

DRAFT

March 19, 2019 – Rahel' Remark

My name is Rahel Desalegne. I am the current representative and committee member of the Madison – Bahir Dar Sister Cities.

It was at around 5 am on March 9 that I first heard about of the ill-fated Ethiopian Airlines plane crash through a group text. After the initial shock and disbelief, I started calling to relatives in Ethiopia who were Nairobi, Kenya bound and found out they had flown to Nairobi just two days earlier. It was sigh of relief to hear they were safe. However, the crash was too close to home and the sorrow I felt was deep and personal. I find out daily that family or friends I know, knew someone who were the victims. Such was how I came to find out that the four (4) Ethiopian passengers had Madison connections. They were humanitarian relief staff with the non-profit organization Catholic Relief Services, whom some University of Wisconsin-Madison staff and volunteers across Wisconsin knew them personally. Their names: Sara Chalachew, Getnet Alemayehu, Sintayehu Aymeku, and Mulusew Alemu were humanitarians, and they and all the many lives lost will be greatly missed by their families, colleagues and friends.

On behalf of the Madison-Bahir-Dar Sister Cities Committee and the Ethiopian community here in Madison, I wish to express my heartfelt thank you to Mayor Soglin, Alderman Samba, all council members, and my colleague Charles for your expression of sympathies and care during this time of National tragedy and grief that has touched the international community around the world.

Thank you.