

Washington Update

October 2, 2018

Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) has taken a strong interest in Ethiopia, and in the past has opposed enactment of legislation seeking to bolster democracy and human rights in Ethiopia. At a recent meeting, Inhofe's staff said he is very concerned about the latest instances of ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia.

I informed Inhofe's staff that Prime Minister Abiy has raised expectations, that the country's most serious problems have not been solved, and the U.S. should take steps to support him and hold him accountable for delivering on his promises.

We recommended that Senator Inhofe support legislation that will promote the transition to democracy in Ethiopia, and especially to halt ethnic cleansing, to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for terrorism. The New York Times, Washington Post and Ethiopia TV as well as Diaspora media outlets have reported on ethnic cleansing in Addis Ababa Burayu by terrorist groups, including reports of killings, beatings, harassing and destroying houses based solely on ethnicity. Among the many horrific events, the burning of seven Ethiopian Orthodox churches in Ethiopia, Jijjga Somali region and killings associated with the arson stand out.

The best path forward is non-violent truth and reconciliation. We strongly recommend the US Senate include in SR 168 support for the Ethiopia Declaration of Principles, a document that Eskinder Nega, Journalist, Human Rights and Democracy activist, and Mesfin Mekonen, initiated and delivered to Prime Minister Abiy during his recent visit to the United States. The declaration calls for Ethiopia to move forward with a truth and reconciliation project animated by the spirit that propelled change in South Africa.

We also recommended that Senator Inhofe add the following to SR 168: Directs the President of the United States to provide Ethiopia with assistance to develop Ethiopia's Nile and Awash River resources, including assistance for the construction of irrigation systems that might prevent future famine. Ethiopia is at critical crossroads with a large and increasing population, a

depressed national economy, insufficient agriculture production, and a low number developed energy sources. The user Blue Nile basins harbors considerable untapped potential for irrigation and hydropower development expansion.

We also requested in the meeting that the Senate request that Ethiopia revoke the Charities and Society Proclamation and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation. These laws, both passed in 2009, remain on the books and thus retain the potential to stifle legitimate civil society organizations and political speech.

Regardless of any actions the U.S. government takes, the Prime Minister must focus on stabilizing the country, including halting the ongoing persecution of Amhara people that includes beatings and forced dislocation. He must condemn this barbaric behavior.

Some recent news stories document the situation

[Thousands Are Arrested in Ethiopia After Ethnic Violence](#)

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/24/world/africa/ethiopia-ethnic-violence-arrests.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FEthiopia&action=click&contentCollection=world®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection

Washington Post article

Ethiopia's reforming prime minister runs into a roadblock of ethnic unrest

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/ethiopias-reforming-prime-minister-runs-into-a-roadblock-of-ethnic-unrest/2018/08/24/76cb64c6-a337-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5_story.html?utm_term=.5c95ec6442fd

From Reporter newspaper

"The Federal Attorney General has instituted charges against five individuals who were alleged operatives of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) on Friday September 28, 2018 in connection to the June 23 bomb attack at a rally held in support of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) at Meskel Square".

Please see below link

<https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/article/ag-charges-alleged-olf-operatives-explosives-attack>