

United Somali Diaspora

An Urgent Call to End Crisis in Somalia

Dear Senator/Congressman

Somalia has been without a central government for more than 16 years. Violence has crippled the Horn of Africa nation for years, but over the last few months, the chaos and carnage was particularly momentous. Ethiopian troops, who entered the country in defiance to U.N. Security Council resolution off-limiting its occupation, stormed densely populated areas in Mogadishu. The reported civilian death exceeded 4000 just in the last 10 months; with potentially hundreds more who are trapped under destroyed buildings.

Exoduses of displaced people have left Mogadishu with no particular destination in mind. The UNHCR estimates that more than one million people have left the capital city, seeking reprieve from the indiscriminate shelling by the Ethiopians and the president's militia. A humanitarian catastrophe is looming.

Both the European Union parliament and the Arab League parliament have launched their own separate investigations into possible human rights violation committed by warring factions. We believe the U.S. Congress should do the same.

As the [senator/congressman] from Minnesota, the state with the largest Somali population, we ask you to urgently work to end the suffering of our people in Somalia. The Somali community is feeling the pain of their fellow Somalis inside the country. More than 16 years of lawlessness, suffering and multitude of natural and man-made catastrophes have reduced our nation into ashes.

We believe that you are in a unique position to put a cessation to the hostilities by working with regional and international players. Our biggest concern is not political; rather, it's a humanitarian effort to save the civilians caught in the crossfire.

Of course, politics are the root cause of the current crisis. Somalia had the best opportunity of peace last year, when the Transitional Federal Government was in the third round of peace talks with the Union of Islamic Courts. That hope has been dashed by the illegal Ethiopian invasion.

All of that could be resolved not in the heinous and deadly military action that Ethiopia has employed, but in a serious political talks between the warring factions and the rival clans. This idea is supported by the State Department, which recently urged the Transitional Federal Government to engage in peace talks with various groups. Unfortunately, that call was not heeded as of yet, and signs of hope are diminishing day by day.

We kindly ask you to personally interject the situation at this critical juncture by working with international organizations, such as the International Contact Group, the U.S. State Department, the U.N., the Arab League and the EU to find a common ground for all parties and end their feud.

We have seen your previous work with the Somali community, and we appreciate it tremendously. But we need your help this time more than ever. The situation on the ground is dire and critical. We feel that you are uniquely positioned to help Somalia regain its nationhood.

Thank you,

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____