



**For Immediate Release**  
February 5, 2018

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**ICYMI:**

**Rep. Coffman & Local Ethiopian Delegation  
Negotiated H. Res. 128 with Congressional Leadership**

*Resolution Supports Human Rights & Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia*

**Washington, D.C.** – Last Monday, an Ethiopian delegation from Colorado, joined by Ethiopian national advocacy groups, had a high-level negotiation with the Office of the Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives. The negotiation was requested by U.S. Representative Mike Coffman (R-Aurora) to give the Ethiopian government the opportunity to improve its human rights record in lieu of a vote on House Resolution 128. H. Res. 128, “Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia,” condemns the Ethiopian government’s record of human rights violations. The Government of Ethiopia has voiced their objections to H. Res. 128 and has threatened retaliation against the United States should it be passed and has promised, without the passage of the legislation, to improve human rights conditions within the country.

*“H. Res. 128 calls on the Government of Ethiopia to take clear and decisive steps toward becoming a more inclusive, more democratic government— one that respects the human rights of all their citizens. Today’s meeting set clear milestones for the Ethiopian government to achieve in order to prove they are serious about respecting the human rights of their citizens,”* said Coffman.

Discussions in the meeting centered around the ongoing human rights concerns in Ethiopia and the need to establish a clear timeline to bring [H. Res. 128](#), to the House floor for a vote should the Ethiopian government fail to meet the goals agreed upon in a negotiated agreement between the representatives of the Ethiopian-American community and the Office of the U.S. House Majority Leader.

As a result of the negotiation, the Office of the Majority Leader agreed to communicate to the Ethiopian government the requirement for an independent examination of the state of human rights in Ethiopia, in accordance with H.Res. 128, by giving full access to observers from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by no later than February 28, 2018. Should the Ethiopian government not announce by February 28th that it will allow the independent UN teams access, H.Res. 128 would be sent to the floor for consideration by no later than the end of the year irrespective of retaliatory threats by the Ethiopian government.

*"We deeply thank Congressman Coffman and the U.S. Majority leader for this meeting. The Ethiopian people have been waiting 25 years to be heard— and today, because of these two Congressman, the people of Ethiopia have a chance to fight back against a corrupt and oppressive government". -- Yoseph Tafari, Chairman, Ethiopian American Civic Council.*

*"The Oromo Community of Denver firmly believe that January 29, 2018 negotiations to bring House Resolution 128 to the house floor for the vote with the office of the house majority leader was very productive, and we are happy with the agreement we reached. We appreciate honorable Congressman Mike Coffman, Chris Smith and the office of the majority leader for their leaderships and sending signals to the Ethiopian government the human rights of people of Ethiopia should be respected, honored and respected". -Jamal Said, President of the Oromo Community of Denver*

*"Survivors of torture are grateful to Congressman Coffman for everything he has done to stop the torture, killings, rape and arbitrary arrests in Ethiopia, and to ensure that the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights has unrestricted access to Ethiopia to investigate human rights abuses" said Andrea Barron, Advocacy Program Manager, for Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition.*

Mr. Tewodrose Tirfe from Amhara Association of America added, *"The achievements we gained in the successful negotiations with the Majority Leader in accepting all the provisions in the resolved clause will help bring relief to Amharas who are being massacred by the regime at this moment. We hope this will bring the attention to the estimated 3 million Amharas reported missing in the 2007 Ethiopian Census. We are grateful for Congressman Coffman's leadership to addressing the dire human rights issues in Ethiopia and being a champion for the Ethiopian-American community."*

Meeting participants included:

1. Ethiopian American Civic Council: Deacon Yoseph Tafari, Archbishop Abune Natnael, and Amsalu Kassaw
2. Tewodrose (Ted) Tirfe, Chair, National Advocacy, Amhara Association of America
3. Seena Jimjimo, President of the Coalition of Oromo Advocates for Human Rights and Democracy
4. Guya Abaguya Deki, General Manager of the National Association of the Physically Handicapped and Victims of Government Torture
5. Andrea Barron, Advocacy Program Manager, Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition
6. Oromo Community of Denver: President Jamal Said and Ms. Dahabo Abdella
7. Pierro Tozzi, Staff Director, Africa Subcommittee
8. Luke Murry, National Security Advisor, House Majority Leader

**\*UPDATE\*** -- Today, U.S. Representative Mike Coffman (R-CO) meet with Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Kassa Tekleberhan, and informed him that his office expects an answer as to whether or not the Government of Ethiopia will cooperate with the Majority Leader's office request, and dependent on their answer, H.R. 128 will proceed as stipulated.

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**Background:**

On March 9, 2017, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, chaired by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) in the House Committee of Foreign Affairs, held a hearing titled "[\*Democracy Under Threat in Ethiopia\*](#)".

This hearing was scheduled after H. Res. 128 was introduced by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and originally cosponsored by Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO). After the mark-up process in the foreign affairs committee, the resolution passed unanimously out of the foreign affairs committee and was scheduled for a vote on October 2, 2017.

Shortly before the vote was supposed to take place, the Ethiopian government threatened to terminate regional security cooperation with the United States. In a sign of willingness to work with the Ethiopian government and to get the Ethiopian government to release political prisoners, the Majority Leader cancelled the already scheduled vote.

While the Resolution was working its way through the halls of Congress, the Government of Ethiopia, in an attempt to stop the resolution from getting to the House Floor, hired a Washington D.C. lobbying firm for \$150,000 month according to required disclosure reports.

Connect with Congressman Coffman:

