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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0371/2017**

16.5.2017

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Ethiopia, the case of Dr. Merera Gudina  
(2017/2682(RSP))

**Ignazio Corrao, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Rolandas Paksas, Piernicola  
Pedicini**  
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**European Parliament resolution on Ethiopia, the case of Dr. Merera Gudina  
(2017/2682(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Ethiopia, in particular the one of 21 January 2016,
  - having regard to the press release of the EEAS following the visit of the Federica Mogherini, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission to the Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Addis Ababa, 17/03/2017,
  - having regard to the latest Universal Periodic Review on Ethiopia before the UN Human Rights Council 2015,
  - having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and in particular the provisions of Chapter III on fundamental rights and freedoms, human rights and democratic rights,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regard to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
  - having regard to the United Nations International Charter of Human Rights,
  - having regard to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Ethiopia in 1994,
  - having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights,
  - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
  - having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas political and democratic stability in Ethiopia is crucial to the development of the countries of the Horn of Africa, because of the key role played by the Country in this region and the political support enjoyed from Western donors and most of its regional neighbours and the fact that it host the African Union (AU);
- B. whereas Article 10(2) of Ethiopia's Constitution guarantees that human and democratic rights of citizens and peoples shall be respected;

- C. whereas Ethiopia is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement, Article 96 of which stipulates that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of ACP-EU cooperation;
- D. whereas in recent times there has been a serious deterioration in the freedom of association and opposition and protesters constantly suffer threats and attacks;
- E. whereas after an year of anti-governmental protests during which hundreds of protesters were killed and tens of thousands detained by Ethiopian security forces, the Ethiopian government ordered a state of emergency in October 2016 permitting draconian restriction on the rights to freedom of speech, access to information, freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- F. whereas Ethiopian Government is systematically repressing freedom of expression, preventing individuals from expressing dissent or opposition to government policies and is closing independent media;
- G. whereas in general the Government is shrinking political space for civil society and has introduced the draconian anti-terrorism law under which is carrying out politically motivated prosecutions, dismantling substantial civil society activism and cracking down on opposition political parties;
- H. whereas on 30 November 2016 Ethiopian security forces detained the chairman of the Ethiopian opposition party ‘Oromo Federalist Congress’ (OFC), Dr. Merera Gudina, shortly after his arrival in Addis Ababa from Brussels where - together with other Ethiopian activists and the Olympian athlete Feyisa Lellisa - held a briefing in the European Parliament on the political crisis in Ethiopia;
- I. whereas Dr. Merera Gudina is accused of violating the directives of the state of emergency, for breaching article 32/1/a & b, article 27/1, and article 238/1& 2 of Ethiopia’s criminal code; whereas, in particular, he is accused him to “creating pressure against the government”, “threatening society through the means of violence” and attempting to “disrupt constitutional order”, by giving a false and damaging statement about the Government to a media; whereas for this reason, Dr. Merera Gudina has been accused to be a “terrorist”;
- J. whereas, similarly, since December 2015, Bekele Gerba, a foreign language professor at Addis Ababa University and Deputy Chairman of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), has been arrested, also on terrorism charges and is still in detention; whereas other senior OFC leaders have been arbitrarily arrested in recent weeks;
- K. whereas on 15th March 2017, the Ethiopia Government and the Command post established to oversee the State of Emergency, have extended the state of emergency by four more months, even if lifting several restrictions imposed to implement the state of emergency;
- L. whereas Ethiopian authorities have a record of using excessive force against peaceful protesters, including firing into the crowd and regularly use arbitrary arrests and

politically motivated prosecutions to silence journalists, activists and opposition party members;

