

Dear Friends,

their country of origin in response to PM Abiy's call for a Great Ethiopian Homecoming in a sign of solidarity with their compatriots at this challenging period in the history of Ethiopia. In a resoundingly positive response to the

Members of the Ethiopian diaspora

from all corners of the world flocked to

PM invitation, tens of thousands of Ethiopian diaspora members went to Ethiopia in a move never seen before.

The initiative of the Ethiopian Prime Minister and the overwhelming response of Ethiopians of all ages, gender, and religious affiliation came at the backdrop of Western governments' call for their citizens and diplomats to leave Ethiopia. Western media, including CNN, announced that TPLF and its partner in crime surrounded the capital city and predicted the imminent fall of the city within a few days' time. Western governments looked the other way when the terrorist groups marched towards Addis to topple the democratically elected government of Ethiopia. US Department of State urged Americans to leave Ethiopia before commercial flights from Addis Ababa Airport fall under the artillery of the rebels. In a swift military counteroffensive, Ethiopian defense forces inflicted a heavy

blow to the rebel forces and reversed the advance in an operation that lasted less than three weeks, in what those rebels built in six months. Despite the defeat of the rebels, Western media echoed TPLF's line of misinformation that they "withdrew" their forces for the sake of peace. The PM's call and diaspora's overwhelming response were impactful both at a local and international level. Domestically, thousands of visitors have brought home much-needed foreign currency and medical donations for the looted and destroyed health facilities. They brought life to much-needed ailing tourism and service sectors, and helped to create jobs and rebuild the local economy. Diaspora members paid visits to areas affected by the war, witnessed TPLF cruelties first-hand, expressed solidarity with the survivors, the wounded, and the displaced, met families who lost loved ones, victims of rape and humiliation.

They also saw civilian properties, infrastructures, and carcasses of domestic animals mercilessly destroyed by the terrorizing forces. The courageous act of solidarity they showed to their compatriots at this defining moment was unforgettable. Internationally, Western governments' safety and security concerns in Ethiopia

became a laughingstock in the face of the defiant and safe visit by the diaspora. Quietly and unceremoniously, many departed Western diplomats have reversed their decisions and have started to come back. The Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union will be held in Addis Ababa 5th- 6th of February 2022. Last but not least, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia got on a call, which is the first since both came to power in their

respective countries. I thank all who participated in this initiative and went home to help war victims in Ethiopia! May God bless the US/Ethiopia friendship and solidarity!

Sincerely. Mesfin Tegenu, AEPAC Chairman

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AEPAC ACTIVITY UPDATE

Members of AEPAC Board joined other select diaspora members to a five-hour

interactive meeting with Prime Minister Abiy at his office. The PM made an

them to express their respective concerns. This may be good precedence for

During their stay in Addis Ababa, the AEPAC team had meetings with several

government officials to introduce AEPAC and to discuss issues of mutual

interest. These meetings were helpful to intimately understand the issues,

challenges, and plans of the government. AEPAC Chairman Mesfin Tegenu and

Secretary Youm Fessiha made media appearances where they got the

opportunity to talk about AEPAC, accomplishments in the last ten months of its

existence, and its plans of promoting healthy Ethiopian American relations and

AEPAC Co-sponsors the Diaspora \$1,000 per Plate Fund Raising Dinner

AEPAC was represented by some of its board members to join partners and

elaborate statement on the current situation surrounding the crisis in the North, as well as other general issues of concern to the diaspora. The majority of the about fifty diaspora attendees were given the opportunity to make statements and ask the PM "tough" questions for which the PM provided candid and open responses. The participants expressed the openness and the time given to

future direct engagement between the diaspora and the government.

AEPAC Team Joined Diaspora Discussion with PM

friends at the fund-raising dinner held at the Palace grounds. The fund-raising dinner is organized by AEPAC and three other diaspora groups in the US and Canada. The target is to raise \$1.5 million which will be used to support selected rehabilitation projects in the crisis-affected areas in Amhara and Afra

countering the negative narratives on Ethiopia.

regions.

The dinner participants were joyed by the surprise appearance of the Prime Minister at the dinner. It was during the visit of the diaspora that the government released high-profile political prisoners which created mixed feelings and reactions. The "shock" was felt especially when the release of the senior leader of TPLF "Aboy" Sibhat was made public, despite the government rationale for the release of the six TPLF leaders on humanitarian grounds. The statement by the PM at the dinner was an opportunity for the diaspora to hear from the leader of the country about the decision taken and other reports being circulated on social media. **AEPAC Election Campaign Strategy Implementation Update** The AEPAC National Election Campaign Committee (NECC) has made significant progress in developing election-related flyers and other outreach materials as part of voter education and mobilization for registering and voting.

About 20 State Election Campaign Committees (SECC) have been established

and some of them are already forming their respective district committees.

