



Chairman's Message

9th January 2022

Dear Friends,

Over the last few days, I have spoken to many of you and listened to your concerns and hopes for the coming weeks and months.

The conflict in our homeland has impacted us all. The images and stories emerging from Afar and Amhara are truly heart-breaking. Murders, rape, destruction and looting were the norm under the TPLF's occupation and as they withdrew, defeated, back to Tigray. The actions of the TPLF are unforgivable.

Once again, the TPLF's efforts to rip apart Ethiopia failed. The people said "no" to authoritarianism, and no to oppression, and choose a path of progress, democracy and freedom. We owe everything to those who joined the war effort and put their lives on the line for their country and values in which they believe. The Ethiopian Government, led by Prime Minister Abiy, showed real leadership when they travelled to the front-line, boosting morale and initiating a remarkable victory.

However, now is not the time to celebrate. Thousands are returning home to towns and villages destroyed by TPLF forces. Families in Afar and Amhara are coming to terms with the horrors they have faced, and many are finally laying to rest their loved ones. Yet another generation will carry the scars of war with them for the rest of their lives.

The American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) and our partner organizations have worked relentlessly in the United States and around the world to secure international support for Ethiopia, the Government and Prime Minister Abiy. We did so with a love for our homeland and our friends and family, very much at the forefront of our minds. We have achieved so much: we have tackled the TPLF's tsunami of misinformation, we stopped the war formally being labelled a genocide, we highlighted the TPLF's atrocities, we were so close to saving AGOA and the #NoMore protests showed the world that Ethiopia, and indeed the entire Horn of Africa, was united against the violent insurgency and their foreign backers. There is no doubt in my mind the force of the Ethiopian community abroad played a critical part in defeating the TPLF at home.

That is why there is widespread concern with the recent release of the TPLF leaders. We all want to see a united Ethiopia at peace, and we are in full support of the national dialogue process that has been set up. But, we also want to see justice for the crimes that have been committed against Ethiopia and its people. The leadership of the TPLF should be in prison, not walking free. Let's be under no illusion, their rhetoric and orders were directly responsible for the horrific atrocities committed against communities in Afar and Amhara. Those communities are still burying their children. The horrors of TPLF atrocities are still fresh in our mind. Even worse, TPLF action of unleashing its aggression against innocent Ethiopians has continued unabated. So, the decision to implement this amnesty has created confusion, disillusionment and raised many questions.

The Ethiopian people have sacrificed so much for the values they hold dear, and to protect the Prime Minister and Government they elected and believe can take Ethiopia forward to a new progressive era. Those I have spoken to over the last few days still want to support PM Abiy, they want him to succeed, but timing is everything and this decision at such a delicate moment has been met with anger and frustration.

At AEPAC we have become used to the politics of this war and are not deaf to the support the amnesty has secured from the international community. If this was a gesture of goodwill to the United States and others, we will be watching closely to understand what Ethiopia will be provided in return. The West has done little to support Ethiopia to date, indeed their actions during the conflict only ever emboldened the TPLF. We would welcome a change of approach from Washington DC, Brussels, London etc., but Ethiopia owes them nothing.

AEPAC will be carefully analyzing what further steps are taken by the Ethiopian Government. The journey to peace and reconciliation must include reflection and justice. There is no future in Ethiopia for the TPLF. The people of Tigray deserve better than a self-interested and violent political organization and the rogue leadership of the TPLF. Ethiopia should not entertain a group that fundamentally opposes the idea of Ethiopia as a united country.

In the meantime, AEPAC will continue our hard work across the United States. Many of our members are currently in Addis Ababa as part of the 'Great Homecoming' helping raise vital funds for the rebuilding of Afar and Amhara.

I want to thank everyone for their unwavering support for Ethiopia and the work you have done to save the country.

Yours ever,



Mesfin Tegenu
Executive Chairman of AEPAC