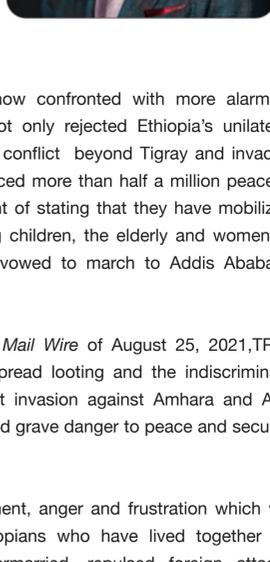


NEWSLETTER

September 2021, Vol 1 No.4

"In my last month's message I applauded Ethiopia's Federal Government unilateral declaration of ceasefire as a positive step forward. I noted "... the ceasefire will create the right preconditions for access to humanitarian aid in Tigray, help farmers to continue their farming activities by taking advantage of the current rainy season, and allow combatants to look for alternative options to war - which is a peaceful resolution to this conflict."



Contrary to my expectation, we are now confronted with more alarming situation in Northern Ethiopia. TPLF, not only rejected Ethiopia's unilateral ceasefire but instead has expanded the conflict beyond Tigray and invaded the Afar and Amhara regions and displaced more than half a million peaceful citizens. TPLF leaders went to the extent of stating that they have mobilized the whole population in Tigray including children, the elderly and women to invade their neighbouring regions and vowed to march to Addis Ababa if necessary.

According to a reliable report by *Daily Mail Wire* of August 25, 2021, TPLF forces were blamed for "killings, widespread looting and the indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas." TPLF flagrant invasion against Amhara and Afar regions has heightened tension and posed grave danger to peace and security in the region.

The TPLF attacks have created resentment, anger and frustration which will lead to a durable legacy among Ethiopians who have lived together for millennia- peacefully intermingled, intermarried, repulsed foreign attacks together for centuries and have built and protected their common home called Ethiopia.

TPLF officials should understand that this madness will be history one day as so many challenges the Ethiopian people faced before. However, history will harshly judge those who are bent on pitting one community against the other for their political objectives.

More than enough damage is already done. We ask that TPLF fighters leave the Amhara and Afar regions alone and give the chance to our Tigrayan brothers and sisters who are threatened with famine to work for peace, reconciliation, and development.

Give peace a chance sooner rather than later. Failing that, better late than never, as the saying goes!

Thank you! God bless the peoples of the United States and Ethiopia.

Sincerely,

Mesfin Tegenu, AEPAC Chairman

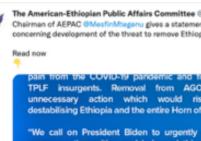
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AEPAC ACTIVITY UPDATE

AEPAC has developed an Election Campaign Strategy for mid-term election of 2022: Consistent with its bylaws that stipulates inter alia "... support the national political parties and their House and Senate campaigns in connection with issues important to AEPAC", AEPAC Board has charted out a strategic plan to conduct and manage a mid-term election of 2022. As a way forward, AEPAC will hold consultations with its partners, supporters, volunteers, and members of the Ethio-American on its implementation.

AEPAC, Partners and Mercury Continues Engagement with Congress Members



Over the past month AEPAC and Mercury have been working together to continue our engagement with Congress Members. This is a vital part of our work to prioritise AGOA funding for Ethiopia, tackle TPLF's aggressions, and fight for environmental agenda in Ethiopia.

Media Work

Over July and August our PR campaign has seen us break through a number of barriers. We secured the first tier-one coverage with a letter to the editor in the Financial Times. We landed a quote in an AP article, and broke into the Foreign Policy journals.

The media 'war room' was used effectively to brief journalists on the child soldiers' issue and as the TPLF began an offensive in neighbouring provinces. This activity ensured outlets where both made aware of the situation on the ground and had a clear steer of AEPAC's position.

We have seen a more dramatic change in the media narrative over the past two months. There is no question the media are now switching focus away from the Government and on to the TPLF. We are seeing this in the language used and also the questions we are being asked. There is no better example than the recent Daily Telegraph piece: ['They are out for revenge': Evidence of war crimes as rebels roar out of Ethiopia's Tigray region \(telegraph.co.uk\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2021/08/24/they-are-out-for-revenge-evidence-war-crimes-as-rebels-roar-out-of-ethiopia-tigray-region/).

Our media distribution list continues to develop and is now well over 200 journalists.

