

**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)**

115<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 128

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

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## 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

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# 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 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 the Government of Ethiopia has recently released hundreds of political prisoners, but has continued to periodically detain government critics and opposition figures;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has periodically imposed a state of emergency that even further restricts freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, includ-

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

Whereas the 2017 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; and

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) recognizes and commends the recent peace-  
11       ful and voluntary transfer of authority from Prime  
12       Minister Hailemariam to new Prime Minister Abiy  
13       and welcomes Prime Minister Abiy's inaugural  
14       speech calling for open political competition and the  
15       defense of fundamental human rights;

16          (6) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

17            (A) lift the state of emergency;

18            (B) repeal or amend proclamations used as  
19       a tool to suppress human rights in Ethiopia, in-  
20       cluding the Charities and Societies Proclama-  
21       tion and Anti-Terrorism Proclamation of 2009,  
22       and respect the rights of Ethiopian citizens to  
23       freedom of assembly and expression, in keeping  
24       with Articles 30 and 29 of the Ethiopian Con-  
25       stitution;

1           (C) end the use of excessive force by Ethi-  
2           opian security forces and hold accountable those  
3           responsible for killing, torturing, or otherwise  
4           abusing the human rights of civilians exercising  
5           their constitutional rights through fair and pub-  
6           lic trials;

7           (D) release all activists, journalists, and  
8           opposition figures who have been wrongfully im-  
9           prisoned for exercising their constitutional  
10          rights, including those arrested for reporting  
11          about public protests;

12          (E) improve transparency around develop-  
13          ment policies and activities that may infringe  
14          upon the human rights of local communities;  
15          and

16          (F) allow for an independent examination  
17          of the state of human rights in Ethiopia by a  
18          rapporteur appointed by the United Nations;

19          (7) urges protesters in Ethiopia to refrain from  
20          the use or incitement of violence in demonstrations;

21          (8) urges opposition groups and the Govern-  
22          ment of Ethiopia to directly engage in peaceful dis-  
23          cussions to air grievances and broaden political dis-  
24          course;

1           (9) calls on the Department of State and the  
2           United States Agency for International Develop-  
3           ment—

4                   (A) to engage in a cooperative effort with  
5                   the Government of Ethiopia in the formulation  
6                   of a comprehensive strategy, in coordination  
7                   with other donors, to help advance democracy,  
8                   rule of law, human rights, economic growth,  
9                   and peace and security in Ethiopia;

10                   (B) continue to strengthen ties with Ethi-  
11                   opia, including through the provision of appro-  
12                   priate levels and forms of security assistance, in  
13                   correlation to the Ethiopian Government's own  
14                   demonstrated commitment to democracy, rule  
15                   of law, human rights, economic growth, and  
16                   peace and security in the region;

17                   (C) condemn human rights abuses and the  
18                   excessive use of force by Ethiopian security  
19                   forces while pressing for the release of individ-  
20                   uals wrongfully detained; and

21                   (D) hold accountable individuals respon-  
22                   sible for gross human rights violations in Ethi-  
23                   opia through appropriate mechanisms, which  
24                   may include the imposition of targeted sanc-  
25                   tions pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human

1           Rights Accountability Act (Public Law 114–  
2           328); and  
3           (10) stands by the people of Ethiopia and sup-  
4           ports their peaceful efforts to increase democratic  
5           space and to exercise the rights guaranteed by the  
6           Ethiopian Constitution.