



Bundeskanzleramt  
Bundeskanzlerin  
Angela Merkel  
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1  
10557 Berlin

Gotha, March 15, 2021

## Current situation of German-Ethiopian town twinning

Dear Chancellor,

we, the cities of Gotha, Leipzig, Vaterstetten and Witten are the only four municipalities in the Federal Republic of Germany with twin cities in Ethiopia. Two of them - Gotha with Adwa and Witten with Mekelle - in the particularly crisis-ridden Tigray region and two - Leipzig with Addis Ababa and Vaterstetten with Alem Katema in other regions. Our work in the area of these town twinning is to strive for intensive cooperation, togetherness and exchange with our Ethiopian partners, to provide local assistance and to develop joint projects.

Although the regions of our twin cities have not always been peaceful to each other, we are and therefore want to jointly solicit your support to vehemently advocate for the deployment of international UN aid troops to be sent to Ethiopia.

This serious conflict will not resolve itself. As the United Nations has confirmed, the Ethiopian government is preventing aid agencies such as Doctors Without Borders from reaching non-government-controlled rural areas in Tigray, where the majority of the region's 2.3 million inhabitants live and are in urgent need of help.

Violent clashes in northern Ethiopia continue more than four months after a military offensive was led for the regional capital of Mekelle. Thus, no improvement of the situation is in sight.

Due to the extensive blocking of the Internet and telephone, we are almost completely cut off from information from our twin towns. Only sporadic reports from our friends on the ground reach us - and one is more unbearable than the other. Factories, hospitals, schools, and children's homes, even orphanages have been destroyed by Eritrean groups. There is a lack of food, clean water, medical care

- everything is missing! We are in great concern because even the transport of relief goods, which we have put together regionally, or money transfers, are hardly possible.

Dear Chancellor,

we are not in a position to assess the political difficulties and rifts in the Ethiopian state. Nor do we want to, and accordingly we will not take sides - it is not for us to judge. Our goal is to continue our work for the welfare and exchange between people, not between parties or ideologies.

Our four cities pursue one and the same goals: To help people directly, cultural exchange and learning from each other. We are not concerned with political discourse, positions of power, party work or anything else, but solely with the people in Ethiopia, who urgently need our support, regardless of their language or regional origin.

The Federal Republic of Germany has so far made a special contribution to Ethiopia with support of around 150 million euros a year for Ethiopia, the Federal Republic of Germany has set a particular development aid. Ethiopia was Germany's reform partner country in 2019.

In addition to this special state commitment, we have initiated numerous projects with our partner cities in recent years, provided them with financial resources, in-kind and advisory services through dedicated support associations to support the development of the Ethiopian common good by our citizens at various levels. We are not concerned with political discourse, positions of power, party work or anything else, but solely with the people in Ethiopia, who urgently need our support, regardless of their language or regional origin.

We are at a loss at the moment and would like to use this letter to once again point out the difficult situation and ask you to seek discussion with the representatives of the Embassy of Ethiopia within the scope of your possibilities and to draw attention to the current precarious situation. The help and support of the citizens of Ethiopia and especially the help for the poorest of the poor, is more urgent than ever, in addition to the war caused by the Corona pandemic, the great plague of locusts and the famine that prevails with it.

With kind regards

Burkhard Jung, Mayor of Leipzig

Leonard Spitzauer, Mayor of Vaterstetten,

Lars König, Mayor of Witten

Knut Kreuch, Mayor of Gotha