

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2023

Dear Administrator Power,

As Chair of the US-Africa Policy Working Group and Co-Chair of the Ethiopia Caucus, we write to express our concerns about the complete suspension of food aid to Ethiopia announced by the United States Agency for International Development in June. While we understand the severity of the food diversion schemes, we also recognize the urgent and acute need to resume food aid to meet the nutrition needs of many Ethiopians, and especially people in Tigray.

By UN estimates, there are more than 20 million Ethiopians facing food insecurity throughout the country. This is exacerbated by unprecedented droughts in recent years, and by internal conflicts in Ethiopia, including the war in Tigray and widely reported atrocities.

We recognize that the food diversion schemes in Ethiopia are unprecedented in scale, and we have absolute contempt for anyone abusing the generosity of the American taxpayer for their own personal or institutional gains. We understand the Agency's decision to suspend food aid was not made lightly and that you take your fiduciary duties seriously. We support all efforts to bring those responsible to justice swiftly, and to put mechanisms in place that will ensure nothing similar happens again.

At the same time, we must find a way to balance the very legitimate need to ensure our aid is reaching the people who need it to the extent possible with the plain fact that the cessation of food aid is putting millions of Ethiopians at risk of starvation. Given the enormity of the crisis, we strongly urge you to restore food aid and not to wait until every perpetrator is brought to justice, every mechanism is in place, or every condition has been met. We are extremely concerned about initial reports highlighting the increased suffering already resulting from this decision to stop food aid.

Once again, we are very aware that both you and the Agency understand the gravity of the situation facing Ethiopian people. We are grateful for the attention you have paid to Ethiopia in your time as Administrator and for the work across the Agency to provide aid and support to Ethiopians. We stand ready to assist in any way we can to ensure that USAID can return to its vital work of providing food to people who need it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress