

Ethiopia: A message for you from US Ambassador Mike | U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa

February 14, 2018

[U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa](#)

Hi Everyone, we have a message for you from Ambassador Mike in light of events over the past several weeks:

The United States has long advocated for increasing the pace of democratic reform, respect for human rights, and creating space for inclusive dialogue because we believe these are important for Ethiopia's long term success. Shared goals such as broad-based economic growth, lasting stability, and regional peace need the full capacity of the Ethiopian people behind them if they are to be achieved.



In recent weeks, we have seen some promising steps in these directions, but also some reminders of the challenges that remain. One thing I've observed during my four-plus months here is that matters are rarely as clear-cut as anyone would like them to be. My goal is for our Embassy to play a constructive role in Ethiopia, one that supports the aspirations of those who seek a better future, without dictating what that future should be or how Ethiopia should get there. But there are certain principles that we stand for, and in light of recent events I want to reiterate those now.

People need to be free to express themselves peacefully, and to be confident that they can do so. Lethal force to protect the safety of the public, even in the face of violent protests, must always be a last resort. At the same time, people need to demonstrate their commitment to peaceful expression and dialogue. Political engagement needs to be done constructively – through strengthening institutions rather than destroying them, and never through the destruction of property, livelihoods, and lives. When laws are broken, there need to be consequences, but accountability should come through legal mechanisms and constitutional processes.

I am upset by the reports of deaths and violence, even as I am hopeful about what Ethiopia can accomplish if stated goals of reform are followed through with quick and comprehensive

action. As we seek to partner with all Ethiopians toward that better future, everyone must do their part. The United States will stay the course in Ethiopia, and I hope I can count on each of you to do the same.

Sincerely,
Ambassador Mike