



Global Amhara Coalition (GAC)
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May 20, 2021

The Honorable, Anthony Blinken,
The United States Secretary of State
US Department of State
2021C street NW
Washington, DC 20520

RE: So-called Western Tigray

Dear Mr. Secretary of State

We are Ethiopian-Americans from the Amhara ethnic group residing in the US. We have very carefully examined the recent Press Statement by the US Department of State entitled, "Continuing Atrocities and Denial of Humanitarian Access in Ethiopia's Tigray Region". We are certainly supportive of any genuine expressions of concern by the United States of America and others for victims' human rights violations and their right to live in peace and security anywhere in Ethiopia. But such expressions of concern should never be done selectively.

We too are greatly concerned and do care about the rights of all groups of Ethiopians who face any form of oppression, ethnic or faith-based killing, displacement, marginalization and subjugation. Regardless of who holds state power in Ethiopia, targeting and killing innocent civilians constitutes crimes against humanity, and those who are found to have committed such crimes must be held accountable. Your Excellency

As you know, Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries which has maintained its freedom, independence and unity until the most divisive anti-Ethiopian group known as the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) assumed state power with the support of the United States and Great Britain in 1991.

This unfortunate and tragic blunder was committed by the then Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Herman Cohen, who crafted and facilitated the illegal takeover of state power by TPLF without proper negotiations with the representatives of the then existing Ethiopian Government. The TPLF which espoused the goal of secession to form the Republic of Tigray was allowed, thanks to Mr. Cohen and others in the U.S. Administration, to control the whole country and rule it with an iron hand for 27 years. This brutal Marxist Leninist group partitioned the country along ethnic and language lines. As a consequence, the many bonds and commonalities that have united Ethiopians over the centuries have given way to ethnic polarization, division and human insecurity in all parts of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Parliament has recently declared the TPLF a terrorist organization as has the United States Government at earlier period. Rightly so because the group has committed numerous heinous crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide most notably against the Amhara people and followers of the Orthodox Christian faith. Sadly, these atrocities have gotten scant attention much less condemnation by the international community.

Your Excellency

We wish to bring to your attention that the TPLF's animus and proclivity for ethnic cleansing and genocide surfaced more than 40 years ago. In 1976, the TPLF issued a Marxist-Leninist Manifesto declaring that the Amhara population is a mortal enemy of the people of Tigray. The Manifesto also sought to incorporate into Tigray certain regions of the former Gondar province.

It saddens us that in your most recent statement issued by the Department of State, you mentioned a precedent-setting policy position that accepts the TPLF position of "Western Tigray" as part and parcel of "Greater Tigray" designed by the TPLF itself and contested for more than 40 years by the indigenous population, predominantly Amharas.

We wish to go on record that the so-called "Western Tigray" is a region that has been part of North Western portion of Gondar province since 384 A D, for over 1, 660 years. There was no geographical region called "Western Tigray" before 1991 when the TPLF terrorist group annexed those fertile lands, incorporated these lands into Tigray illegally. This was done by force and coercion. Thousands of innocent people were murdered, displaced, arbitrarily incarcerated, and forced to flee their homeland and properties by the TPLF. These occupied lands include Wolkait, Telemt and Tegede, (commonly known as north western Gondar). As Appendix 1 shows the historical political geography of the Amhara region prior to the illegal annexation of the areas in 1991. The region spans 4 sub-regions as shown in the Map. It is home to over 40 million Amhara people.

The insinuation by the U.S. Department of State that these lands are part of "Western Tigray" and must revert to this region is wrong. We wish to go on record that such declaration will lead to a catastrophic civil war. Tigrean-Ethiopians have the right to live

and work in these lands as they have done historically. But these lands are part and parcel of the Amhara region and not of Tigray.

Accordingly, we are diametrically opposed to the idea of return of the so-called "Western Tigray" to the transitional government of Tigray. This pronouncement by the U.S. Department of State that you head is solely based on disinformation and misinformation that were pumped into the State Department by TPLF surrogates, lobbyists and TPLF foreign agents. For your reference we included Appendix 2 as evidence to show where the current geographical span is demonstrated and what TPLF currently refers as Western Tigray. It is worth noting how large of an area (an estimated 12,323.35km²) has been illegally included as part of the so called "Western Tigray". At the beginning of 1991, soon after TPLF came to power and the government began aggressively and forcefully implementing the "tigranization" ideology of what were once historically under the Gonder jurisdiction. These areas were declared Western Tigray without any consent of Amahra residents at the time.

It is also our considered assessment that the move is unequivocally planned and designed to smuggle out TPLF remnants for ultimate restoration to power. The press release by the Department of State is not in line with the ground realities of historical, identity and constitutional parameters. We consider the move as hand twisting and bullying Ethiopia disingenuously.

We believe the US should be an impartial player rather than hoodwinking Ethiopians for the sake of America's national interest. This is also gross violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty undertaken hastily without objective justifications. We strongly believe that a destabilized and fragmented Ethiopia is not in the national interest of the United States of America.

We, descendants of the Amhara ethnic group, vehemently oppose your statement that Wolkait, Tegede, Telemt and other Amhara lands should revert to Tigray; and that the Amhara Special forces should be withdrawn from their own ancestral lands (north western Gondar). To repeat, these lands were annexed and incorporated into Greater Tigray in 1991.

