



AEPAC
American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee

AEPAC: END OF YEAR REPORT



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The Highlights

AEPAC has become a leading and authoritative voice on Ethiopian-American issues in Washington DC. What can take organisations years to build we have done so in just 6-months. There have been many successes on the journey, below are some of the most prominent highlights from 2021.

- **Fighting to save AGOA.** From day 1 maintaining Ethiopia's place in AGOA has been a primary objective. As we reach the 31st December deadline the narrative is turning back in our direction. Thanks to relentless advocacy, Congresswoman Bass released a statement calling for the delisting to be postponed, using many of our talking points. Separately, she also joined Senator Van Hollen to send a joint letter from the two Chairs of the House and Senate Africa Subcommittees to President Biden. A huge win given where those two were at the start of the campaign. We also worked closely with Congressman Garamendi to secure a supportive letter to the President. There is still hope the decision will be reversed and we are executing a final push in the media and on Capitol Hill.
- **Blocking the use of the word 'genocide.'** In November, there were serious attempts through the NDAA by leading representatives such as Senator Booker and Congressman Malinowski to urge the State Department to include the use of 'genocide' in relation to the conflict in Ethiopia. By leveraging the advocates with whom we have built robust relationships over the past 6-months, we were able to counter this effort and ensure that language did not make the final version.
- **The facilitation of the Archbishops' march on Washington.** We secured 15 Administrative, Congressional or press briefings over two-days. On this visit we were able to cut through to the heart of the U.S. Government and articulate the conflict and related issues in a unique and powerful way. We placed an op-ed with the Washington Examiner ahead of the visit and the resulting write up by the Christian Post was one of the most favourable articles we have secured.

FINANCIAL TIMES

SIGN IN

Letter

Letter: Abiy is not to blame for starting Ethiopia's conflict

From Fisseha Adugna, Former Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee, Kennett Square, PA, US



A fighter loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) remains a guard post on the outskirts of Mekele in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia on May 7, 2021. © AP

November 11, 2021, 3:59 am

I have been consistently disappointed in the FT coverage of the conflict in Ethiopia. The latest

AP NEWS

Trending News Abortion Coronavirus pandemic Just

He said that under AGOA in 2020, Ethiopia exported goods worth "a minuscule \$38 million to the United States; in 2020, that figure rose roughly tenfold and stood at close to \$300 million, nearly half of it under the AGOA."

He asserted that Ethiopia's removal from AGOA "would deal a serious blow to the welfare of millions of low-income workers."

Mesfin Tsegem, chairman of the American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee, estimated an immediate impact of some 200,000 jobs lost, most among low-income female workers.

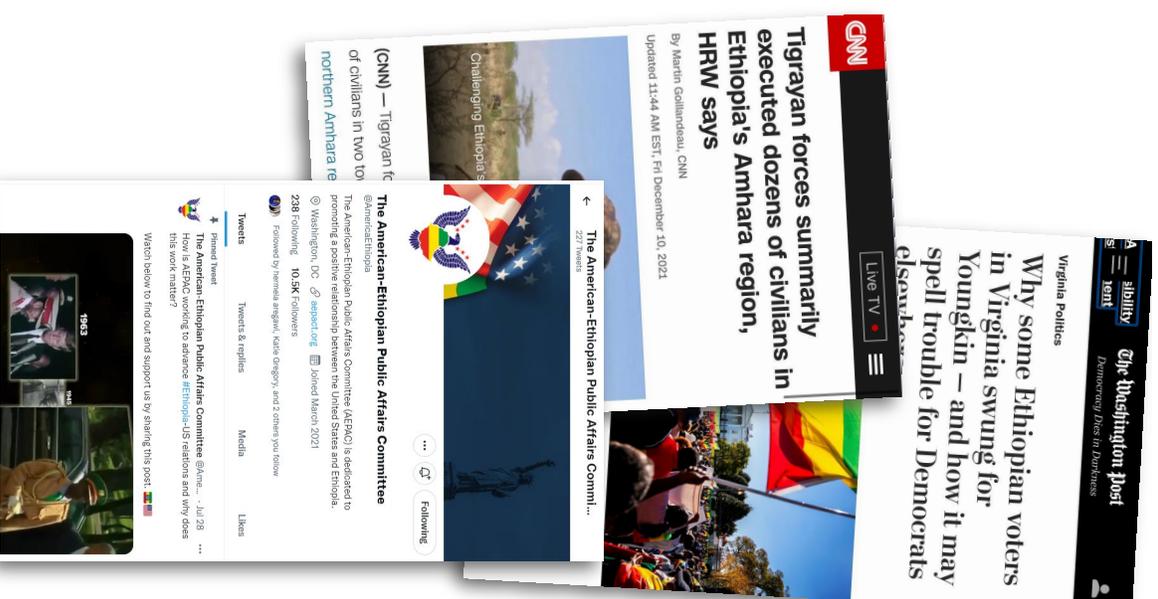
"On behalf of the one million members of the Ethiopian-American community, we call on the administration to think again," Mesfin said in a statement.

