

EXECUTIVE ORDER ON THE CRISIS IN ETHIOPIA

Statement by USAID Administrator Samantha Power

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Office of Press Relations

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Today, President Biden signed an Executive Order (E.O.) establishing a new sanctions regime that authorizes the United States to target any party responsible for or complicit in actions or policies that are prolonging the conflict in northern Ethiopia, and those that commit human rights abuses, or obstruct humanitarian access and a ceasefire. These sanctions are not directed at the people of Ethiopia or Eritrea and have clear exemptions to allow for the continuation of ongoing development and humanitarian programs. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to people affected by this crisis, and we will continue to provide life-saving aid to all those in need regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation.

The conflict in northern Ethiopia has sparked one of the worst humanitarian and human rights crises in the world, with over 5 million people requiring humanitarian assistance and up to 900,000 living in famine conditions in Tigray. The conflict now risks expanding into a wider civil war that threatens Ethiopia and regional stability. The United States continues to work diplomatically to press for an end to this humanitarian and human rights crisis, and this Executive Order provides new leverage against those obstructing progress towards a negotiated ceasefire, hindering humanitarian access, or committing serious human rights abuses.

We cannot ignore the fact that heinous human rights abuses are being perpetrated against civilians. I have personally met with Ethiopian refugees from Tigray, many of them women, who shared heart-wrenching experiences of armed actors committing murder, rape, and other gruesome acts of sexual and gender-based violence. Tens of thousands of women and girls in northern Ethiopia will need medical, mental health, psychosocial, and legal services to begin to rebuild their lives. Hundreds of thousands of people are facing starvation, in large part because of the Government of Ethiopia's efforts to delay and prevent humanitarian aid from reaching civilian populations who need this emergency food and medical assistance to survive.

The suffering of the Ethiopian people ensnared in this conflict must end. We call on all parties to cease hostilities, allow and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access, ensure accountability for human rights abuses, and enter into an inclusive dialogue to chart a path forward that preserves the unity of their state.