



NEWSLETTER

March 2022, Vol 3 No.1

Dear friends,

EOTC Controversy and Resolution

AEPAC continues to monitor the crisis that engulfed one of the world's oldest religious institutions, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). Although we are pleased that a resolution has been reached, we are deeply saddened and disturbed by the loss of life, continued unchecked violence, abuses of rights and desecration of consecrated land.

The Ethiopian Government must defend human, civil and political rights and ensure that all facets of government and society support the values these rights rest on.



During the controversy, AEPAC was a vocal advocate working with the diaspora and the EOTC on creating a path towards peace and reconciliation – and away from ethnic and religious conflict. The Ethiopian Government could have played a more constructive and balanced role earlier. It instead chose to interfere in internal church matters and give cover to illegal acts, thereby helping precipitate the loss of life and property.

While the immediate crisis is now over, we still need to see restitution for the violence against clergy, churchgoers and religious buildings. Crucially, those unwarrantedly detained during the crisis must also be released. AEPAC denounces several reports of continued church breakings and illegal church closings in certain parts of western Ethiopia, depriving parishioners of their ability to peacefully conduct their prayer in this holy "Hudade" (lent) fasting season.

Call for Nominees for the Ethiopian Constitutional Reform (ECR) Committees

A culturally diverse country with a long history of unity cannot be stably governed by a constitutional order that accentuates ethnic differences and political tribalization. Ethiopia's constitutional settlement created deeply exclusionary and corrupt rule, which denied Ethiopians free and equal citizenship.

AEPAC's project to ensure a diaspora contribution to the ongoing national dialogue in Ethiopia is in full swing. Nominations are open for the organizing committee of AEPAC's *Diaspora Dialogue Platform for Constitutional Reform in Ethiopia*.

This undertaking will become the legacy for all Ethiopian Americans and diaspora of Ethiopian descent living across the world, as well as the esteemed individuals who are granted seats on the two constitutional reform committees.

We are currently seeking nominations from across the diaspora for individuals of good moral character, integrity, honesty, and a strong sense of duty. We encourage you to continue to nominate people for this historic endeavor.

To nominate someone in your community or yourself, [click here](#).

Minute Survey

In addition to gathering your insights on the nominees to the committees, AEPAC is looking to gather your thoughts on the current Ethiopian constitution. We have created a survey that takes 2 minutes or less to complete. The survey closes at 11:59 pm PST on March 4th, 2023 and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Thank you for your partnership on this journey to securing a prosperous and bright future for Ethiopia and the Ethiopian diaspora.

God bless the peoples of the United States and Ethiopia.
Mesfin Tegenu, AEPAC Chairman



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AEPAC ACTIVITY UPDATE

AEPAC Call for United Action Against Drought in Ethiopia



AEPAC and its affiliated organizations in the global Ethiopian diaspora are monitoring the increasingly concerning news from the drought-stricken Borena region of Ethiopia. Already this drought has caused a significant loss of livestock and internally displaced millions of Ethiopians. We are also disturbed by the further internal displacement of over 3.2 million Ethiopians due to ongoing ethnic-based violence as well as the over 10 million Ethiopians displaced as a result of TPLF aggression.

We call upon the relevant US government agencies, UN-affiliated organizations and non-governmental organizations to immediately bring the required expertise and resources to help this situation. We also call upon humanitarians around the world to come together to help bring resolution to these challenges. AEPAC particularly calls upon our fellow Americans to show their generosity in this time of need.

While the international community's help will be vital, the Ethiopian Government must act decisively before the situation gets worse. It must take a lead and publicly release a strategy to tackle the drought and the growing crisis of internally displaced Ethiopians.

AEPAC is convening several diaspora organizations and other interested parties to form a 'Diaspora United Front Against Drought and Internally Displaced People'. This group will help facilitate resolutions for impacted people. In the meantime, please support the effort by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians.



AEPAC
American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee

MESFIN TEGENU
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

African Union Summit



As the continental body marks 20 years since it was re-formed from the old Organization of African Unity (OAU), the 36th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government of the African Union and the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Ministerial Session), as well as other side events were held in Addis Ababa from February 15 to 20, 2023. The Summit was attended also by the UN Secretary General Gutierrez, EU commissioner Michelle, US delegates and other international agencies/organizations.

