



በየኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የሰሜን አሜሪካ አህጉረ ስብከት ማዕከል ጽ/ቤት
THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH ARCHDIOCESES HEADQUARTER
MAIN OFFICE IN NORTHERN AMERICA

"በእርሱ የሚያምን ሁሉ የዘላለም ሕይወት እንዲኖረው እንጂ እንዳይጠፋ እግዚአብሔር አንድያ ልጁን እስኪሰጥ ድረስ ዓለሙን እንዲሁ ወድሏል።" (ዮሐ3:16)

ቀን: 19/09/2013 ዓ.ም

Date: 06/26/2021

ቁጥር: ሰካነአሀ/01/13

12th August 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State

2201 C Street NW

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary of State,

First and foremost, we would like to take this opportunity to offer our greetings to you in our capacity as the Archbishops of the North American Dioceses of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. We are honored to write this letter to voice our concerns regarding the position of the United States on the ongoing situation in Ethiopia.

As you are aware, Ethiopia has experienced heightened ethnic and religious violence over the past three decades. We are as much troubled by the occurrence of such heinous acts of violence across our country as you are. We want to seize this moment to seek your support in condemning all barbaric attacks that claim the lives of innocent civilians irrespective of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. Please join us in urging all actors, both at home and abroad, to stop funding and supporting those who orchestrate these malicious attacks.



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There has been widespread coverage of the use of child soldiers by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), including images taken by the 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. It is deeply concerning that the U.S. administration has not taken such actions to date. Without international pressure, innocent Ethiopian children will continue to be subjected to violence and war.

On another account, by taking advantage of the recent internal conflict, the Sudanese military has forcefully occupied Ethiopian territories and is shooting sporadically at innocent and unarmed Ethiopians. The brotherly peoples of Ethiopia and Sudan have lived peacefully for thousands of years. What is done by the Sudanese forces inside the territory of Ethiopia is totally unacceptable. Sudan is also being used as a staging board by anti-Ethiopia forces which will broaden the conflict. We, therefore, implore the United States to stand with Ethiopia in condemning the transgression and to call on Sudan to withdraw all its forces and solve any border issues peacefully. If not now, then when? We also acknowledge that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issue is critical to all the parties involved. We firmly believe that the only way any outstanding issue can optimally be solved is through negotiation. However, Egypt and Sudan have now teamed up to wage direct and indirect war against Ethiopia unless Ethiopia succumbs to their demands. We strongly denounce any foreign occupation of Ethiopian land.



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We are concerned with the overt efforts by some lobbyist groups seeking to have Ethiopia withdrawn from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The rationale for such a decision would be purely political and embolden those actors who wish to see Ethiopia destabilize further. To withdraw Ethiopia from AGOA would be devastating for Ethiopia-U.S. historical relations, but worst still, it would cause severe economic pain for hundreds and thousands of families in Ethiopia. This move would be counterproductive to President Biden's aim of enhancing the United States' presence on the continent and will cause immense suffering.

Finally, we are concerned with the safety of the historic town of Lalibela. We understand the TPLF has taken control of the town, a UNESCO world heritage site in the Amhara region. Lalibela is a holy site, one of profound importance to Christianity. We would welcome further calls from the U.S. for the TPLF to withdraw from neighboring regions and the U.S. to use its influences to protect artifacts and other heritage items from being destroyed by the TPLF. They have now occupied far beyond the Tigray region's borders. We are deeply concerned that TPLF's continued attacks will force the government to consider ending the unilateral ceasefire and worsen the conflict further. Who will then be responsible for the outbreak of hostilities?

As Ethiopia reaches a critical juncture in the conflict, we would request you attain advice from a broad range of sources. The situation is deeply complex, and the historical context is essential



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to understanding the challenges faced today. A cautious, constructive, and diplomatic approach is needed if there is to be a peaceful end to the conflict.

We would also like to share our appreciation for the humanitarian aid being delivered to Ethiopia by governmental agencies and charities from across the United States. The crisis facing the people of Tigray, Afar, and Amhara should continue to be our priority.

We want to reiterate our wish to continue strengthening the U.S-Ethiopia bilateral relations as we move forward to build a prosperous Ethiopia. May God bless Ethiopia and the United States of America!

Sincerely,

**The Archbishops of the North American Dioceses of the Ethiopian
Orthodox Tewahedo Church**

C.C. Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Embassy of Ethiopia

Washington, DC



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