

Dear Ambassador Cohen,

The Ethiopian-American Community is very disappointed about your hateful and divisive comments about events in Ethiopia's Amhara state. In comments on Twitter and in a BBC interview you blamed the victims and misled the US government and people about the situation in Ethiopia.

The root cause of the misery in Amhara and elsewhere in Ethiopia is the nation's constitution which is based on divide and rule ethnic federalism,

Ethnic conflicts that threaten to tear Ethiopia apart are the result of the 1994 Constitution, introduced by then-Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front governing coalition. The constitution recast the country from a centrally unified republic to a federation of nine regional ethnic states and two federally administered city states. The system of ethnic federalism was troubled with internal inconsistencies because ethnic groups do not live only in a discrete "homeland" territory but are dispersed across the country. Non-native ethnic minorities live within every ethnic homeland.

Ethiopia does not have a long history of ethnic division. By making these false claims you are not only creating a false version of history, but more importantly you are justifying hatred and intolerance that has no place in the modern world. You should stop abusing the confidence the media places in you as a former government official. Please either work for peace and reconciliation or remain quiet.

Mesfin Mekonen