The first day of the Summit marked the handing over of the presidency of the African Union from the Senegalese leader to his counterpart from the Union of Comoros.

The theme of this year's summit is: *'The Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation'*. The AfCFTA is widely seen as a strong impetus for African governments to address infrastructure shortcomings, integrate supply chains, boost manufacturing capacity, and rearrange regulations to do with trade, cross-border initiatives, investment-friendly policies, and capital flow. African nations currently trade only about 15 percent of their goods and services with each other, and the AfCFTA aims to boost that by 60 percent by 2034 with the elimination of almost all tariffs.

President Azali Assoumani the Comoros, the new Chairperson of the African Union for 2023, in his speech underscored the need for coordinated efforts by African countries to achieve peace and prosperity through the successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In his remarks, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: Africa needs action. First — economic action. Africa is rich in potential, but it is not rich in global support. "Investing in Africa's prosperity requires finance and developing countries are repeatedly left in the dark, the global financial system routinely denies them debt relief and concessional financing while charging extortionist interest rates," Guterres said, adding that the UN has made a new call to radically transform the global financing architecture in this regard.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, for his part, lauded the Pretoria Peace Accord between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) that led to the end of the conflict. Abiy asked African nations to expand the spirit of "African solutions to African problems."

Kenyan leader William Ruto emphasized the importance of early prevention of diseases and an aggressive approach to the manufacturing of vaccines and medical products on the African continent.

The US delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee included Ambassador Johnnie Carson, the Special Presidential Representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit Implementation, and other senior US officials. The United States representative reaffirmed the value of a strong African Union, its leadership on the global stage and expressed US dedication to working together to advance shared global priorities to foster openness and open societies, deliver democratic and security dividends, promote pandemic recovery and economic opportunity, and support conservation, climate adaptation, and a just energy transition.

AU Food Sovereignty and Resilience Summit

Africa has 65 percent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land and has the potential to produce enough food to feed itself and contribute to feeding the rest of the world. Despite its huge agricultural potential, Africa suffers from high food insecurity, with one third of the 828 million hungry people in the world being on the continent. Achieving and sustaining food sovereignty requires delivering agricultural technology to farmers at scale, raising food production and increasing investments in food and agricultural systems.

African heads of state and government have endorsed the outcomes of the [Dakar 2 Summit on Food Sovereignty and Resilience](#), hosted in January

2023 by the African Development Bank Group and the government of Senegal, calling for global support for its immediate implementation. Speaking at the AU Summit, president after president lauded the African Development Bank for its leadership in helping Africa to feed itself and become a breadbasket for the world.

In less than a month, the Dakar 2 Food summit mobilized more than \$36 billion in investment to boost food and agriculture production across the continent. The African Development Bank led with \$10 billion.

The U.S. delegation joined African leaders by reinforcing U.S. commitment to advance food security and highlight the ongoing work through the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative, and efforts to scale up work on climate-resilient agriculture and soil health, including upcoming work on the "Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils" (VACS).

Federal Government of Ethiopia and TPLF Leaders Meet

On February 3, 2023, Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed met Tigray region leaders for the first time since peace deal in Pretoria, South Africa. The meeting was held in Halala Kela in the environs of the Koysya Hydroelectric Power Project – 370km southwest of the capital city Addis Ababa in south-west Ethiopia.



The talks took place almost three months to the day since the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed an agreement to silence the guns after two years of brutal war.

Those attending included Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen and armed forces chief Birhanu Jula, Abraham Belay, Minister for Defense along with top Tigrayan military commander Tsadkan Gebretensae and TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda.

The two sides evaluated actions carried out on the implementation of the Pretoria and Nairobi peace agreements so far. They also discussed issues that need further attention with PM Abiy giving instructions about increasing flights, banking and other issues that would boost trust and ease the lives of civilians.

Farah Adam, Deputy Chair of the ruling Prosperity Party, said "it was a very historical forum. It has created more trust and the discussion we had could transform the implementation of the agreement to a higher level."

