

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2004

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Secretary Blinken,

We write to you today to request that you issue an immediate 18-month designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ethiopia. While we commend the administration’s swift work to safeguard Ukrainians and Afghans in the United States from war and humanitarian disaster, **we are deeply concerned that TPS has not yet been designated for Ethiopia given the ongoing civil war.**

TPS authority stems from the same deeply held principles that underpin the U.S. refugee and asylum systems—that the United States will not return people to situations where their lives or freedom will be threatened. In addition to humanitarian protection, TPS provides many benefits to the United States. It keeps families and communities stabilized, ensuring they can remain together and support themselves. TPS is a boom to the U.S. economy, adding workers—including essential workers during this pandemic—and new businesses. It also plays an important role on the national stage, setting an example for the world on human rights—as this administration just did with Ukraine and Afghanistan—as well as increasing remittances which can serve as unofficial foreign aid to assist people, families, and economies in countries in crisis.

For over a year, international non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia have documented severe famine conditions, sexual violence as a weapon of war, crumbling infrastructure, and more. According to USAID, about 7 million people in northern Ethiopia face severe acute food insecurity and 8.1 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.¹ We are particularly concerned over media reports of drone warfare against civilians and vital infrastructure, a continued escalation of violence that deepens this human rights and humanitarian crisis.² On March 7, 2022, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights reported even more rapidly deteriorating conditions since late 2021, including widespread “rapes and lethal air strikes.”³

In March 2022, the U.S. State Department re-upped its highest-level do not travel advisory due to “armed conflict, civil unrest, communications disruptions, crime, and the potential for terrorism and kidnapping in border areas.”⁴ The next day, the State Department withdrew all non-emergency U.S. government employees and their family members from Ethiopia due to violence and severe supply shortages.⁵ While Tigrayan forces and the Ethiopian government declared a humanitarian truce on March 24, 2022, only a tiny amount of food aid has been allowed to reach Tigray since then. With up to 900,000 people in Tigray facing famine conditions, and the Horn of Africa’s worst drought in 40 years threatening famine in other parts of the country, the United States must not return anyone to such conditions and must provide protection through TPS designation.⁶

A country is typically designated for TPS when conditions in the country fall into one or more of the three statutory bases for designation: ongoing armed conflict, environmental disasters, or extraordinary and temporary conditions. Due to the atrocities, we have witnessed within Ukraine and Afghanistan, the TPS designation for these countries will save the lives of countless men and women. We have witnessed, extra-judicial killings, massacres, gender-based violence, and forced displacement documented in Ethiopia. The people of Ethiopia living in the United States deserve the same protection from the dangers of returning to a war-torn country.

As we applaud the administration’s swift work in designating TPS for Ukraine and later Afghanistan, we are concerned at the lack of new designations for majority-Black and African

¹ “Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis,” USAID, November 30, 2021, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11-30_USG_Northern_Ethiopia_Crisis_Fact_Sheet_2.pdf.

² Dan Sabbagh, “Ethiopia-Turkey pact fuels speculation about drone use in Tigray war,” *The Guardian*, November 4, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/04/ethiopia-turkey-pact-fuels-speculation-about-drone-use-in-tigray-war>.

³ “U.N. rights chief says air strikes have killed hundreds since November in Ethiopia,” *Reuters*, March 7, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/more-than-300-killed-air-strikes-northern-ethiopia-since-nov-un-rights-chief-2022-03-07/>.

⁴ “Ethiopia Travel Advisory,” U.S. State Department, November 6, 2021, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/ethiopia-travel-advisory.html>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Samuel Gebre, “Worst Drought in 40 Years Threatens Millions in the Horn of Africa” *Bloomberg*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/worst-drought-in-40-years-threatens-millions-in-horn-of-africa>

countries. **The conditions in Ethiopia are urgent and egregious and we call upon the administration to do its part to protect Ethiopians in the United States from deportation by designating Ethiopia for TPS.**

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jamal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



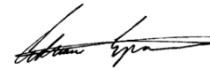
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



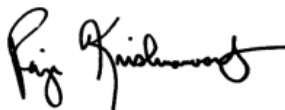
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



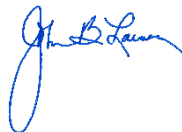
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Cori Bush
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