

**Washington Update**  
**June 29, 2018**

**It is time for all Ethiopian-Americans to contact their senators and urge them to support and cosponsor SR 168.**

**At the same time, Ethiopians cannot and will not rely on the United States or any other government to create their nation's future.** Millions of Ethiopians showed their commitment to democracy by demonstrating on June 23.

A group of prominent Ethiopians soon will issue a Declaration of Principles modeled on the South Africa precedent for a transition to democracy.

**Nevertheless, support from the United States government can act as a powerful incentive for the Ethiopian regime. That's why SR 168 is important.** To increase the chances of SR 168 passing, the Ethiopian-American community in the United States must contact the senators representing their state and ask them to cosponsor SR 168, a resolution introduced by Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD). SR 168 supports respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia. The resolution has only 30 cosponsors. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported the resolution out of committee in September. It could be considered by the full Senate at any time.

To find your Senator's contact information go to

<https://clicktime.cloud.postoffice.net/clicktime.php?U=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.govtrack.us%2F&E=susdin%40biocentury.com&X=XID847wFCu346648Xd1&T=USWO&HV=U,E,X,T&H=dcb800ab5f3a89e32427ff15832e3af3ccbfbfecongress/bills/115/sres168/details> **and click on the names of co-sponsors.**

At this critical time, the U.S. must send a clear message to the Ethiopian regime and to the Ethiopian people in support of democracy and human rights.

Small signs of progress of Ethiopia do not mean that the resolution is no longer necessary. On the contrary, passage of the resolution would help encourage Prime Minister Abiy to move toward democracy and inclusive governance. Preconditions for progress include lifting the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP), allowing UN officials to travel freely in Ethiopia to investigate human rights abuses, and amending the anti-terrorism law. Without these fundamental changes, any apparent improvements could be reversed in an instant.

Based on information we have gathered from Ethiopia, the government in power has engaged only with select opposition parties, and has done so in a manner that is not transparent to the Ethiopian public. This appears to be part of a deliberate effort to divide the opposition, and to create a false appearance of progress toward democracy. For example, Dr. Abiy's government

delegation recently met with members of the Oromo Democratic Force, an opposition party based outside of Ethiopia, in an undisclosed location in a foreign country. Participants of the two delegations were not identified. After the meeting in the undisclosed location, ODF's delegation traveled to Addis Ababa.

A number of opposition parties and human rights activists have asked the government to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss the country's socio-economic and political crisis, and to work together to develop a road map to democracy. So far there has been no response.

Dr. Abiy's government has lifted the state of emergency. However, people who protest are still being beaten and arrested for simply exercising rights provided for under the country's constitution. For example, Bahir Dar University engineering students who protested the requirement that they take a certain exam which they claim is not given to their counterparts in other universities were beaten and arrested. Similar crackdowns continue by government forces in different parts of the country.

The Prime Minister must focus on stabilizing the country. Currently, Southern Ethiopia is in turmoil, as is Eastern Ethiopia. Ongoing persecution of Amhara people in Southern part and other area includes beatings, killings and forced dislocation. For details, please check ethnic conflicts below link.

While Ethiopia is not on the top of policy agendas in Washington, the current situation in Ethiopia demonstrates that countries can change quite rapidly. Ethiopia is approaching a decision point: it could become a free, prosperous nation, or, if the current policies are kept in place, it could descend into instability. These views are articulated in a new White House report. The National Intelligence Council recently released a report on Global Trends 2030. This report highlights the opportunities and dangers in Ethiopia's future. On the one hand it states that Ethiopia, along with Egypt and Nigeria, "have the potential to approach or surpass South Africa in overall national power." It adds that "the key will be better governance to further economic growth and social and human development." The report also ranks Ethiopia as 14th among nations at highest risk of "state failure" by 2030. Its scenario for 2030 predicts that unless urgent action is taken to improve governance — which means transitioning to a real democracy that adheres to the rule of law and respects human rights — Ethiopia could "fragment along sectarian, tribal, and ethnic lines" and become a safe haven for terrorists.

The world is watching. Here are links to recent reports about Ethiopia

- Ethiopia: Government must protect victims of escalating ethnic attacks  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/06/ethiopia-government-must-protect-victims-of-escalating-ethnic-attacks/>
- Ethiopian government attacks on five more localities in the same district - Geellaa, Hosale, Usweyne, Tiirro and Marar - killing four people and wounding another four.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/06/ethiopia-abusive-police-unit-must-be-stopped/>

- Ethiopia not doing enough to curb ethnic violence:

<https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/ethiopia-not-doing-enough-to-curb-ethnic-violence-amnesty-20180608>

Mesffin Mekonen