Tadesse Worede stated that there is still work to be done to ensure that the agreement is not just postponing the war instead of ending it for good.

Frontline States Summit in Mogadishu



On February 1, 2023, the Frontline States Summit with President Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia, President William Ruto of Kenya, and host President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia met in the Somali capital Mogadishu to discuss the ongoing fight against al-Shabab militants. The security summit took place amid an offensive by Somalia and its allies against the Islamist militants. Somalia in the past year has won significant victories against the group, which has also increased its counterattacks.

Although al-Shabab is centered in Somalia, it has carried out deadly attacks throughout the region, especially Kenya, and has made incursions into Ethiopia and Djibouti.

In recent months, the army and local clan militia have retaken territory from the militants in an operation backed by US air strikes and the **African Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**. The **20,000-strong African Union** force is drawn from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, with troops deployed in southern and central Somalia.

The U.N. Security Council has set December 2024 as the exit date for African Union forces from Somalia. However, that milestone has been termed overly ambitious considering inadequate preparation among Somali security forces and the current strength of al-Shabab.

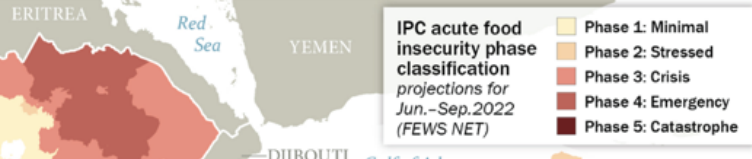
Following the conclusion of the summit, the leaders of the four countries said they had agreed to establish a joint coordination mechanism and jointly plan a decisive operational strategy against the Islamist militants. "The leaders agree to make the final push for joint operations in the areas that remain under Al-Shabab to completely liberate the whole of Somalia from Al-Shabab," leaders said in a joint communiqué. In addition to their commitment to defeating Al-Shabab, the leaders also expressed their support for lifting the 30-year-old arms embargo on Somalia.

Drought in the HOA

The eastern Horn of Africa just saw as unprecedented fifth straight failed rainy season on record, making it the longest and most severe drought in 70 years of precipitation data, causing unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. The ongoing drought has its roots in a combination of human-induced global warming and La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean. The Horn of Africa has two rainy seasons per year, one from March to May, and another from October to December.

Horn of Africa: Persistent Drought Increasing Food Insecurity Millions Face Threat of Famine

Acute food insecurity continues to rise in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia due to an exceptionally persistent and severe drought, increasing the risk of starvation in the region and the potential for famine in Somalia. Four consecutive below-average rainy seasons since late 2020 have made the current drought the most extensive since 1981. The October–December 2022 forecasts anticipate another below-average rainy season. The drought has impacted farmer and pastoralist livelihoods and led to lower food production and millions of livestock deaths. More than **18 million** people are food insecure (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System [IPC] Phase 3, 4, or 5) due to drought and more than **7 million** children face acute malnutrition.

