

Washington Update

April 2, 2021

The U.S. and the global community must do everything possible to stop the killing and human rights abuses. Assistance from the international community can help prevent Ethiopia from becoming a failed state and a haven for terrorists only if it bases its actions in an accurate understanding of the situation on the ground.

Unfortunately, resolutions calling for an end to violence in Ethiopia that are pending in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are based on a flawed conception of the conflict. By failing to acknowledge the TPLF atrocities and need to step back from policies based on ethnic division that are foreign to Ethiopia's history, the resolutions could make a terrible situation even worse.

The lack of balance in reporting about Ethiopia is exemplified by the world's indifference to the fate of over 600 innocent people who were killed by TPLF soldiers and militia on November 12 in Mai-Kadra.

The massacre, and the identity of its perpetrators, have been described by Amnesty International and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

The recent letter to his constituency, Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) wrote, As the lead Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee dealing with human rights and civilian protection, I feel a great sense of responsibility to stand up against the sort of discrimination and violence that you have described. I strongly condemn the atrocities carried out in Metekel, Mai-Kadra, West Welega, and Guraferda, and urge the Ethiopian government to ensure that all its people, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or political affiliations, can live in peace and security. Rest assured that, as your Senator, I will continue advocating for the protection of human rights in Ethiopia and around the world.

There are many other examples of ethnically motivated violence in Ethiopia, including in Metekel where ethnic Gumuz armed groups have engaged in a targeted campaign against members of other ethnic groups in the area, including the Amhara.

The government of Ethiopia must carry out its basic responsibility to ensure public safety and security by ending the politically motivated violence in the Oromia, Benshangul and Southern regions of the country.

In his opening remarks to the recent hearing of the House Africa Subcommittee on the crisis in Ethiopia, Rep. Chris Smith stressed the importance of Ethiopia, called for a return to peace, and said that long-term stability requires dismantling the system of ethnic division that was created by the TPLF regime. “It is my belief that Ethiopia is one of the two most strategically significant countries in Africa—Nigeria being the other one—and what happens there is amplified throughout the region,” he said. “

Ethiopian-Americans recommend adding the following language to Senate Resolution 97:

Add this to the Preamble:

WHEREAS the unabated and ongoing politically-orchestrated ethnic cleansing of Amhara farmers in the Wollega region of Oromia and in the Metekel region of Benishangul has resulted in gruesome killings of tens of thousands and in the creation, inside Ethiopia and in southeastern Sudan, of over 60,000 refugees;

Reformulate the language of (1):

Now be it Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) Strongly disapproves the attacks on by the now banned Tigray Peoples Liberation Movement (TPLF) on Northern Command headquarters in Tigray in early November 2020 that no government can tolerate, and the Maikadra massacre of civilians by the retreating TPLF forces;

Add a new (B) to the list:

(5) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

(B) immediately carry out its basic responsibility to ensure public safety and security by ending the politically motivated violence in the Oromia and Southern regions of the country;

(7) (A) [delete any reference to the TPLF since it is a terrorist organization that is now banned in Ethiopia for treason by an act of Parliament. No self-respecting government will negotiate with a banned organization].

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