

SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

VAN HOLLEN STATEMENT ON ONGOING SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA

Today, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) released the following statement regarding the ongoing situation in Ethiopia:

As the situation in Ethiopia continues to worsen, I remain deeply concerned by the evolving conflict and repeat my calls for all parties to come to the table to bring an end to it. I am particularly alarmed by the recent Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) offensive that has expanded the conflict to the Amhara and Afar regions, with new reports of mass displacement, a worsening humanitarian situation, ethnically-targeted killings, and atrocities. The looting of a USAID warehouse containing food supplies by TPLF forces in Amhara and the reported massacre of more than 120 civilians near Gondar are abhorrent and underscore the destruction being wrought by the TPLF offensive.

At the same time, the humanitarian crisis in Tigray continues. Aid agencies are running out of food. In addition to the TPLF offensive, a commercial blockade, government-imposed bureaucratic impediments, and insecurity are hindering resupply, preventing humanitarian actors from aiding innocent people in desperate need. The Prime Minister's call last month for mass enlistment and reports of a possible alliance between the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Army raise concerns that the conflict could escalate further.

I was inspired by the popular aspirations that brought Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed into office in 2018. However, over the past year, those legitimate aspirations have been sidelined by this bloody conflict that has destabilized Ethiopia and threatened the stability of the broader region. A negotiated ceasefire is urgently needed to allow time for humanitarians to render aid and mediators to seek a path forward for all Ethiopians.

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