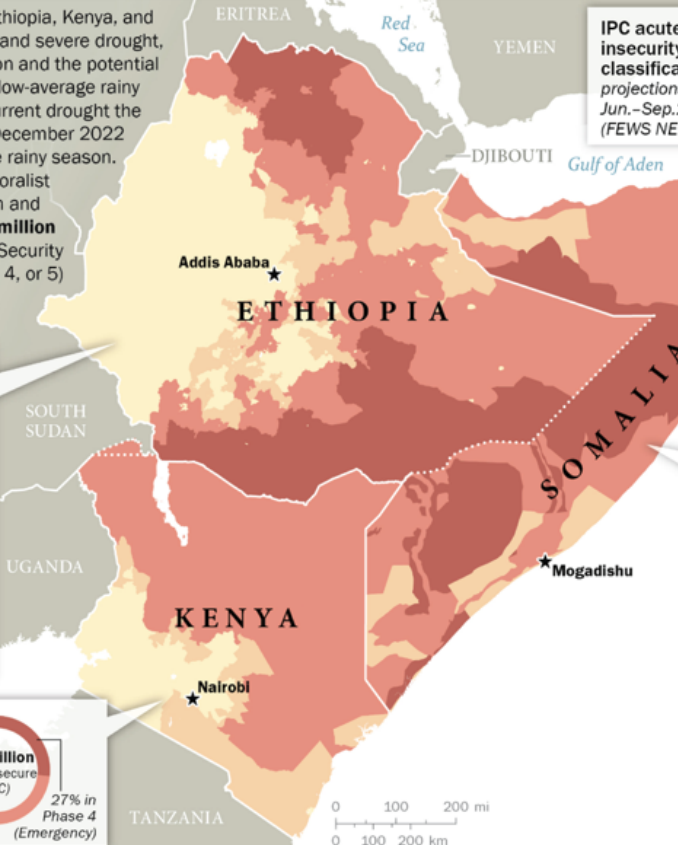


ETHIOPIA

- 4.7 million children under age 5 are facing acute malnutrition.
- At least 2.1 million livestock have died.
- Over 420,000 people were internally displaced by drought since 2021.

7.4 million* food insecure (WFP)

*Food insecure numbers for Ethiopia are from WFP; breakdown by IPC phase is not available.



SOMALIA

- 1.5 million children under age 5 are facing acute malnutrition.
- An estimated 3 million livestock have died.
- Over 800,000 people were internally displaced by drought since 2021.

3% (213,000 people) in Phase 5 (Catastrophe)

7.1 million food insecure (IPC)

67% in Phase 3 (Crisis) | 30% in Phase 4 (Emergency)

KENYA

- 942,000 children under age 5 are facing acute malnutrition.
- An estimated 1.5 million livestock have died.

4.1 million food insecure (IPC)

73% in Phase 3 (Crisis) | 27% in Phase 4 (Emergency)

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative. U.S. Department of State • @StateHIU • hiu.state.gov
Sources: FEWS NET, FSNWG, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System (IPC), IOM, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP
June 27, 2022 U2609 STATE (HIU)

The southern and eastern pastoral areas of Ethiopia, north and eastern parts of Kenya, northern Uganda and a large part of south-central Somalia are the worst affected areas, with over 30 million people needing urgent humanitarian food assistance. According to IGAD, already 11 million livestock that are essential to many families' health and wealth have died. In this region, where the population lives mainly on livestock and agriculture, nearly 5.6 million people are now "acutely food insecure" in Somalia, 12 million in Ethiopia and 4.3 million in Kenya, according to the UN. Somalia is the most severely affected country, with more than half of its population (7.85 million people) affected by this drought.

Across the Horn of Africa, at least 36.4 million people will be affected by the most prolonged and severe drought in recent history in the last months of 2022, including 24.1 million in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.5 million in Kenya. This includes over 9 million women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) who face dangers to their health and aggravated risks of gender-based violence due to the drought, according to UNFPA.

It is reported that roads and settlements in many affected communities are littered with animal carcasses. Communities have lost half or more of their livestock. Prices for livestock – families' main income – have plunged by 70-85 percent, while prices for water and food have skyrocketed.

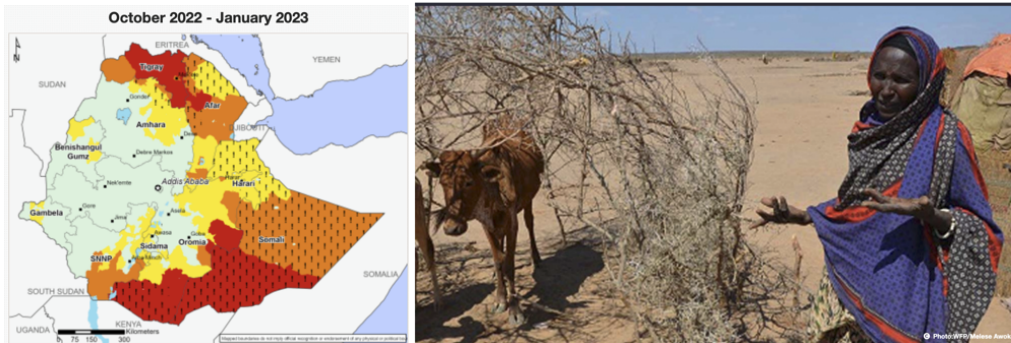
According to U.N. data, despite the EU giving \$74 million and the U.K. \$78 million, Japan gave \$27 million and Saudi Arabia \$22 million, only 56% of the 5.9 billion dollars requested by the UN to alleviate this crisis in 2023 has been funded. "Many of the traditional donors have washed their hands and focused on Ukraine," the U.N. resident coordinator in Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula, told Thomas-Greenfield during a briefing in [Mogadishu](#).