Each State will use the centrally developed outreach materials as templates for

customizing them according to their specific needs. Data acquisition on

Ethiopian Americans in the target States is being conducted by the Data

Management Committee so that it can help in reaching out to potential voters

and show candidates the strength of their Ethiopian American constituents. Flyers and short messages for social network platforms, in English and Amharic, are being tested and finalized for distribution to states. **MEDIA**

The last month has seen AEPAC reaffirm its place as a leading voice on Ethiopia-US issues. We enjoyed significant coverage in tier-one media on issues such as AGOA, the US Special Envoy, and the rebuilding of Ethiopia. On and around Jan 1st, when Ethiopia was delisted from AGOA, we secured interviews and comments with BBC, AFP, Business Insider, Voice of America, CGTN, and France 24. The coverage secured dozens of further articles in markets around the world through syndication including in one of Asia's largest outlets The Straits Times. Every piece was very sympathetic to our positioning and positive in regards to AEPAC's efforts. The Chairman also had an op-ed published with Pan African Visions focused on how the US can support Ethiopia going forward. And an open letter sent to the new Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Ambassador Satterfield was published on **Borkena**.

We currently have requests from BBC, Financial Times, The Guardian, and

more which we are working through. Thanks to all those who helped give

Our PR team is also actively working on raising awareness of the destruction

caused by the TPLF in Afar and Amhara. If you have any case studies or

With the TPLF being driven back to Tigray, the news and online discussion

have shifted to one of disarmament, peace talks, and documentation of the

damage done by TPLF fighters. This damage has been extensive, and we have

interviews and quotes on these stories, your support is always welcome.

information to share, please do with awalker@actumllc.com.

DIGITAL

Diplomatic Breakthroughs:

for the first time.

Ethiopia

President Biden and Prime Minister Abiy Talk

focused on highlighting the reports on our social channels. The Twitter channel has grown substantially over the course of 7 months last year, with a follower rate of over 100% MOM and a gain of over 10k new followers. This steady growth puts the channel into a strong position for the year ahead. Content including open letters, impactful videos, and graphics have driven high engagement and click-throughs. Some of the best performing content was the following: AEPAC in partnership with GLEAN, ECNAS The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee @Ame... · Jan 13 · · · · & GETFACTS has organized a home coming We've been speaking to leading experts and commentators, exploring the future of the century-old US-Ethiopia relationship. fund raising dinner at the Friendship Park. Watch what Lawyer and Human Rights Activist Blen Mamo has to say about The goal is to raise \$1.5 Million Dollars US strategic rivals in Africa now 🎬 earmarked to the reconstruction effort of affected areas by the TPLF's attack. Reserve now! eyezonethiopia.com/campaign/37/th... pic.twitter.com/C95B8yGhP5 ARE US FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS BENEFITING ITS o FUNDRAISING DINNER STRATEGIC RIVALS? o HELP CONFLICT VICTIMS REBUILD ETHIOPIA 0:02 / 1:05 👊 🖒 125 125 ♡ 180 ılι ♠ 1 **£**3 133 ♥ 176 **NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS**

President Biden and PM Abiy had their first telephone encounter and Dr. Abiy

called their phone communication as a "candid" discussion. The discussion is

said to have focused on the peaceful resolution of the crisis in northern Ethiopia

and the need for access to humanitarian assistance to affected areas. The

Biden Administration delisted Ethiopia, along with Mali and Guinea, from

benefitting from AGOA. Delisting Ethiopia affects women-headed families who

were trying to build a bright future by being gainfully employed in garment

factories, rather than depending on handouts from USAID assistance

programs. Hopefully, the change of the dynamics of the crisis in Ethiopia and

The outgoing US Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, met with

PM Abiy, seemingly to wrap up his mission that lasted about ten months. His

replacement, Ambassador David Satterfield, has made his first visit to the

region after Feltman's departure. President Obasanjo, the Africa Union envoy

to HOA, also visited the region to move the AU agenda of bringing the crisis in

Ethiopia to a peaceful conclusion. There have been encouraging gestures from

the Ethiopian government side by addressing some of the demands of the

international community at a time when the situation on the ground was right.

China has joined the US, AU, and EU in appointing a special envoy to the HOA

The government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared the amnesty of scores

of political prisoners on Ethiopian Christmas Day to pave the way for the start of

national dialogue declared by the Ethiopian Parliament recently. Among the

beneficiaries of the amnesty were six TPLF associated leaders released on

humanitarian grounds, including the elderly father figure of TPLF, "Aboy"

Sebhat. Others included Jawar Mohammed of the Oromo Federalist Party and

Eskinder Nega of Balderas party who were released with some of their

35th Africa Union Summit of Heads of State and Government to be Held in

The 40th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union will be

held from February 2nd to 3rd, 2022, and the Assembly of the Heads of State

and Government of the African Union will hold its 35th Ordinary Session from

February 5th to 6th in Addis Ababa. The theme of the Summit is "Building

Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital,

Social and Economic Development". Ethiopia is a founding member and seat

of the AU. The crisis in North Ethiopia and the advance of the TPLF forces into

non-conflict areas had created unease from different corners that the situation

may not be conducive to holding the leaders' meeting in Addis. It is surmised

that this decision might have been based on security assessment and the

reversal of the advance by TPLF, and stability in the rest of the country that the

