

Washington Update - by Mesfin Mekonen
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The events in Afghanistan must not distract the world from the catastrophe that is occurring in Ethiopia. The crumbling of the Afghan government, and the horrors that are already being imposed on its people, should serve as a reminder that U.S. policies must be rooted in accurate and unbiased information. Lies, fantasies and selective reporting led to disastrous failures in Afghanistan. The same is happening in Ethiopia.

U.S. Ethiopian policy has been distorted by a failure to understand the corrosive effects of a constitution that exacerbates ethnic divisions, by a willingness ignore human rights abuses, and a desire to simplify complex conflicts into fights between forces of good and evil.

In attempting to mediate the conflicts in Ethiopia, special envoy Jeffrey Feltman must not repeat mistakes the U.S. has made in the past when it excluded pro-democracy Ethiopian parties from negotiations over the nation's future. The U.S. should not forget recent history, including the corruption, violence and human rights abuses of the EPRDF and TPLF.

OLF/Shenne terrorist group has struck a military alliance with the Tigray forces now pressing toward the country's capital, as [the conflict](#) that erupted in the Tigray region last year spreads into other parts of Africa's second-most populous country.

The TPLF and OLF/Shenne terrorist group activities might be a breeding ground for Al Queda and Al Shebab in Ethiopia.

The recent statement from Ethiopia Foreign Minister on the looting and killings innocent civilians in the Lalibela, Woldeya and Afar regions: "The action of the irresponsible group is testing the Federal Government's patience and pushing it to change its defensive mood which has been taken for the sake of the unilateral humanitarian ceasefire," the statement read. The statement added that the Ethiopian government is "being pushed to mobilize and deploy the entire defensive capability of the state if its humanitarian overtures for a peaceful resolution of the conflict remain unreciprocated," and accused Tigrayan fighters of launching "new attacks in the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar, which left more than 300,000 people displaced and thousands dead."

The U.S. must also avoid sanctions that will merely annoy powerful individuals in Ethiopia while imposing additional misery on ordinary people.

In developing policies toward the escalating civil war, the U.S. and the international community must keep their eyes open.

A recent statement Rep. Gregory Meeks on escalating violence in Ethiopia civil war is a step in the right direction. “The recent ejection of international humanitarian actors, the armed incursion into Lalibela - a holy site and home of renowned UNESCO World Heritage sites - and the grim discovery of bound and possibly tortured corpses in the Tekeze River indicate parties to this conflict remain callously indifferent to the suffering of the Ethiopian people. All parties must accede to an immediate cessation of hostilities and avoid taking Ethiopia down the path toward civil war and state collapse. I call on the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front to withdraw from Amhara and Afar regions, as well as on Eritrean troops and Amhara forces to leave Tigray. African and other international partners have an important role in bringing the Government of Ethiopia and other parties to the conflict closer to the negotiating table and to an inclusive national dialogue without further delay.”



The UNESCO World Heritage Site at Lalibela, in Ethiopia's northern Amhara region.