



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

November 24, 2020

His Excellency Abiy Ahmed
Prime Minister
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Lorenzo Te'azaz Road
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dear Prime Minister Abiy:

We write to express our grave concern over the ongoing fighting in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. We commend your commitment to reforming Ethiopia since your appointment as Prime Minister in April 2018, specifically efforts to pursue accountability for human rights violations, normalize relations with Eritrea, open political space, improve media freedom, and support increased U.S. trade and investment. However, continued hostilities in Tigray, and particularly threats to shell civilian areas, threaten to erase hard fought reforms under your leadership and risk destabilizing Ethiopia and the broader Horn of Africa.

We recognize that tensions between the federal government and the Tigray regional government have been brewing for some time, and we condemn the attacks by the Tigray People's Liberation Front on Ethiopian National Defense Forces military bases, as well as rockets launched in neighboring Eritrea. However, as Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, we look to you for decisive leadership to ensure the safety and security of all Ethiopians, advance peace and stability across all of Ethiopia, and bring an immediate end to this conflict.

We are deeply concerned about reports of civilian casualties, as well as the safety of all U.S. citizens in Tigray. We are also concerned about rising internal displacement and refugee outflows, and a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. As a result of poor communications inside Tigray and lack of access to affected populations, humanitarian partners have not been able to appropriately assess need and ensure services for displaced persons and other vulnerable populations. Finally, we are concerned about the recent arrests of journalists and restrictions on international press accessing and reporting from Tigray.

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We ask for your commitment to immediately cease hostilities, de-escalate tensions, and accept mediation efforts offered by the African Union. We also urge your government to restore telecommunications in the Tigray region and ensure safe and unfettered humanitarian access in the region to avert a humanitarian crisis. Finally, we ask for your leadership to support an independent investigation of atrocities committed by all sides in the conflict and ensure that these hostilities do not fuel ethnic tensions and the targeting of civilians based on ethnic identity.

As Members of the U.S. Congress, we will continue to support efforts to strengthen the relationship between our two countries and advocate for robust assistance to preserve democratic gains, spur economic growth, advance peace and security, and support the well-being of all Ethiopian citizens. However, the ongoing fighting and increasing internationalization of this conflict threatens these key priorities and further risks destabilizing the broader region. We stand ready to support efforts to find a peaceful and negotiated settlement to this conflict.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Ranking Member