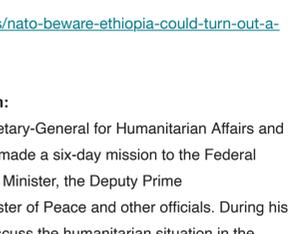
Our most notable successes include:

- A Letter to the Editor in the Financial Times.
- An op-ed with Euronews Green, focused on the importance of stability to continue Ethiopia's efforts tackling climate change.
- An op-ed from Dr Kassa on Foreign Policy News.
- A quote from Professor Alemayehu Demissie in an AP article.
- An op-ed with Artnet, focused on the risk to Lalibela's religious sites.
- Interviews set up for Professor Ann Fitz-Gerald with Reuters, NPR and PBS.
- Pursuing several regional op-eds awaiting placement.

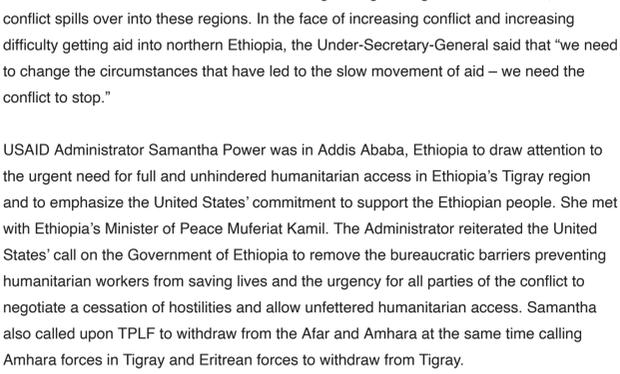
Digital Update

We have gone from strength to strength with our development of digital channels, having gained over 1000 followers in the past month.

Mercury has continued to produce engaging content aimed at increasing awareness about AEPAC and promoting its priority messaging to target audiences. In the last 30 days, AEPAC content on Twitter has appeared in newsfeeds 376K times, a 40.7% increase compared with the previous 30-day period. 6.5K likes, comments, shares and link clicks were generated in this time – which is a high engagement volume for an account with 2.8K followers. Content including open letters, impactful videos and graphics have driven high engagement. High profile accounts such as the Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and influential journalists started following the account and engaging in content.



NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



In recent weeks it has become apparent that the TPLF insurgency has kidnapped children and forced them to fight in a blatant violation of international law and human rights. AEPAC has written to a Secretary of State Blinken and has been aggressively trying to highlight this travesty in the world's media. But we now need your help. Please watch the video above and then contact your elected officials. The TPLF cannot be allowed to get away with this. The more we can get this issue in front of your representatives, the better chance we have of ensuring the US and the international community acts to protect Ethiopian children.

The TPLF takes the crisis to Amhara and Afar Regions

Despite the unilateral ceasefire implemented by the Ethiopian Government, TPLF continued its aggressive move by taking the offensive to neighboring regions of Afar and Amhara. In response to this act of aggression, the Ethiopian government's defensive stance moved to an offensive by taking measures against TPLF forces to leave the pockets of places they have attacked in the two regions. The government and regions mobilized the people and their respective special forces and militias to protect the peace and national integrity of the country. This new TPLF venture has resulted in more people being displaced, property lost and violations of human rights such as lootings, killings and rapes. The most blatant act is the attack on Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage site home to some of the greatest cultural, historical and religious treasures not just in Ethiopia and Africa, but in the world. By leaving their own region, TPLF insurgents have needlessly brought war to this holy place. The only way to avoid any damage to Lalibela is for the TPLF to immediately withdraw and agree to a ceasefire.

It is reported that TPLF wreaked havoc at shelter for displaced persons in a village which looked like a revenge attack on civilian people. The UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore stated "UNICEF is extremely alarmed by the reported killing of over 200 people, including more than 100 children, in attacks on displaced families sheltering at a health facility and a school in Afar region on Thursday, 5 August. Crucial food supplies were also reportedly destroyed in an area that is already seeing emergency levels of malnutrition and food insecurity".

The soul-searching question in this latest bravado by TPLF is the silence of the international media in making statements and demanding investigations. The double standard and unethical position of the international media and US and European governments is hard to fathom.

PM Abiy visits Turkey

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed paid an official visit to Turkey at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.. This visit holds additional significance as it marks the 125th year of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations between Turkey and Ethiopia.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan backs a peaceful resolution to Ethiopia's Tigray conflict, which has displaced tens of thousands and left millions hungry. He also says Turkey is willing to mediate between Ethiopia and Sudan to resolve a separate border dispute. Erdogan told visiting Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Wednesday that the war-hit country's "peace and integrity is important to us". Abiy said the two countries' relationship was built on "mutual respect and trust". Erdogan and Abiy oversaw the signing of water, military and other economic agreements, including a military financial cooperation deal. Erdogan, who hosted General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, chairman of the Sovereignty Council of Sudan, in Ankara a week earlier, also said Turkey was prepared to contribute toward a peaceful resolution of a dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan over the al-Fashaga region.

