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March 20, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I write to you today at the request of many of the Ethiopian-Americans whom I represent in Congress. These constituents have brought to my attention what they view as an ongoing campaign of human rights violations in their homeland of Ethiopia. They are convinced that these serious human rights violations are the result of an organized and concerted effort perpetrated by the Ethiopian government.

My constituents tell me that they have seen clear evidence that the Government of Ethiopia is behind a pattern of human rights abuse including:

- The wanton killing of peaceful protestors,
- The arrest and detention of journalists, students, activists, and political leaders,
- The stifling of political and civil dissent and journalistic freedoms.

I have reason to believe these allegations because the Department of State's Country Report on Ethiopia in 2016 cited that country for serious human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, killings, torture, and restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Likewise, Human Rights Watch has reported that Ethiopian security forces killed between 500 and 800 peaceful protestors in the Oromia and Amhara regions as of November 2016.

Representative Chris Smith, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights & International Organizations and I have introduced a bipartisan resolution in the House of Representatives condemning the Ethiopian Government for these violations (H.Res. 128), and calling for a review of the foreign aid and security assistance the United States currently provides to Ethiopia. In light of these abuses and the United States' stated strategy of strengthening democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, I believe it is important for you to review the current aid program to Ethiopia to ensure that the aid provided

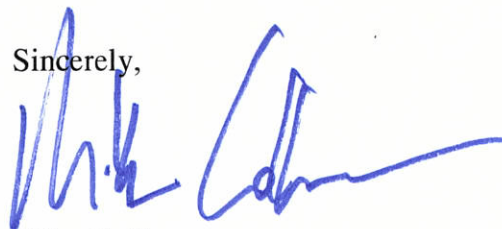
by the U.S. is not subsidizing a government apparently committed to the systematic abuse of its own citizens and reduction of the democratic space within its own borders.

I note that current US aid levels to Ethiopia for FY2017 are set at \$514 million dollars, the majority of which is intended for economic development, humanitarian assistance, health, education and social services. While the goal of this aid is noble, I hear from numerous constituents and experts on the Sub-Saharan region that this assistance may not be reaching those in Ethiopia who need it the most, and may be providing support and legitimacy to this regime.

I therefore request that you reconsider the current aid program for Ethiopia pending its implementation of real, concrete and measurable humanitarian reforms by the Government of Ethiopia as outlined in H.Res. 128. I would also suggest you consider immediate suspension of military and/or security assistance (which make up less than one percent of the total annual aid budget). I believe that doing so will communicate to the Ethiopian government how seriously the United States views these human rights violations.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter, and for your work on behalf of the United States.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman
U.S. Representative
6th District, Colorado



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