ethan, the special envoy, said Ethiopian officials a retreat in Washington in June were warned that Ethiopia's relations with the U.S. were at a crossroads. That crossroads, he said, "are behind



The Highlights Cont'd

- **Highlighting TPLF Atrocities.** When we started out on this campaign, the narrative both in the media and among politicians was dangerously simplistic: TPLF are good, the Ethiopian Government are bad. Through a systematic campaign we have secured a balancing of that narrative. The TPLF is now widely seen as an aggressor and the historical context of their three decades of authoritarian rule is now understood by the majority of interested parties. We have forced this on the media's agenda, even those who have been sympathetic to the TPLF such as the New York Times, WashPost and CNN.
- **Virginia Governor Election.** On the ground in Virginia, AEPAC showed what can be achieved when we the community votes as a block, helping to secure a surprise win for Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin. We supported engagement with candidates and secured broad coverage of AEPAC's role in the election, including in the Washington Post, Black Star News, Insider and a number of African outlets. We also secured interviews with Reuters.
- **Significant Digital Footprint.** Since the beginning of June, the digital workstream has developed the AEPAC channels consistently and effectively. The greatest growth has been in areas we would expect for a politically focused organisation, with the Twitter channel showing the greenest shoots. The page has grown far faster than would be expected and engagement is far higher than the average for an advocacy group. All in, since the start of July, AEPAC's twitter handle has had 62.5m impressions, that is the number of times Tweets that mention AEPAC have been seen on channels. The channel also enjoys an average engagement rate of 4.7%, significantly above Twitter's expected average engagement for channels of this nature, which is 0.45%. This is thanks to high-quality and engaging content.
- **HRes. 445.** Leveraging our relationships on the Hill and relentlessly engaging our political targets, we moved HRes. 445 in a considerably different direction. Without our collective engagement this Bill would've been much more aggressive and could have resulted in additional sanctions and stronger anti-Ethiopian rhetoric.



Timeline: June – Sept

June

- Mercury joins AEPAC.
- GR team issue 84 Member meeting requests in a single week.
- Work starts on HRes. 445 and a short while after it is pulled from the mark up agenda.
- The Chairman's 'launch' op-ed is published with Today News Africa.
- Digital accounts are launched with the first video being watched 2.5k times.

August

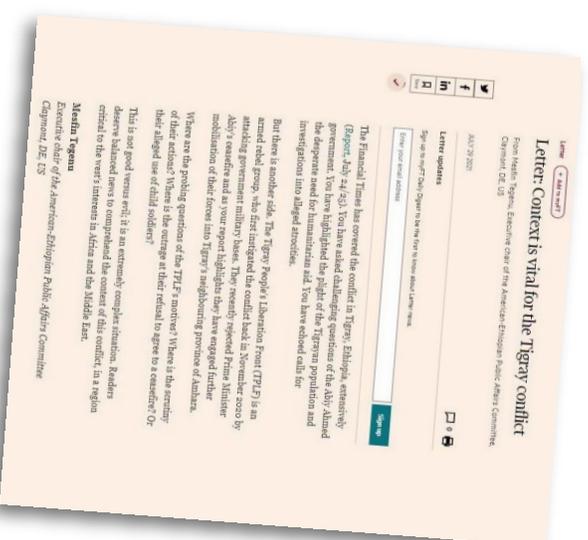
- GR team partners with businesses in the fight to save AGOA and starts aggressive outreach to the administration.
- PR team secures a first direct tier-one placement in the Financial Times.
- The Chairman's environment op-ed is published by Euronews.
- Professor Ann Fitz-Gerald is brought in to help and we secure initial interviews with Reuters, NPR and PBS.
- Digital channels enjoys a 50% monthly increase in engagements with the child soldiers video becoming AEPAC's best performing content.

July

- GR team secures a re-write of HRes. 445 with a reference to Ethiopia Government's ceasefire.
- GR team flags the issue of child soldiers & AGOA. In just a month, 40 meetings with representative and staff took place.
- The TPLF's use of child soldiers is briefed out to the press with coverage on the BBC and Reuters, and the White House Press Secretary is forced to respond.
- Twitter reaches 1,000 followers and an open letter to Members of Congress calling on the TPLF to agree a ceasefire enjoys 1,000 engagements.