NATO Beware, Ethiopia could turn out a Big Policy Blunder for Biden

Professor Ann Fitz-Gerald says "More disturbing than the images of desperate people in Kabul scrambling to flee from Afghanistan is the realisation that the United States may not have learnt from experience and could bring havoc to another global region."

She added, "Addis Ababa's unilateral ceasefire in June came as a result of both international pressure and the potential risk of civilian casualties. The international community appealed to the Abiy Administration to give the region a chance to work with aid workers without a federal military or interim political presence."

Peace loving Ethiopians, Ethiopians in the diaspora and international community members who are tired of seeing and hearing horror acts of belligerence, which unfortunately is being intentionally or unintentionally being fanned by outside forces who fantasize moral superiority as a cover to their covert or overt machinations.

Read more... <https://nation.africa/kenya/blogs-opinion/blogs/nato-beware-ethiopia-could-turn-out-a-big-policy-blunder-for-biden-3522208>

High profile visits to Ethiopia and the Region:

In early August, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, made a six-day mission to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and met Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Peace and other officials. During his meetings, Mr. Griffiths had the opportunity to discuss the humanitarian situation in the country and the challenges aid organizations face in getting assistance to Ethiopians. Mr. Griffiths also spent two days in the Tigray region, where he saw first-hand the dire humanitarian situation, meeting with civilians whose lives had been upended by the conflict. Humanitarian needs are also increasing in neighboring Amhara and Afar, as the conflict spills over into these regions. In the face of increasing conflict and increasing difficulty getting aid into northern Ethiopia, the Under-Secretary-General said that "we need to change the circumstances that have led to the slow movement of aid – we need the conflict to stop."

USAID Administrator Samantha Power was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to draw attention to the urgent need for full and unhindered humanitarian access in Ethiopia's Tigray region and to emphasize the United States' commitment to support the Ethiopian people. She met with Ethiopia's Minister of Peace Muferiat Kamil. The Administrator reiterated the United States' call on the Government of Ethiopia to remove the bureaucratic barriers preventing humanitarian workers from saving lives and the urgency for all parties of the conflict to negotiate a cessation of hostilities and allow unfettered humanitarian access. Samantha also called upon TPLF to withdraw from the Afar and Amhara at the same time calling Amhara forces in Tigray and Eritrean forces to withdraw from Tigray.

President Biden's special envoy to the HOA Mr. Jeff Feltman's mission follows a trip earlier this month to Addis Ababa by US aid chief Samantha Power, who pushed all sides to end hostilities and warned of an impending "humanitarian catastrophe" if more aid cannot enter. Mr. Jeffery Feltman who had visited Eritrea, Djibouti and t Dubai on this trip met the deputy PM and Foreign minister Demeke Mekonnen . The DPM told the envoy that " The invading force [TPLF] is currently carrying out open invasions, looting and killings in the Afar and Amhara regions. Feltman stated that " The U.S. Government perfectly understands the views of the people of Ethiopia on the TPLF."

Feltman's statement lacks honesty and balance, as it is so obvious that TPLF is attacking two neighboring regions of the country, displacing and killing civilians, destroying property and disrupting humanitarian assistance and all he has to say is - " *The U.S. Government perfectly understands the views of the people of Ethiopia on the TPLF.*"

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Archdioceses Letter to US Secretary of State

Ten Archbishops of the North American Dioceses of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church wrote a letter to US Secretary of State Blinken requesting US Government to take informed, balanced and responsible measures to avert further loss of life, suffering and destruction of property. The Archbishops expressed their deep concern that the U.S. administration has not stern measures to date.

Their appeal included:

- Support in condemning all barbaric attacks that claim the lives of innocent civilians irrespective of their ethnicity or religious beliefs.
- Strongly condemning the use of child soldiers by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), as image reported by New York Times photojournalist Finbarr O'Reilly on July 2, 2021. This is an international war crime, and the TPLF leadership should face condemnation and sanctions.
- condemning the Sudanese military forceful occupation of Ethiopian territory and to call on Sudan to withdraw all its forces and solve any border issues legally and peacefully.
- Take nonpartisan and neutral position on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issue so that negotiations can lead to win-win solutions
- Not cause severe economic pain for hundreds and thousands of families in Ethiopia by considering to withdraw Ethiopia from AGOA which would also be devastating for Ethiopia-U.S. historical relations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Follow

To keep up to date with AEPAC's work, please follow us on Twitter, and Facebook for regular updates.

Share

Want to help push the voice of American-Ethiopians to the audiences who matter? Then please share these Tweets so that AEPAC's message is seen by more people across social media:

[AEPAC Mission Video](#)

[Open letter to Members of Congress](#)

[Oped in Foreign Policy News](#)

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