

**Suspend the Rules And Agree to the Resolution, H. Res. 128 with
Amendments**

**(The amendments consist of a new preamble and a complete new
text)**

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 128

Supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance
in Ethiopia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. COFFMAN, Ms. KELLY
of Illinois, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. ELLISON) submitted the following reso-
lution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting respect for human rights and encouraging
inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

Whereas the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has
been an important partner of the United States and a re-
gional leader in promoting economic growth, global
health, and peace and security;

Whereas Ethiopia has helped advance the national interests
of the United States and regional partners, including
through contributions to international peacekeeping, com-
bating radical Islamist extremism and other forms of ter-

rorism, and regional cooperation through the African Union;

Whereas Ethiopia has made great strides in addressing significant challenges in global health, child survival, and food security;

Whereas Ethiopia's transition from authoritarian rule to participatory democracy has not kept pace with other reforms;

Whereas general elections in 2005 were marred by violence, manipulation, and the detention of thousands of opposition members, journalists, and civic activists;

Whereas the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) claimed to win 99.6 percent of the vote in elections that were deemed neither free nor fair in 2010 and all 546 parliamentary seats in 2015, thereby further consolidating the EPRDF's single party rule;

Whereas the Charities and Societies Proclamation and Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, both enacted in 2009, have accelerated the contraction of democratic space, severely limited the practice of fundamental human rights, enabled abuses by security forces, and impeded efforts to promote accountability for such abuses in Ethiopia;

Whereas government forces launched a violent crackdown on protests by ethnic Oromo and Amhara over their perceived marginalization in 2015, resulting in hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of arrests;

Whereas on October 9, 2016, the Government of Ethiopia imposed a six-month state of emergency, which was extended on March 30, 2017, that even further restricts freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, includ-

ing through blockage of mobile Internet access and social media communication;

Whereas the 2016 Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Ethiopia cited serious human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, killings, and torture committed by security forces, restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of association, politically motivated trials, harassment, and intimidation of opposition members and journalists;

Whereas these persistent human right abuses, including state-sponsored violence against civilians in the Oromia, Amhara, and Somali regions of Ethiopia, as well as the abuse of laws to stifle journalistic freedoms, stand in direct contrast to democratic principles, violate the Constitution of Ethiopia, and undermine Ethiopia's position as a regional leader for economic growth, peace, and security: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes and commends Ethiopia's efforts
3 to promote regional peace and security, including
4 through the contribution of peacekeeping forces to
5 regional and United Nations peacekeeping oper-
6 ations;

7 (2) recognizes the importance of continued
8 United States and Ethiopian partnership in combat-
9 ting terrorism, promoting economic growth and op-
10 portunity, and addressing global health challenges;

11 (3) notes with deep concern persistent reports
12 of widespread human rights abuses and the contrac-

1 tion of democratic space in Ethiopia, which may
2 threaten stability and reverse economic progress over
3 the long term;

4 (4) condemns the use of excessive force by Ethi-
5 opian security forces, including the killing of un-
6 armed protesters, and the wrongful arrest and de-
7 tention of journalists, students, activists, and polit-
8 ical leaders exercising their constitutional rights to
9 freedom of assembly, association, and expression;

10 (5) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

11 (A) lift the state of emergency, repeal or
12 amend proclamations used as a tool to suppress
13 human rights in Ethiopia, including the Char-
14 ities and Societies Proclamation and Anti-Ter-
15 rorism Proclamation of 2009, and respect the
16 rights of Ethiopian citizens to freedom of as-
17 sembly and expression, in keeping with Articles
18 30 and 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution;

19 (B) end the use of excessive force by Ethi-
20 opian security forces and hold accountable those
21 responsible for killing, torturing, or otherwise
22 abusing the human rights of civilians exercising
23 their constitutional rights through fair and pub-
24 lic trials;

1 (C) release activists, journalists, and oppo-
2 sition figures who have been wrongfully impris-
3 oned for exercising their constitutional rights,
4 including those arrested for reporting about
5 public protests;

6 (D) improve transparency around develop-
7 ment policies and activities that may infringe
8 upon the human rights of local communities;
9 and

10 (E) allow for an independent examination
11 of the state of human rights in Ethiopia by a
12 rapporteur appointed by the United Nations;

13 (6) urges protesters in Ethiopia to refrain from
14 the use or incitement of violence in demonstrations;

15 (7) urges opposition groups and the Govern-
16 ment of Ethiopia to directly engage in peaceful dis-
17 cussions to air grievances and broaden political dis-
18 course;

19 (8) calls on the Department of State and the
20 United States Agency for International Develop-
21 ment—

22 (A) to engage in a cooperative effort with
23 the Government of Ethiopia in the formulation
24 of a comprehensive strategy, in coordination
25 with other donors, to help advance democracy,

1 rule of law, human rights, economic growth,
2 and peace and security in Ethiopia;

3 (B) continue to strengthen ties with Ethi-
4 opia, including through the provision of appro-
5 priate levels and forms of security assistance, in
6 correlation to the Ethiopian Government's own
7 demonstrated commitment to democracy, rule
8 of law, human rights, economic growth, and
9 peace and security in the region;

10 (C) condemn human rights abuses and the
11 excessive use of force by Ethiopian security
12 forces while pressing for the release of individ-
13 uals wrongfully detained; and

14 (D) hold accountable individuals respon-
15 sible for gross human rights violations in Ethi-
16 opia through appropriate mechanisms, which
17 may include the imposition of targeted sanc-
18 tions pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human
19 Rights Accountability Act (Public Law 114–
20 328); and

21 (9) stands by the people of Ethiopia and sup-
22 ports their peaceful efforts to increase democratic
23 space and to exercise the rights guaranteed by the
24 Ethiopian Constitution.