



Ethiopia's Role and Political Developments in the Horn of Africa

Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie Amde
Permanent Representative of
Ethiopia to the United Nations

As presented on January 21, 2021.

Key Takeaways*

- The Horn of Africa is a region of vital strategic importance, including for the United States. This region is currently undergoing a historic and hopeful political transformation. Ethiopia is the largest economy in the region. It is also the largest in terms of population and landmass. As a country with a long history of independence and statehood, as the founder of the African Union, the United Nations, and the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia plays a key role in the peace and security of this important region. Ethiopia is the bulwark of security in with its unparalleled role in Africa in the fight against Al Qaida and Al Shabbab, and as a leading contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts in Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan (Darfur and Abiye), South Sudan, etc. Of course, Ethiopia's contribution to UN peace keeping dates back to 1951 in the Korean war.
- Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia are undergoing political transitions. After more than a decade of state collapse, Somalia is slated to hold parliamentary elections next month. The Federal Government of Somalia has made remarkable progress, but it also faces serious challenges, including the existential threat posed by Al-Shabab.
- South Sudan and Sudan are also in the midst of momentous transitions and peacebuilding efforts. Over the past three years, Ethiopia has undergone historic economic and political reforms, and we are preparing to hold a free and fair election in June 2021.

**Disclaimer: The views expressed in these presentations are those of our guest speakers and are not intended to represent the views or position of the Indiana Council on World Affairs, its board or members.*

- Not unlike other transitional societies, the Horn of Africa countries face a myriad of political and economic challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a generational locust plague. However, the inclusive transitions and efforts toward greater cooperation and economic integration have generated hopes in our region.
- Ethiopia is pursuing the building of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam for the sole purpose of increasing access to electricity (current access rate of only 40%, with 26% in rural areas) to its people and most importantly to extricate its people out of poverty. The dam will also have significant benefit to Egypt and the Sudan. Ethiopia strives to work in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation with these countries, with strong support to the African Union in bringing the countries together on issues of disagreement.
- Like any other country would do, Ethiopian government has taken actions towards law and order in the Tigray region after the national defense force was attacked. The conflict in Tigray region has affected thousands of citizens resulting in humanitarian crises and instability in the Tigray and Amhara regions. Ethiopia will overcome these challenges with its track record on and experience in addressing such challenges and collaborative work with the international community.

**Disclaimer: The views expressed in these presentations are those of our guest speakers and are not intended to represent the views or position of the Indiana Council on World Affairs, its board or members.*