in keeping with the recommendation of UN Human Rights Council, we believe human rights issues must remain at the core of all engagement with Eritrea.

We are writing to urge the Canadian government to engage with Eritrean officials to:

- Exert maximum pressure on the dictatorship to end its policy of torture, enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention of political opponents, journalists, people of faith and community leaders.
- Free the more than 10,000 people detained without trial in Eritrean prisons, including politicians, journalists, religious and community leaders.
- Pressure the Eritrean government to hold free and fair country-wide elections.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nancy Allan, Global Citizen Award
Recipient, Saskatoon

Devon Anderson/ Phil Johnson, Regina

Shelly Balbar, Saskatoon

Rev. Dr. Sandra Beardsall, Saskatoon

Jane Bickis, Saskatoon

Carla Burke, Saskatoon

Rev. Deacon Dr. William Crosby, Saskatoon

Dawit Debena, Saskatoon

Sr. Darlene De Mong, Saskatoon

Paul Denham, Saskatoon

Ebtsam Elsheikh, Saskatoon

Shirley Fredeen, Saskatoon

Tigisty Glaizghi, Vancouver

L.J. Holden, Saskatoon

Bernadette Holder, Saskatoon

Thelma Howard, Global Citizen Award
Recipient, Saskatoon

Yasin Osman Ibrahim, Toronto

Nessa Jalali, Saskatoon

Aina Kagis, Regina

Antonet Tonya Kaye, Saskatoon

Bokre Keleta, Toronto

Fortuna Keleta, Vancouver

Saba Keleta, Saskatoon

Mildred Kerr, 2025 Citizen of the Year
Award, Saskatoon

Fisseha Kiros, Scarborough

Rev. Heather Kleiner, Global Citizen Award
Recipient, Saskatoon

Don Kossick, C.M and Global Citizen Award
Recipient, Saskatoon

Denise Kouri, Global Citizen Award
Recipient, Saskatoon

Gwen Lancaster, Saskatoon

Jackie Marshall, Saskatoon

Rita McLeod, Saskatoon

Maureen McPherson, Women's Hall of
Fame Award, Saskatoon

Mesmer Mesmer, Saskatoon

Darien Moore, Saskatoon

Gayle Nemeth, Saskatoon

Renee Nunan-Rappard, Lanigan

Dr. Lynn Oliphant, RM of Aberdeen, Sk.

Tim Quigley/ Deb Hopkins, Saskatoon

Rev. Vicki Obedkoff, Saskatoon

Rohi Rasa/ Mojeeb Bari, Saskatoon

Maria Reha, Saskatoon

Linda Rudachyk, Rosthern

Ahmed and Malaz Saeed, Saskatoon

Nawal Salma, Saskatoon

Virginia Scissons, Saskatoon

Rhonda Shewfelt, RM of Aberdeen

Elizabeth Smillie, Saskatoon

Mary Smillie, Bladworth

Ruth Smillie, S.O.M., Regina

Yohannes Solomon, Vancouver

Stephanie Sydiaha, Saskatoon

Brot Tekle, London

Fnan Tewelde, Saskatoon

Gherezghiher Tewelde, Saskatoon

Linda Tweddell, Saskatoon

Lois Wakeman, Saskatoon

Dr. Ailsa M. Watkinson, Saskatoon

Dr. Judy White, Saskatoon

Tekie Woldemariam, London

c.c. The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs

High Commissioner Joshua Tabah