



FROM THE DESK OF
INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF
OF THE ETHIOPIAN WORLD FEDERATION, INCORPORATED
DONAH SANDFORD

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF NON-AFFILIATION AND DEMAND FOR WRITTEN ASSURANCES

DATE	July 26, 2026
TO	Professor Evelyn Welch, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Bristol
COPY TO	Michael Flay, Director of Governance and University Secretary; University Secretary's Office; Dr Joanna Burch-Brown; New York State Attorney General, Charities Bureau; New York State Attorney General, Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau; Federal Trade Commission; FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center; Internal Revenue Service
ADDRESS	University of Bristol, Beacon House, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1QU, United Kingdom
SUBJECT	EWF name, identity, claimed affiliation, and fundraising connected with Lalibela Legacy Tours / Bridging Histories / Seven Olives project

Dear Professor Welch:

I write in my official capacity as International Executive President of The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated (the "EWF"), an American membership corporation established in New York in 1937, with its International Executive Headquarters at 105 West 125th Street, Suite 1095, New York, NY 10027-4444.

This letter gives formal notice that EWF has not authorized the University of Bristol, any University-affiliated centre or project, Bridging Histories CIC, Lalibela Legacy Tours, the Seven Olives project, any Rastafari cultural centre or organization, or any person acting through them to use EWF's name, history, goodwill, membership, local structure, insignia, or claimed relationship for fundraising, sponsorship, contracting, publicity, research representation, or any other commercial or charitable purpose.

Documents reviewed and the reason for this notice

EWF reviewed a 56-page document titled "Renovating the Seven Olives Hotel & Haile Selassie I Museum, Lalibela, Ethiopia," dated December 24, 2025. The document identifies Dr Joanna

Burch-Brown as a University of Bristol Senior Lecturer and CEO of Bridging Histories, identifies Eyayaw Baye as a “Bridging Histories Ambassador” associated with Lalibela Legacy Tours, states that agreements were signed to initiate fundraising, describes work as “based out of University of Bristol,” and seeks sponsors and research funding. Photographs are captioned as agreement signings with Ethiopian Orthodox clergy. The brief does not itself name EWF. Our concern is that Mr Baye’s separate EWF Local 2 relationship may be used, expressly or by implication, to create a false impression that EWF endorses, participates in, or benefits from this work.

For clarity, Lalibela Legacy Tours is Mr Baye’s separate company or venture. It is not EWF, is not an EWF project, and has no authority to bind EWF. The entity recognized within EWF’s Local 2 structure is “Lalibela Area Humanitarian Clarity, EWF Local 2.” Any membership, title, or Local 2 relationship held by Mr Baye does not create agency, apparent authority, a joint venture, partnership, sponsorship, or permission to use EWF’s identity. EWF does not consent to, adopt, ratify, or accept responsibility for any agreement Mr Baye may have signed for Lalibela Legacy Tours or any other separate enterprise.

EWF also requests disclosure concerning Francis Odokonyero, President of EWF Local 4. At present, EWF Headquarters does not know whether Mr Odokonyero, EWF Local 4, or any company, foundation, project, or account associated with him has solicited, received, controlled, transferred, managed, or been promised money, grants, sponsorship, travel support, or other financial benefit from the University of Bristol, Bridging Histories, Lalibela Legacy Tours, the Seven Olives project, or persons acting for them. This statement raises a question for verification and does not allege that Mr Odokonyero has collected or misused funds.

EWF’s American legal and constitutional identity

EWF was incorporated under New York law as The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated. Its Articles of Incorporation establish a New York principal office, require U.S.-citizen participation in its founding governance, and state among its corporate purposes:

“To encourage its members to develop interest and pride in American institutions, to promote American principles and ideals, and to further those objectives of the American Republic.”

EWF’s historical relationship with Ethiopia does not convert EWF into a Rastafari organization, does not place EWF under any foreign university, religious body, tour company, cultural centre, or outside network, and does not authorize others to represent EWF’s international membership. Any statement suggesting that EWF Headquarters is affiliated with the University of Bristol, a University-associated “Rastafari Culture Centre,” the University of the West Indies, Lalibela Legacy Tours, Bridging Histories, or another Rastafari organization is false unless supported by a written instrument duly authorized by EWF’s International Executive Council. No such authorization exists for the matters addressed here.

Legal notice concerning unauthorized name use and fundraising

If EWF's name or identity is used in fundraising, advertising, donor communications, sponsorship proposals, websites, grant applications, agreements, or public statements in or affecting United States commerce, such conduct may implicate, among other law:

- 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a)(1)(A) (Lanham Act), which provides a civil remedy for a false or misleading representation likely to cause confusion about affiliation, connection, association, sponsorship, or approval. This notice is not a representation that EWF presently holds a federal trademark registration; Section 1125(a) can apply to qualifying unregistered designations.
- New York General Business Law § 349, which prohibits unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices in business, trade, commerce, or services in New York and permits public enforcement and, for an injured person, specified private relief.
- Other potentially applicable claims or remedies, depending on proven facts, may include New York common-law unfair competition, false endorsement, misappropriation, tortious interference, accounting, restitution, and injunctive relief. EWF expressly reserves all rights and remedies.

