



An Open Letter to all Members of Congress

7th July 2021

All Honorable Members of Congress
United States Congress
Washington, D.C.

Dear Representatives,

On behalf of the board of the American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee, the undersigned thirteen partner organizations and the 100,000 members of the American-Ethiopian diaspora we collectively represent, we write to express our concern in regard to the United States' position following the recent general election in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian diaspora in the United States is a million strong, we live in your constituencies. America is our home and we want our representatives to help strengthen the century old diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

The poll on Monday 21st June was the freest election in Ethiopia's history. It was the first general election since 2015 and the first-time multi-parties have stood since 2005. In total, 20 political parties fielded candidates, with encouraging scenes of rallies, street campaigning and TV debates in which opposition parties were allowed to engage for the first time ever.

It was an historic day for Ethiopians everywhere and a critical milestone in the country's journey to a truly representative democracy.

It was an immense effort by all involved to ensure the election went ahead despite significant challenges. Security and logistical issues meant voting in 64 out of the 673 parliamentary constituencies have been postponed to September to protect the integrity of the poll, with 38 constituencies in Tigray postponed indefinitely.

The election has been praised by international observers, the African Union Election Observation Mission stated:

"The Mission concludes that despite some operational, logistical, security, political and COVID-19 related challenges, overall, the pre-election and Election Day processes were conducted in an orderly, peaceful and credible manner. There was nothing, in the Mission's estimation, that distracted from the credible conduct of the elections."

The result is due shortly but, whatever the outcome, it is our sincere belief the moment is an opportunity to reflect on the country's positive democratic journey. We would encourage the United States to acknowledge the conclusions of the international observers and praise the hard

work of the National Election Board, political parties, candidates, observers, the Government for successfully holding a free and fair election, and most of all the voters who turned out in their millions to exercise their democratic right.

Furthermore, we request the United States renews efforts to engage with the Government of Ethiopia in a constructive manner to help bring about a solution to the ongoing conflict in Tigray, address the humanitarian crisis and bring to justice all those who have committed atrocities.

The current rhetoric of condemnation and punitive measures such as visa restrictions only serve to weaken US-Ethiopian relations and negatively impact all Ethiopians.

There is now an urgent need for international pressure on the TPLF for unconditional acceptance of the ceasefire. The TPLF's rejection of the ceasefire will only accelerate the humanitarian crises affecting the most vulnerable citizens in the region. It is time the group received intense scrutiny for its actions.

Ending the conflict is essential and will allow US-Ethiopia relations to refocus on areas of common interest, such as security in the Horn of Africa, tackling the climate emergency and boosting trade.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Mesfin Tegenu
Chairman
AEPAC

- We Can
- New York Tristate GERD Support
- Ethio-Canadian Network for Advocacy and Support
- Global Ethiopia Advocacy Nexus
- Global Ethiopian Diaspora Society
- Ethiopian American Civic Council
- Ethiopian Dialogue Forum
- Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians
- Bridge Generation
- EAN
- EDTF
- Advocates for Ethiopia
- Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Network