

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW 85
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

As representatives of one of the largest Ethiopian Diaspora groups in the country, we are alarmed by the growing unrest and reports of human rights abuses in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is an important partner in the region that helps promote security and economic and political stability. We urge the Department of State to do everything in its power to work towards a peaceful resolution to the violence and to restore democratic processes and human rights.

When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in 2018, we were encouraged to see his commitment to economic and political reforms within Ethiopia and to pursuing peace with neighboring countries. Unfortunately, recent events undermine progress in these areas. Excessive use of force against protestors by the Ethiopian security forces have been documented. This comes on the heels of limits on free speech and restrictions on an open internet that run counter to the inclusive, open political reforms committed to by Prime Minister Abiy early in his tenure. In addition, disturbing reports of widespread violence against ethnic and religious communities threaten the stability and social fabric of the country.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the arrests and detention of individuals, particularly youth, that are potentially politically motivated. This includes the arrests of two Washington state residents on June 30, 2020, Yusuf Beshir and Redwan Aman. Both have since been released on bail but are not allowed to leave the country. Concerns for their safety remain especially as violence and unrest grows. We ask that you work with the Ethiopian government to ensure due process in their cases and the safe return of both Yusuf and Redwan to their communities here in Washington.

A peaceful and stable Ethiopia is important to the United States, to security and prosperity in the region, and to the Ethiopian Diaspora communities across the U.S. We urge you to work with the Ethiopian government and other stakeholders to bring an end to the violence and restore democratic norms and human rights in Ethiopia.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress