

August 18, 2022

To:

H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, High Representative for the Horn of Africa, AU
H.E. Mike Hammer, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, USA
H.E. Annette Weber, Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, EU
H.E. Sarah Montgomery, Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa and Red Sea, UK
H.E. Xue Bing, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Affairs, People's Republic of China

CC:

H.E. President Macky Sall, Chairperson of the African Union and President of Senegal
H.E. Mousa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission
H.E. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General, United Nations
H.E. Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union For Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Subject: **Exclusion of Amharas from the Peace Negotiation Process will not Bring Lasting Peace in Northern Ethiopia**

Your Excellencies,

We, the below signed Amhara organizations, appreciate your relentless effort to bring a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia. Amharas are the largest affected community due to the war. As we write this letter, millions of Amharas in TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) occupied areas in Wag Hemra, Raya Alamata, Raya Bala, and Telemt are under siege with no access to aid and basic services (health care, electricity, telecommunications or banking services). Survivors of the Mai-Kadra Massacre perpetrated by TPLF allied forces are being denied aid, and budget by the Ethiopian Government. Thousands of rape survivors are dealing with trauma, stigma and poverty. A month ago, thousands of Amharas were killed in the latest massacre of the ongoing Amhara Genocide in the Oromia Region. We are painfully aware of the devastation this war and the general lack of peace and stability throughout the nation has brought to Amharas and other Ethiopians, and we would support any effort to end the conflict peacefully. We thus are encouraged by the ongoing effort to get parties of the war to negotiate.

However, we are seriously concerned by the exclusion of Amharas from the expected negotiations. The negotiation process thus far has only involved the Prosperity Party (dominated by Oromo Prosperity Party) and TPLF, and has continued to exclude Amharas. The Amhara people have an immense stake in the negotiations; a final resolution on the identity and border questions of Welkait, Setit Humera, Telemt, Tegede and Raya, restitution for Amharas affected by the war, justice for the thousands killed, raped, and millions displaced, demobilization of TPLF, amendment to the ethnic-apartheid constitution, accountability for the crimes committed against Amharas by the TPLF and the ruling Prosperity Party, as well as the release of the nearly 13,000 Amharas arbitrarily arrested by Prosperity Party. Among these are Amhara Fano patriots who were key to turning the tide of the war by defending against TPLF invading forces and dislodging TPLF and OLA (Oromo Liberation Army) forces from the Amhara and Afar Regions. Sidelining non-partisan and

genuine voices of Amharas from the negotiations will not help achieve the intended outcome – lasting peace.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's regime lacks the mandate, support, and standing to negotiate on behalf of Amharas at a time when Amharas are demanding his resignation and independent investigations into his and his party's complicity in enabling and/or direct involvement of the genocide against Amharas. At the time of this writing, Abiy's regime has jailed dozens of Amhara university students for organizing peaceful protests against his administration across the Amhara Region and Addis Ababa. No credible observer would support a government that has jailed more than 13,000 Amharas - mainly patriotic Fano veterans that fought against TPLF and notable Amhara advocates, journalists and opposition politicians - as an acceptable delegate on behalf of Amharas. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has dismissed the questions of representation of Amharas, including in a question presented to him during a recent parliamentary session. Amharas are thus anxious about what the negotiations will likely entail and what could be agreed on for matters that immensely affect them without their presence in these negotiations.

We also believe that the negotiation process has been made a matter of the ruling party instead of the Ethiopian Federal and Regional Governments. To date, the TPLF is a designated terrorist group by the FDRE parliament. Prosperity Party has not even cared to consult the parliament and get the mandate to negotiate with a designated terrorist group. Making the entire initiative a party affair not only makes the Ethiopian Government lack the mandate and legal basis such an important national issue requires but also turns the negotiation into a power-sharing agreement among former members of the EPRDF. Such missteps are not only indicative of authoritarianism by Abiy but also signal the possibility of the entire process being insincere and shrouded in secrecy in a way that leaves out all mandated government institutions as well as the major stakeholders in the matter. If the process is not directed under more legal auspices and is not representative of all stakeholders, we believe there will be a high chance of the entire process falling apart, prolonging human suffering and triggering more conflicts in the country.

Furthermore, we are also concerned by the exclusion of civil societies from the negotiations. International experience has shown that when victim groups are represented in the peace deal process, there is a better chance of accountability for crimes committed by warring parties. With the absence of civil society actors advocating for accountability for the crimes committed by warring parties, even in the unlikely scenario of a peace deal, the warring parties could agree on impunity to crimes and evade accountability.

Thus, in light of these concerns, we urge you to :

1. Exert maximum pressure on TPLF to leave Amhara areas it occupies as a precondition to begin the negotiation.
2. Pressure the Prosperity Party and TPLF to accept an inclusive negotiation process, and invite Amharas representatives to be part of the negotiation process.
3. Demand the warring parties accept the inclusion of civil societies to ensure victims' voices are represented and accountability for the crimes committed is elevated to be a primary agenda through the negotiation process.
4. Exert maximum pressure on the Ethiopian Government to allocate adequate budget and restore basic services to Amhara areas affected by the war including the Welkait Tegade Setit Humera Zone.

5. Pressure Abiy Ahmed's regime to end the crackdown against Fano, Amhara activists and politicians, free all detained political prisoners, and end the ongoing Amhara Genocide in Oromia Region and elsewhere in the country.

We hope you will take action to save the negotiation process from falling apart. Amharas have lived through 30 years of hell on earth in Ethiopia because of destiny-changing decisions made without their presence in 1991 by almost the same actors who are about to negotiate at Amharas' expense currently. Given what is transpiring in the country right now and based on the experience of relentless targeting, agreeing to live (or perish) under conditions set in their absence is a deed no Amhara voice will endorse. We kindly encourage you to stay in touch with the Amhara Association of America (AAA) for any questions and further discussions on this matter.

Signatories

1. Amhara Association in Switzerland (AAS)
2. Amhara Association in Queensland (AAQ)
3. Amhara Association in South Wales, Australia
4. Amhara Association of America (AAA)
5. Amhara Association of California (San Diego)
6. Amhara Association of Colorado
7. Amhara Association of Georgia
8. Amhara Association of Los Angeles
9. Amhara Association of Nevada
10. Amhara Association of Seattle
11. Amhara Families Society of Wellington Incorporated
12. Amhara Heritage Society of Minnesota
13. Amhara Human Rights and Genocide Warning (AHRGW)
14. Amhara People's Civic Organization, Dallas Tx
15. Amhara Professionals Union (APU)
16. Amhara Students Association (in Ethiopia)
17. Amhara Youth Association (in Ethiopia)
18. Association Amhara Ethiopienne en France (AAEF)
19. Calgary Amhara Association
20. Canadian Amhara Societies Alliance (CASA)
21. Dejen for Amhara Survival
22. Edmonton Amhara Association
23. Federation of Amhara Associations in North America (FANA)
24. Federation of Amhara Associations in Australia (FAAA)
25. Genocide Prevention in Ethiopia (GPE)
26. London Ontario Amhara Society Forum
27. The Amhara Association of New England
28. Vereinigung der Amhara in Deutschland (VAD)