Because the materials concern UK-based activity, EWF also asks the University to have its UK counsel assess any fundraising or representation under applicable UK law, including the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 provisions governing misleading commercial practices and, only where the required elements are present, the Fraud Act 2006. EWF does not allege criminal liability in this notice; it requests immediate verification and prevention of misleading affiliation.

Required action and requested written response

Please take the following steps immediately and respond in writing within ten (10) business days after receipt:

- Confirm whether the University of Bristol, any University school, centre, programme, employee, account, brand, facility, email system, grant office, or fundraising channel has sponsored, approved, hosted, administered, publicized, or received funds for the Seven Olives project, Bridging Histories, or Lalibela Legacy Tours.
- Confirm whether any communication, proposal, agreement, donor solicitation, grant application, webpage, social-media post, presentation, or event has used or referred to EWF, "The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated," EWF Headquarters, EWF Local 2, EWF Local 4, Francis Odokonyero, or EWF's history, seal, logo, officers, membership, or relationship with Ethiopia.
- State whether Francis Odokonyero, EWF Local 4, or any entity, project, foundation, company, or account associated with him has solicited, received, controlled, transferred, managed, or been promised any money, grant, sponsorship, travel support, in-kind contribution, or other financial benefit connected with the University of Bristol, Bridging Histories, Lalibela Legacy Tours, or the Seven Olives project. If so,

provide the dates, purposes, amounts, sources, recipients, destination accounts, agreements, approvals, and present disposition of those funds or benefits.

- If any such use occurred, stop it immediately; remove or correct the material; notify every recipient or donor that EWF is not affiliated; suspend the affected fundraising pending review; and provide EWF with copies, dates, distribution lists, platforms, amounts solicited, amounts received, current balances, recipients, and transfer records.
- Direct Dr Joanna Burch-Brown, Bridging Histories personnel using University resources, and any relevant University-associated Rastafari cultural programme or centre not to represent or imply EWF affiliation without prior written authorization signed by EWF's International Executive President and duly approved through EWF governance.
- Confirm that no document signed by Eyayaw Baye, Francis Odokonyero, Lalibela Legacy Tours, Bridging Histories, clergy, or any third party binds EWF or will be presented as evidence of EWF's consent.
- Preserve all potentially relevant documents and electronically stored information, including emails, messages, agreements, drafts, donation pages, grant records, financial records, photographs, event materials, and communications involving Eyayaw Baye, Francis Odokonyero, Lalibela Legacy Tours, Bridging Histories, Seven Olives, Haile Selassie I Museum, EWF, EWF Local 2, or EWF Local 4.

If your review confirms that EWF has never been named, referenced, or used and that no EWF-related money has been solicited or received, a concise written confirmation will resolve the principal concern. If the University believes any EWF authorization exists, please provide a complete copy and identify the EWF officer and governing-body action on which the University relies.

No hostility toward independent cultural or humanitarian work

EWF does not object to lawful independent cultural, educational, religious, tourism, or humanitarian work. Our objection is to any unauthorized use of EWF's legal identity or any statement that confuses independent activity with the authority, endorsement, governance, or international membership of EWF Headquarters. This notice is intended to protect donors, the University, the public, and EWF's members by ensuring accurate disclosure.

Please direct the University's written response and all supporting records to ewf@theethiopianworldfederation.org and to the Headquarters address above. Nothing in this letter waives any EWF right, claim, objection, privilege, or remedy, all of which are expressly reserved.

Respectfully,

Donah Sandford
International Executive President

The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated

ewf@theethiopianworldfederation.org | (929) 483-3778

Enclosures: Exhibit A - EWF Articles of Incorporation; Exhibit B - Creative Brief, “Renovating the Seven Olives Hotel & Haile Selassie I Museum,” dated December 24, 2025.

Source and authority notes

1. The quoted corporate purpose is transcribed from the EWF Articles of Incorporation supplied as Exhibit A. The scan should be attached to the sent letter as the controlling source.
2. Creative Brief, “Renovating the Seven Olives Hotel & Haile Selassie I Museum,” dated December 24, 2025, especially pp. 48-49 and 54-56.
3. 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a): <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=15+usc+1125>
4. New York General Business Law § 349: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/GBS/349>
5. Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/13>
6. Fraud Act 2006, §§ 1-2: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/35/sections/1-2>
7. University of Bristol, Vice-Chancellor and President: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/executive/vc-president/>
8. University of Bristol, University Secretary’s Office: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/>
9. University of Bristol profile for Dr Joanna Burch-Brown: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/people/person/Joanna-Burch-Brown-9102d59e-0790-46bf-98da-ed774c2f5419/>