



Statement from the Amhara Association of America (AAA)

Amhara Representatives Forced to Walk Out of Ethiopian Diaspora Peace Conference Private Meeting

August 1, 2023

On Saturday, July 22, 2023, representatives from the local Amhara diaspora including a representative from the Amhara Association of America (AAA) attended a private peace meeting organized by the Horn of Africa Community organization and attended by Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa (SEHOA) Ambassador Mike Hammer. The Amhara community was invited to the event three days before the event after AAA reached out to a keynote speaker requesting a meeting to make sure they understood Amharas' perspective on how to promote lasting peace in Ethiopia. Other attendees included representatives from the Somali, Tigrayan and Oromo diaspora communities. The Saturday event was preceded by a public conference which took place on Friday, July 21, 2023, that featured keynote speakers including the SEHOA, Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, and a panel of the diaspora representatives. The event took place in San Diego, California at the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego.

The private meeting involved representatives from the above-mentioned communities presenting ideas for reaching a common consensus to resolve challenges facing various communities collectively. Unfortunately, the Amhara delegation was forced to walk out of the meeting without reaching a consensus on recommendations for SEHOA and the State Department. Although the Amhara delegation contributed to drafting multiple overarching policy recommendations, the opaque, unfair and haphazard process ultimately resulted in several red line issues of Amharas not being incorporated into the final list while several proposals unilaterally proposed by other groups were included.

Aside from using wording that obfuscate the Amhara genocide in Oromia Region and Abiy's war on Amhara, some of the recommendations proposed by the Amhara representatives that were not accepted by representatives of Oromo, Tigray and/or Ogaden-Somali communities included:

1. An admission of the failure of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (Pretoria Peace Deal) to bring lasting peace in Ethiopia as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's war on Amhara has continued for months.
2. A call for the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Prosperity Party and establishment of a civilian-led transitional government as a necessary step to ending atrocities including the state-sanctioned Amhara genocide and beginning a genuine transition centering accountability.
3. Accountability for all atrocities committed by the TPLF/EPRDF regime before November 2020.
4. Recognition of ethnic cleansing in Sheger/outskirts of Addis Ababa and the need to halt the ethnic cleansing and holding Oromia Region officials accountable.
5. An inclusive process to allow Ethiopians to decide on changing/amending the Constitution that was imposed on them by TPLF and OLF in 1995 and has been fueling conflict in Ethiopia.

While we expected the US government officials to play a positive, neutral role in the process. Regrettably, the interventions made by officials were dismissive to our issues and concerns. Furthermore, representatives from one of the other communities directed extremely violent and genocidal remarks towards the Amhara community repeatedly (i.e. inciting ethnic cleansing and genocide of *all* Amharas in Oromia Region) and no actions were taken to call out the speakers' genocidal remark. These repeated genocidal remarks and the overall unproductive engagements left the Amhara representatives no option but to walk out of the meeting. Furthermore, the Amhara representatives encouraged the event organizers to include other disenfranchised communities in future discussions including representatives from the Afar, Gambella, Gurage and other communities which are facing respective challenges.

More broadly, AAA remains concerned about the policy decisions of the Biden Administration in relation to Ethiopia. Aside from not being balanced in addressing community concerns, the State Department has continued to fail to recognize the grave plights Amharas are facing including as a result of the ongoing war in Amhara Region and the Amhara Genocide in Oromia Region. Thus, AAA on behalf of the Amhara-Ethiopian diaspora community continues to call for:

- An end to the Abiy regime's genocidal war on Amharas.
- A new peace deal which is more comprehensive and inclusive of all communities in Ethiopia.
- The immediate and unconditional release of all Amhara political prisoners.
- The immediate restoration of all telecommunications and internet services in the Amhara Region.
- Justice and accountability for crimes committed against Amharas since at least 1983.
- Targeted sanctions against all government officials, military leaders, and armed groups implicated in atrocities against Amharas and other groups.
- International independent investigations into the ongoing Amhara Genocide in Oromia Region and the role of Oromo Prosperity Party leaders including Abiy Ahmed and Shimelis Abdisa.
- Resettlement of millions of Amharas ethnically cleansed from their homes across Ethiopia including from the Oromia Region, Addis Ababa and surrounding areas.

AAA will continue to support genuine peace initiatives and engage all stakeholders to promote an inclusive and comprehensive process that can bring genuine and lasting peace in Ethiopia.

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***About AAA:** The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a nonprofit organization that coordinates the advocacy efforts of Ethiopia's Amhara diaspora in the United States to Congress, the Executive Branch, non-governmental organizations, and international bodies. Visit www.amharaamerica.org for more information.*