September

- The entire Mercury team facilitates a visit of Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishops to Washington DC. We hosted 15 Administrative, Congressional or press briefings over two days.
- Chairwoman Bass starts to change her view on the conflict with positive discussions with the GR team and the diaspora.
- PR team secures the first Washington press hit with an op-ed in the Washington Examiner challenging President Biden's policy position.
- We successfully place an op-ed on behalf of Tebabu Assefa in Foreign Policy focused on AGOA.



Timeline: Oct - Dec

October

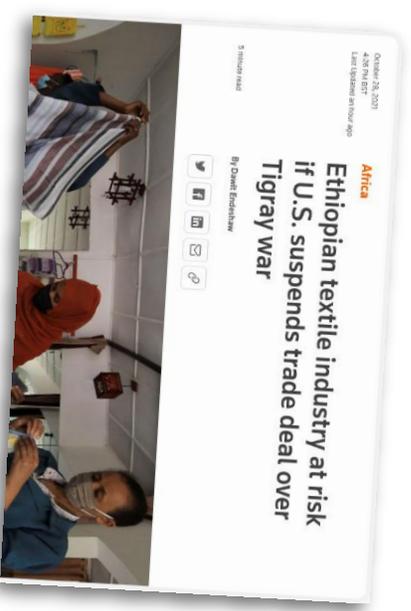
- HRes. 445 returns but the GR team secure significant changes in language on the "Be It Resolved" section of the resolution.
- Work starts on the Virginia campaign and outreach is undertaken to both Democrat and Republican teams. Both candidates provide video messages.
- A positive meeting with Congressman Garamendi's staff results in an op-ed published in The Hill magazine.
- A month long project with Reuters pays off as they publish a favourable report on AGOA and visit's Sammy's factory in Addis Ababa.
- PR team lands an op-ed in the Cincinnati Enquirer on behalf of local diaspora leader Araya Arnsalu.

December

- The GR team hits more than 80 meetings with representatives and staffers.
- After relentless efforts the NDAA is published without the use of the word 'genocide.'
- Persistent AGOA lobbying pays off with Congresswoman Bass issuing a statement calling for the delisting to be postponed, using our talking points. She also joins Senator Van-Hollen to send a joint letter to President Biden. Congressman Garamendi follows up with his own letter following our engagement and the GR team undertakes outreach to Special Envoy Jeffrey Feltman.
- The PR team brief out a Human Rights Watch report on TPLF atrocities and the media narrative starts to turn on the TPLF with big attack pieces by Reuters, Channel 4 and the Guardian.
- AEPAC's twitter handle hits 10k followers, the Facebook ad campaign begins and a new Instagram channel is launched.

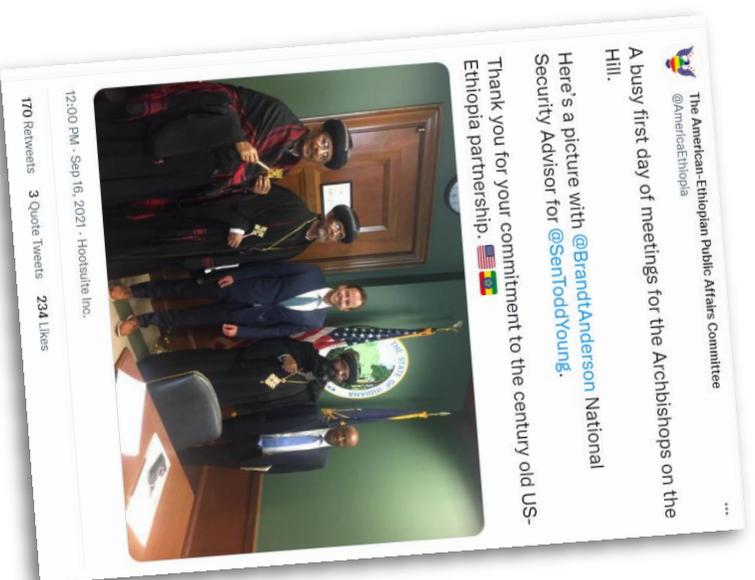
November

- The digital team's work using 'phone2action' to leverage the diaspora members to lobby their representatives on AGOA hits 60k emails sent.
- The Virginia election is held with Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin winning. AEPAC is referenced by the Washington Post, Insider and Black Star News as a central reason for the win.
- Ethiopia is delisted from AGOA, AEPAC's statement in response is covered by AP, Bloomberg, Reuters, Washington Post, ABC and more.
- The UN Joint Human Rights Report is published and is briefed to political stakeholders and the press.
- Amnesty International publish a report into the TPLF atrocities and is covered widely in the media. PR team place a letter to the editor in the FT.



