



CALL FOR GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPE TO STEER AWAY FROM UNITED STATES' POSITION ON ETHIOPIA

We, the members of the Steering Group of the [Defend Ethiopia Task Force in Europe](#) (DETFE), have noted with concern the [Executive Order](#) issued by President Joseph R. Biden on September 17, 2021 in relation to the situation in northern Ethiopia.

The DETFE is a voluntary non-partisan multi-country group of Ethiopians, their friends and families as well as many citizens of European countries - organized in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Our main mission is to 'call out' disinformation and misinformation about Ethiopia promulgated by anti-Ethiopia elements on mainstream and social media and by some prominent European politicians, that misdirects and misleads country-level policies and the political actions of some European Governments and International and Non-Governmental Organizations with respect to their relations with the Ethiopian Government and its people.

The European Union (EU) has been a strong and pro-active supporter of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ever since his accession in April 2018. The European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are very well aware of the Ethiopian context as it prevailed after the fall of the Derg in 1991 and since then. Indeed, Europe and many individual member states took a strong position opposing Meles Zenawi's government following post-election unrest in 2005 in which hundreds were killed by the security forces. Sadly, the Meles autocracy deepened its grip on the country after the 2005 elections, such that opposition and free speech were all but wiped out for much of the following 13 years. It is thus unfortunate that the current context is in fact a direct legacy attributable to the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF)'s autocracy! Ethiopia needs the EU and its partners' continued support at this critical time.

It is understandable too that, in a post-pandemic world, with the global economy in turmoil and recovery over the horizon and as yet out of sight, and whilst the geo-political situation is in a state of flux that does not favour developing or smaller economies - loyalties are under extreme pressure! It is not acceptable however that countries most in need of proactive and unified support from the largest economies, should be left behind! Yet this is precisely what is happening to Ethiopia, right now.

Whilst we salute the active engagement of the President of the United States with respect to the humanitarian crisis and related challenges in Ethiopia - a country with a long history of statehood, independence and resilience; we remain gravely concerned by the continued misleading US-lead international posture where, putting a terrorist group (TPLF) and the legitimate government of Ethiopia on the same footing, is somehow regarded as acceptable, this does not speak well to the global community's stated values.

It is therefore appropriate to point out at this stage that the current US Administration, which is just 36 weeks old, has not shown itself to be adept where international relations are concerned e.g. Afghanistan and the Australian/French submarine deal, among others. Yet the misguided opinion of this administration in relation to Ethiopia is not being challenged by the USA's key partners, in particular the EU and its member states. As the truth unfolds, contemporary history will all too soon look back at this period and visit shame upon those countries who stood idly by and said/did nothing to help the people and government of Ethiopia. The EU & EC can and should do more to help Ethiopia navigate successfully through these troubled waters and onwards to embedding political reform and democracy.

With regard to President Joseph R Biden Jr's [Executive Order](#), we have many reservations and we are concerned that it will have an impact on the policies and actions of European governments, many of whom though well qualified have failed to adopt a more nuanced and historical approach to the understanding of the Ethiopian context, thus ignoring the voice of the tens of millions of Ethiopians who have spoken through the [country's sixth general elections this year](#).





DEFEND ETHIOPIA EUROPE

We strongly contest the Biden administration's mistaken position on the situation in Ethiopia and we support the [Ethiopian American Civic Council call](#) to the people of the United States to engage and heighten their awareness of the potentially dangerous policy currently being pursued by their government in relation to Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa (HOA) generally. America cannot on the one hand promise peace or stability in this region whilst it enforces sanctions on the other hand, a strategy that has failed in the most recent past!

Therefore, we believe it is time for the European Union and its member states to adopt a more independent tack in regard to their own security and on key foreign policy issues especially Ethiopia, the GERD and the HOA.

We call upon all European Governments to rethink their approach to Ethiopia's situation, differentiate their position from the United States' stance on Ethiopia, with a self-standing perspective that prioritises Europe's security, economic interest and minimises the risk of further mass migration on the old continent.

The most obvious position that serves the interests of the European Union, its member states and Ethiopia is to distance itself from the sanctions, question and debate the United States' ill-advised position whilst avoiding the use of humanitarian assistance as a pretext for advancing local political agendas, something that goes against European values. As voting citizens in our respective countries in Europe, we call upon our European governments to take a constructive approach, cultivate trust and create and promote a fuller understanding of the context and complexities that are Ethiopia.

The voice of the Ethiopian People must be listened to and respected, the undue pressure on the Government of Ethiopia has to stop, the Ethiopian led national dialogue should be supported and encouraged and the promising journey of political and economic reform already started by the newly elected government of Ethiopia must be tangibly supported, as these will ultimately lead to peace and stability in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

We thank you for your time and trust that you will deploy the power and influence of Europe to support Abiy and the people of Ethiopia as they continue to emerge from decades of relative darkness to a promising pathway towards dialogue, unity and prosperity.

The Steering Group of Defend Ethiopia Task Force in Europe organized in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.



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