Sudan's Deputy Chairman of the TSC, General Mohammed Dagalo ("Hemetti"),

had a two-day visit in Ethiopia where he met PM Abiy and other officials of the

government. It is reported that PM had a productive meeting. Sudan is

experiencing a series of opposition rallies against the Military led administration

It looks that there are peaceful gestures from the side of the Sudanese

government after the reversal of the TPLF's aggressive advances into the

Amhara and Afra regions. The border between Ethiopia and Sudan, which has

been closed since the start of the war in North Ethiopia, has opened for moving

trade between the two countries. This visit by the Vice-Chair is likely to be a

positive sign for reaching an understanding not to interfere in the internal affairs

of sovereign Ethiopia. It shall be remembered that Ethiopia, and in particular,

Dr. Abiy played a key role in negotiating the peaceful resolution of the political

crisis that erupted in Sudan in 2018 to pave a new path for Sudan had it not

been a for a miscalculated and misguided turn of events that created a bump in

After the defeat of TPLF, Prime Minister Abiy declared that the war is won and

the ENDF will halt its advance into Tigrai. The focus going forward will be

At an event to officiate the opening of the new Defense Forces new building

(the "Pentagon of Ethiopia"), the PM honored military leaders who surpassed in

rehabilitating the affected areas and taking care of the victims of the war.

the healthy relationship between the two friendly countries.

Ethiopian National Defense Force Halts Operations into Tigrai

detained members after the court decided to drop their cases.

talk of the two leaders may lead to reconsider the unwarranted decision.

Envoys to the Horn Africa Criss Cross the Region

Prominent Political Prisoners Released

AU decided to hold the summit in Ethiopia, a welcome decision and diplomatic win for Ethiopia. General Mohammed Dagalo ("Hemetti") of Sudan Visits Ethiopia

which worsened following the resignation of PM Abdalla Hamdok.

military leadership, succeeding in building the national defense forces in science and skills, as well as reversing the aggression. The families of those who laid their lives for the nation were also honored at this event. The PM honored the Chief of General Staff Berhanu Jula with the Nation's highest military title as the first Field Marshal of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and made several appointments in the military structure. The situation in the North has significantly improved in terms of military and diplomatic positions, although TPLF has not totally stopped pestering civilians living in bordering areas of Afar and Gondar. The government has started resettling displaced persons in Amhara and Afar regions, rebuilding destroyed infrastructure, and reinstating services such as banking, electricity, and telecommunications.

Photos Showing Epiphany Celebration in Gondar & The Great Ethiopian Run in Addis Ababa Addis Ababa, Lalibela, and Gondar observed the annual festivities of the Ethiopian Christmas (75 Genna) and Epiphany (介9中十 Timket) peaceful and joyous manner. Lalibela and the surroundings of Gondar were victims of the TPLF advance which had the ancient and UNESCO registered relic under occupation for several months. The two holidays were peacefully observed in almost every part of the country. The spirit of the holidays reflected how much the Ethiopian people want peace and stability. Another event that brought confidence to the residents of Addis Ababa and was taken as a testimony of peace and stability in Ethiopia was the Great Ethiopian

Run. This Run was initiated twenty-one years ago by the world-renowned

Athlete Haile Gebre Selassie. The 10km race, which is the biggest road race in Africa and called by some as "the most exciting race in the world" attracts runners from other parts of the world. The event this year had the runners clad in green, yellow, and red sports dresses to reflect the national flag and a message of unity and nationalism. Coup d'Etats: African Union's Challenges 2021 saw several coup d'etats that overturned democratically-elected African countries by the military. These coups disrupt the building of democratic political institutions, encourage violence, and increase the prospects of civil wars. The five recent coups took place mostly in ex-French colonies: in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, excepting Sudan. Although the African Union and other African regional bodies reject unconstitutional changes of government and take appropriate measures to reverse the coups and return to democratic elections, this doesn't seem to

Holidays and Festivities in January 2022 Usher a Spirit of Joy and Normalcy in Ethiopia

resolve the crisis in many countries, in a timely manner. On the most recent coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, the UN Secretary-General called on coup leaders to lay down their arms and reiterated the UN's "full commitment to the preservation of the constitutional order" and support for the people in their efforts "to find solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing the country." External involvement or sponsorships of coups in these five countries can't be ruled out, as stability and democratic systems don't auger well for corrupt business dealings and unequal partnerships. Foreign country interferences in

internal affairs of sovereign developing nations are premised mostly in the guise of fighting human rights violations, averting humanitarian crises, supporting democratic elections, etc. On the contrary, the interfering countries turn a blind eye to their "friendly" countries despite gross violations of human rights and rule of law; a blatant double standard. The African Union has a challenging task ahead of elevating its engagement with its 54 member

HOW YOU CAN HELP

To keep up to date with AEPAC's work, please follow us on Twitter, and Facebook for regular updates. Check out our website - www.aepact.org

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of members will be #NoMore.

Share

countries to a higher level of a new order of multilateralism in the spirit of Vision 2063, where among many hurdles, sinister interferences in the internal affairs

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** Contact

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