Government Relations

- We have undertaken a very aggressive GR campaign.
- Facilitated more than 80 meetings with Senators, Congressmen, and senior staffers.
- These have included high-profile targets such as Senators Mike Rounds, Chris Van Hollen, Roy Blunt, and Jim Inhofe, and Congressman John Garamendi.
- We engaged senior Committee chairs including Congresswoman Karen Bass and the office of Senator Mark Warner who leads the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.
- We have put an intense focus on Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Biden Administration officials regarding AGOA.
- Regularly share letters, press coverage, and on-the-ground information to our target list of contacts.
- Secured significant changes to the narrative on the Hill and mitigated against critical risks to Ethiopia.



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

A busy first day of meetings for the Archbishops on the Hill.

Here's a picture with [@BrandtAnderson](#) National Security Advisor for [@SenToddYoung](#).

Thank you for your commitment to the century old US-Ethiopia partnership. 🇺🇸🇪🇹

12:00 PM · Sep 16, 2021 · HoodSuite Inc.
170 Retweets · 3 Quote Tweets · 234 Likes

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

"Regarding [#Ethiopia](#), I think there has been a failure by the State Dept."

We are pleased to hear Rep. Smith's comments, as the US has failed to call out TPLF atrocities. It is time for [@StateDept](#) to start constructive dialogue with the Ethiopia gov't.

Watch now 📺 [@EA_DevCouncil](#)

...

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

Thank you [@RepWalberg](#) for a fruitful and productive discussion. Your support for democracy in Ethiopia is vital and we were glad to hear of your many trips there.

We value your support and look forward to further engagement as we work to strengthen [#Ethiopia-US](#) relations.

1:26 PM · Jul 27, 2021 · Twitter Web App
22 Retweets · 2 Quote Tweets · 41 Likes

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

Thank you [@MichaelBennet](#) for your time and engagement to discuss Ethiopian matters.

During our meeting with Sen. Michael Bennet, we discussed the importance of the US-Ethiopian relationship and the urgent situation in [#Ethiopia](#).

10:56 PM · Oct 22, 2021 · HoodSuite Inc.
49 Retweets · 861 Likes

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

Great to meet with and have a productive discussion with [@RepKenBuck](#).

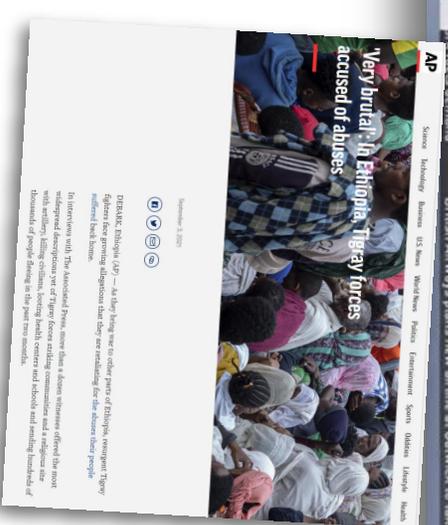
Your support for democracy in [#Ethiopia](#) and the importance of productive Ethiopia-US relations is extremely important at this time and we value your engagement. 🇺🇸🇪🇹

Rep. Ken Buck

2:14 PM · Aug 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App
60 Retweets · 4 Quote Tweets · 120 Likes

Press Engagement

- There has been a significant change in media coverage since May 2021.
- We have a media contact list of over 200 journalists and a core group of tier-one press we engage with.
- We have been directly responsible for 40 articles and indirectly responsible for many more.
- Big pieces in Bloomberg, Washington Post, AP, Financial Times and Reuters.
- Leveraged the Ethiopian-American community and other third party leaders.
- AEPAC is now an authoritative voice among the international media.

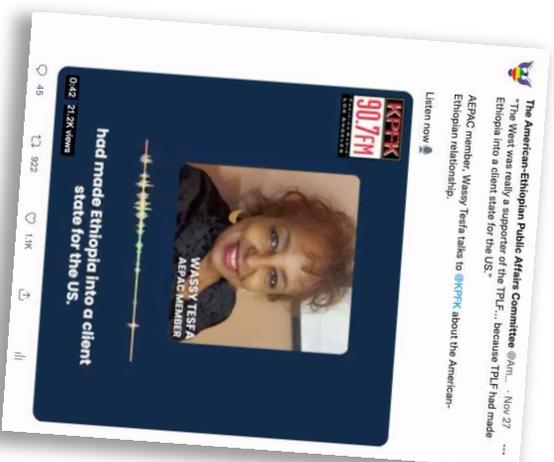


Digital

3.5m
Newsfeed
appearances
since July

64.1K
Likes, comments,
retweets, clicks

10,040
New followers
added since July



- Digital has been a vital tool in amplifying our GR and press activity, but also in driving content and engagement.
- The Phone2Action campaign has helped us reach 14,587 advocates who have collectively sent over 60,798 letters to congressional representatives.
- Our social media campaign has been consistent and professional and has seen significant engagement, with an average of 12.5k impressions per day.
- By every metric AEPAC's social media channels are hitting the right audiences, with high-quality content.

