



NEWSLETTER

May 2023

Dear Friend,

It appears each and every day brings worse news from Ethiopia. Just recently, we have seen a political assassination, continued ethnic-based violence, forced displacements, drought, a haphazard and chaotic integration of Amhara special forces and Fano with the federal defense forces/police, a peace process that lacks a reconciliation and healing for those directly impacted, ethnic-based policies, imprisonment of journalists, demolition of homes and ever-increasing corrupt practices. Unfortunately also a new potential armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and residents of Gojjam, Gonder, Wollo, and some parts of Shewa- Amhara region is brewing.



No coincidence, we are receiving a voice of frustration and hopelessness from several Ethiopian Americans. AEPAC was founded at the time of greatest need to advance a Pro-Ethiopia policy, and I would say it has met its mission. Now is not the time for despair nor to give up, but to come together, be true to our mission and resolute to continue to work hard.

In the last 24 months, controversial US-Ethiopia policy has also become a concern to Ethiopian Americans, which now more than ever demands active engagement both with the Administration and legislators. So AEPAC has initiated a review of the proposed US-Africa new 21st partnership policy as one of its 2023 initiatives.

The US-Africa Partnership Strategy is an overarching endeavor by the US Government formed of several policies and initiatives, aimed at achieving four strategic objectives:

1. Foster Openness and Open Societies
2. Deliver Democratic and Security Dividends
3. Advance Pandemic Recovery and Economic Opportunity
4. Support Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and a Just Energy Transition

A key part of the strategy is Promoting Peace, Security, and Democratic Governance, which includes the US's efforts to promote human rights, and the rule of law; empower civil society; strengthen accountability mechanisms; and support democratic transitions and institutions in Africa. It also includes the 'US Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to Atrocities'.

In the economic aspects of the partnership strategy, the US is seeking to work with regional governments and international partners to build more stable and inclusive African economies. US support for sub-Saharan Africa's recovery is viewed as a prerequisite in Washington DC to regaining Africa's trust in US leadership, increasing US trade and investment, and creating both American and African jobs.

AEPAC's team believes that this strategy provides our organization and the larger diaspora advocacy Groups with the route to help shape a better US-Ethiopia relationship – one grounded in support for Ethiopia's people and with shared human values at its heart. We are putting together both a broad policy position and specific concrete reforms to US policy and will announce these in due course.

While many of us have now spent years becoming increasingly downhearted at the approach of the US Government towards Ethiopia, now is not the time to give up but instead to push harder. We hope you will be with us in this mission.

OLA-Shene

On April 25th, peace talks began between OLA-Shene and the Government of Ethiopia. While any negotiations that have a hope of bringing about peace and stability are of course to be welcomed, but talks must occur with pre-conditions. Namely, a verifiable end to violence and the guarantee of safety for the communities that have borne the brunt of OLA-Shene's human rights violations.

Negotiations must also place victims front and centre – ensuring transitional justice, criminal cases against violators and truth for the families of those who suffered. AEPAC will be active in making this case to US political stakeholders, via the press and online.

Ethiopian Constitutional Reform (ECR) Committees

At the core of many of Ethiopia's ongoing issues is the outdated system of ethno-federalism and the conflict between communities it fosters. AEPAC is committed to participating on Ethiopian constitutional reform as a long-term solution to the nation's challenges. We have now received many nominations for the committees at the heart of this effort. I would like to thank all those who took the time to nominate individuals of good moral character, integrity, honesty, and a strong sense of duty. We will now begin the process of selecting those who will form the committees and the larger advisory group. This is a historic undertaking that all parties involved should respect.

Ethiopia Congressional Caucus

Along with other AEPAC members, I met recently with Congressman John Garamendi, a true friend to Ethiopia and one of our diaspora's greatest champions in Washington DC. Rep. Garamendi also Chairs the Ethiopian Caucus. We discussed that group's legislative priorities for the coming year. We have also met with congressman Brian FitzPatrick and Congressman Boyle to solicit their participation in the Ethiopian Caucus. It remains vitally important that we continue our efforts on the Hill and for the political leaders of the US to be continually engaged in support of an agenda that seeks to support Ethiopia's citizens as they seek peace, freedom, democracy and economic opportunities.

Thank you for your partnership on this journey. Ethiopia's best days are ahead, if those of us with its best interests at heart stay engaged and active.

Yours ever,

Mesfin Tegenu, AEPAC Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mesfin Tegenu', is positioned below the typed name.

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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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