Given the unprecedented nature of the statement, we condemn the statement in the strongest possible terms.

Finally, we hope that the United States Government will reconsider and retract its position that we believe is based on a false narrative supplied by the TPLF and its allies, and on the misreading of Ethiopian history and the history of this region.

Meanwhile, we urge the United States Government to seriously look into the on-going government sponsored Amhara Genocide in Oromia, Benshanguel-Gumez regions and recently in North Shewa Zone of the Amhara region; and take considerable measures to pressure the Ethiopian Government to stop the Amhara Genocide, to establish an

independent inquiry commission that can fully investigate these heinous crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Respectfully yours,

Members of Global Amhara Coalition – GAC.

CC : Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime minister of the FDRE

W/o Sahlework Zewde, President of FDRE

Ato Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of FDRE

Ato Agegnehu Teshager, President of the Amhara Regional Government

Prof. Daniel Kitaw, Vice President of the Amhara Scholars Council

Prof. Belete Molla, Chairman, National Movement of Amhara (አብኛ)

Nancy Pelosi, House Speaker of the US Congress, United States

Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader of the Senate, United States

Mark Warner, Chair of the United States Senate Intelligence Committee

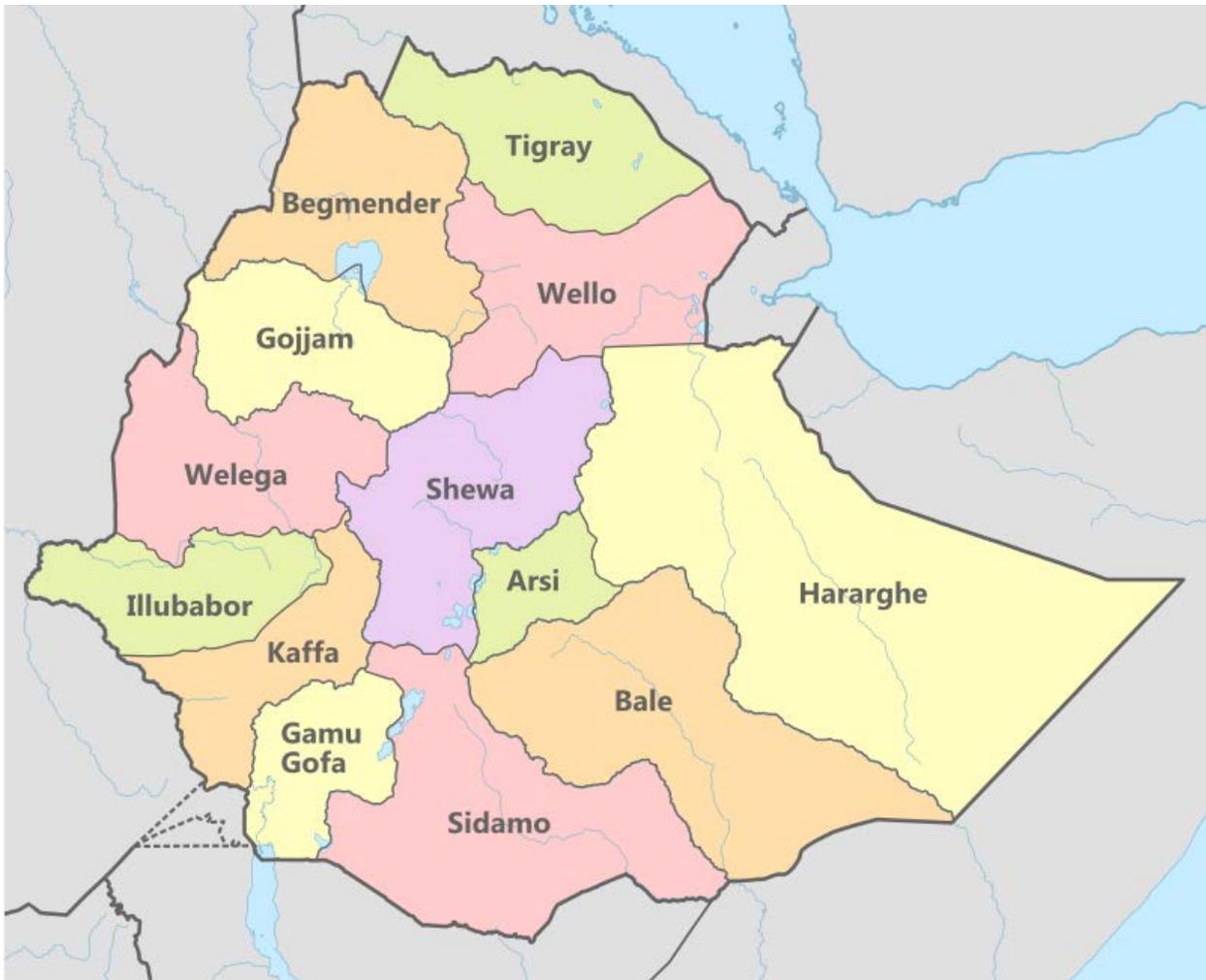
Bob Menedez, Chair of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Gregory Meeks, Chair of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Relations

Karen Bass, Chair of the United States House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa

Ambassador Geeta Pasi, United States Ambassador to Ethiopia

Appendix I: Historical political geography of the Amhara region prior to 1991



Appendix 2; The political geography of Amhara regions after 1991 (ie., after TPLF came to power)

