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Ambassador David Satterfield  
Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa  
United States Department of State  
Washington, D.C.

19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear Ambassador,

On behalf of the American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) and our partner organizations, I would like to congratulate you on your new role as Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa.

We hope you will oversee a real sea-change in the United States' approach to the conflict in Ethiopia and work to strengthen ties between the two countries during your tenure. AEPAC looks forward to working with you on that endeavor.

You have taken on this role at a critical moment. The TPLF facing defeat has withdrawn deep into Tigray. The destruction, pain and fear they have left behind in Afar, Amhara and parts of Tigray is shocking, and it will take years for Ethiopia to rebuild.

Many Ethiopian-Americans have returned to Ethiopia as part of the Great Homecoming initiative and it has become clear from meeting with friends and family that the conflict will leave a deep scar. The humanitarian challenge now extends across all Northern regions and there are millions in need. Schools and hospitals in Afar and Amhara were trashed and looted by fleeing TPLF fighters, farms have been destroyed and aid stolen.

As Ethiopia and the international community look forward, the next step must be to unite the country. The national dialogue process announced by the Ethiopian Government is very welcome and will start to address the deep-rooted ethnic divides, established by the TPLF during their 28 years in power, that have hindered the country's progress for too long.

It is important that the United States understands there is no support for the TPLF's inclusion in the peace process in Ethiopia nor among the diaspora. The TPLF made a choice to initiate a violent insurrection and threaten to march on Addis Ababa. They raped and killed innocent civilians on the way and looted humanitarian aid. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and USAID have all highlighted the TPLF's crimes. They tried to steal back power and the people of Ethiopia said "no."

We hope on your upcoming first visit to Ethiopia as Special Envoy, you will support that position and call on the remaining TPLF forces to surrender and cease offensive activity, particularly on Tigray's border with Afar. We have been concerned that recent statements by the State Department have only increased pressure on the Ethiopian Government, not the TPLF, despite significant steps toward peace already being implemented including halting Ethiopia's armed forces at the borders of Tigray, an amnesty for TPLF leaders, and launching the national dialogue.

In order to restart trading ties between Ethiopia and the United States, it would be appropriate to reverse the delisting of Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), a decision that is costing hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ethiopia and hurting businesses in the U.S. This would be a very welcome gesture and would act as a positive step toward reestablishing trade relations.

Finally, we would ask you to use your position to articulate the humanitarian aid situation as an Ethiopian challenge, not just a Tigray issue. Millions in Afar and Amhara are displaced and living without food and shelter. UN OCHA has called the situation "dire" describing the response in those regions as "*significantly low due to insecurity and lack of access in some areas, low presence of partners, lack of funding and to meet the mounting needs.*" It is right the alarm for humanitarian aid is raised, but we can't forget the people of Afar and Amhara. Their suffering at the hands of the TPLF has been ignored for too long.

You will be aware there is much anger and frustration toward the United States and President Biden's Administration for its policy position during the conflict and indeed its approach to the Horn of Africa more widely. As Ethiopian-Americans, we at AEPAC want to see our two countries working together. Ethiopia should be treated as an ally and partner and we would implore you to reestablish such a relationship.

In our view, that is best achieved by putting pressure on the TPLF to meet this moment of peace, cease punitive sanctions, re-list Ethiopia in AGOA, and work with the Ethiopian Government to secure access to humanitarian aid for all Northern regions.

Yours sincerely,



**Mesfin Tegenu**  
**Executive Chairman of AEPAC**