The United States, meanwhile, funded roughly \$1.3 billion to Somalia since the start of the 2022 fiscal year. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield who visited Somalia at the end of January 2023, announced that the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is providing more than \$41 million in new, urgently needed assistance for the people of Somalia. US First Lady Jill Biden also arrived in Kenya on Feb 25, 2023, kicking off a visit aimed at focusing attention on the worst drought.

Borana Zone - Ethiopia

Significant rainfall deficits led to widescale crop failure, household debt, severe fodder and feed shortages and diminished water access in the northern rainfall belt of Ethiopia.

The Borana zone of Oromia region in Southern Ethiopia is one of the places harshly hit by the worst drought in 40 years in East Africa. State-owned media cited authorities from the zone as saying that over 3.3 million livestock died because of the drought. The report has also confirmed that over 800,000 people are on the verge of facing famine.



Livestock production is the most important livelihood system in Borana Zone, providing food, income, socio-economic welfare, and insurance to pastoral and agropastoral households. This sector has been one of the most affected by frequent droughts, resulting in feed shortages and related emaciation, disease outbreak, livestock deaths, market imbalance and socio-economic crisis.

Deteriorating humanitarian situation has led to increased humanitarian needs across Ethiopia, with over 20 million people in crisis-affected communities needing humanitarian assistance. The situation in Ethiopia calls an extra effort from donor countries to respond to the high and urgent need for relief food and medical supplies, restoration of services and reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure.

China's "AGOA": Zero-Tariff Import of African Goods

The dual successes of the Johannesburg Summit in 2015 and the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2018 pushed China-Africa cooperation to a new and unprecedented high.

China has removed all tariffs on 98 per cent of the goods imported from 26 least developed African nations, including Ethiopia. The tariff policy will gradually expand to benefit all least-developed countries which have diplomatic ties with China. The new policy includes over 8,800 commodities, with China aiming to increase African imports to \$300 billion by 2025. A large proportion of Africa's exports to China were natural resources such as crude oil, copper, cobalt and iron ore, while its imports were frequently finished goods: machinery, electronics and textiles. This resulted in a trade surplus in China's favor. Zero-tariff treatment had a significant role in promoting the diversification of exports from the manufacturing industry.

In 2022, China's exports to Africa were \$164.49 billion, according to Chinese customs authorities, while imports from Africa reached \$117.51 billion. China has now become the continent's second largest export market after the US. The annual value of U.S. commerce with African states is now less than \$40 billion, just one-fifth the size of China-Africa trade. The West has to aggressively work on its trade policies and practices to regain the positive relations it had with the continent.

Ethiopia is now a beneficiary of the zero-tariff policy of China with effect on March 1, 2023. Out of 6422 Ethiopian products, only 1,644 items are eligible for the Chinese policy of zero tariff treatment. In 2021, bilateral trade volume reached 2.66 billion U.S. dollars, of which, China imported commodities of nearly 370 million U.S. dollars from Ethiopia, a year-on-year increase of 8.1 percent. Ethiopia is one of the largest recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa from China.

A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by the Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide visited China for an official visit to discuss bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The duty-free export privilege given to Ethiopia by the Chinese government doesn't require Ethiopia to reciprocate or allow any Chinese products imported duty free to Ethiopia, according to Ethiopia's Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration. Most products listed to be exported duty free from Ethiopia are manufactured goods the country is not manufacturing now. These include parts and accessories of various machineries, electronics

equipment, sunglasses, contact lenses, hand drying apparatus, cameras, projectors, electric smoothing irons, warships, vessels, sailboards, vacuum cleaner, soldering irons and guns, sound signaling equipment, etc.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

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