CONTENT EXAMPLES

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

The #TPLF is using child soldiers.
This is a war crime.
We call on the international community to take urgent action to stop this barbaric practice.



0:49 17K Views
8:11 PM · Aug 1, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

In collaboration with 13 #Ethiopian diaspora organizations, AEPAC has sent an open letter to Members of Congress calling on them to pressure the #Tigray Peoples Liberation Front to agree to an unconditional ceasefire.

Please share this post and tag your Representative. pic.twitter.com/SB52ajRsvB



4:40 424 498

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee · Aug 25
Thank you @RepRomynJackson for your time and engagement in American-Ethiopian matters.

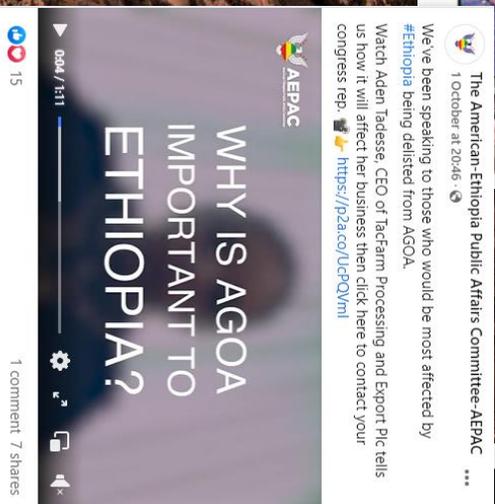
During our meeting with Rep. Jackson AEPAC updated on the urgent situation in Tigray and outlined how the US can best support #Ethiopia.



14 247 303

The American-Ethiopia Public Affairs Committee- AEPAC
1 October at 20:46

We've been speaking to those who would be most affected by #Ethiopia being delisted from AGOA.
Watch Aden Tadese, CEO of TacFarm Processing and Export. Pic tells us how it will affect her business then click here to contact your congress rep. <https://p2a.co/UCPQVml>



0:04 / 1:11 15 1 comment 7 shares

Pinned Tweet
The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee
@AmericaEthiopia

How is AEPAC working to advance #Ethiopia-US relations and why does this work matter?
Watch below to find out and support us by sharing this post.



31K Views
14 Quote Tweets 282 Likes
Jul 28, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Diaspora

- Since the start of our engagement, the diaspora workstream has formalised and professionalised AEPAC's database. Turning raw data of over 20,000 contacts into a useable document and structuring the information in a manner that has enabled the success of our outreach and will pay dividends in 2022.
- We have also gathered new data from digital campaigns and from our own research developed university student associations, businesses and friendly diaspora databases.
- In addition, the diaspora workstream has worked hand in glove with our other campaign areas to activate the American-Ethiopian and global diaspora. This has supported the success of the Phone2Action campaign, delivered diaspora by-lined op-eds in US and international media and supported the creation of social media content.
- We have cultivated a core 'friends of Ethiopia' group including Professors Jon Abbink and Anne Fitz-Gerald who have been fielded in the media as expert voices, providing a much needed counterweight to TPLF propaganda. Moreover, we have supported others within the American-Ethiopian community, especially the #NoMore campaign, with resource, media support, digital amplification and strategic advice.
- This work, and other areas, have helped AEPAC establish itself in a relatively short time period as the go-to and representative voice of the American-Ethiopian community. This foundation will be vital as we enter 2022.



Looking Forward

- While we have successfully helped develop AEPAC into a national and respected organisation within a very short-period, there are many challenges ahead in 2022: The conflict has not yet ended, international scepticism remains, the new UN investigation will start and the fight to reinstate Ethiopia's place in AGOA will begin. These challenges will need navigating and a professional approach.
- There are also significant opportunities that AEPAC will need to capitalise on, most notably the 2022 mid-terms where AEPAC will be able to demonstrate its strength in financing campaigns and motivating Ethiopian-American voters. Our teams will help design the strategy and build the infrastructure required to make this a success.
- In early January our teams will provided a 60-day plan that will outline our initial areas of focus as we enter 2022.