- M. whereas, among others, in December 2015 leading activists Getachew Shiferaw (Editor-in-Chief of Negere Ethiopia), Yonathan Teressa (an online activist) and Fikadu Mirkana (Oromia Radio and TV) were arbitrarily arrested; whereas prominent Ethiopian journalist Eskinder Nega was arrested in 2011, and sentenced to 18 years in prison under the Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism proclamation;
- N. Whereas Ethiopia's Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Charities law requires organisations engaged in advocacy to generate 90% of the funding for their activities from local sources leading to decrease of CSO action and to the disappearance of many organisations;
- O. whereas the Swedish-Ethiopian cardiologist Dr Fikru Maru has been running Ethiopia's first heart hospital in Addis Abeba, but has been imprisoned in Ethiopia since 2013; whereas he was first accused of smuggling medical equipment into Ethiopia, then convicted of knowledge about corruption between a minister and a prosecutor in the “smuggling” case to 4 years and 8 months of prison after having spent several years in prison without trial; whereas he risks being charged with additional charges of “terrorism” just before the end of his prison sentence;
- P. Whereas large scale development programmes and projects, such as the [Gibe III dam](#), and wide-scale leasing of land to international investors are accompanied by resettlement programmes and the reduction of living space for local pastoralists; Whereas in these contexts pastoralists are often relocated by force, imprisoned and killed by Ethiopian security forces; whereas foreign aid has widely finance such programmes and thereby indirectly contributed to human rights abused against local populations,
- Q. Whereas Article 40/5 of Ethiopia's constitution guarantees Ethiopian pastoralists the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands,
- R. Whereas Ethiopia persecutes the Ogaden Oromo and other ethnic groups, targeting women and children; whereas rape and torture have been systematically used to spread fear, and the Ogaden region is effectively under government embargo.
- S. whereas on 14 June 2016, the EU and Ethiopia signed a strategic engagement document “Ethio-EU”, aiming at structuring the reinforced cooperation between the two partners, which focuses on six sectoral dialogues one of which is Human rights;
  - 1. Condemns in strong terms the huge loss of lives during the demonstrations over the last year and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and the people of Ethiopia;
  - 2. Calls for a credible, transparent and independent investigation into the killings of protesters and into other alleged human rights violations in connection with the protest

movement, and calls on the government to fairly prosecute those responsible before the competent jurisdictions;

3. Urges the government to immediately invite the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and other UN human rights experts to visit Ethiopia to report on the situation;
4. Call on the Ethiopian Government to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrary detained persons, imprisoned for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression, including Dr Merera Gudina, Bekela Garba, Dr Fikru Maru, Getachew Shiferaw, Yonathan Teressa, Fikadu Mirkana and Eskinder Nega, and fulfil its obligations with respect to human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law;
5. Reminds the Ethiopian Government of its obligations to guarantee fundamental rights, including access to justice and the right to a fair trial, as provided for in the African Charter and other international and regional human rights instruments, including the Cotonou Agreement and specifically Articles 8 and 96 thereof;
6. Call on the Ethiopian Government to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Union Charter on Human and People's Rights, including the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion, and an independent judicial system;
7. Condemns the excessive restrictions placed on human rights work by the Charities and Societies Proclamation, denying human rights organisations access to essential funding and endowing the Charities and Societies Agency with excessive powers of interference in human rights organisations, further endangering victims of human rights violations by contravening principles of confidentiality;
8. Urges all political actors to engage in a peaceful and constructive dialogue and to prevent any deepening of the current political crisis or refrain from further violence and provocations;
9. Stresses that free and independent media are essential in order to guarantee an informed, active and engaged population, and calls on the Ethiopian authorities to stop suppressing the free flow of information, including by jamming media broadcasts and harassing media, to guarantee the rights of local civil society and media and to facilitate access throughout Ethiopia for independent journalists and human rights monitors;
10. Requests that the Ethiopian authorities stop using anti-terrorism legislation (Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No 652/2009) to repress political opponents, dissidents, human rights defenders, other civil society actors and independent journalists; calls also on the Ethiopian Government to review its anti-terrorism law in order to bring it into line;
11. Is deeply concerned by the recent use of force against civilians by the security forces in Oromia and in other Ethiopian regions, and the increased number of cases of human rights violations;

12. Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to ensure that all resettlement programmes are voluntary, that affected people are consulted before moving them and to offer pastoralists alternatives to becoming sedentary;
13. Calls on the EU and other major donors to review programs and policies to ensure that development assistance is not contributing to human rights violations in Ethiopia, particularly programs linked to displacement of farmers and pastoralists, develop strategies to avoid any negative impact of displacement within EU funded development projects and to ensure protection and support to human rights defenders and inclusion of the Ethiopian civil society in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all development efforts;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Ethiopia, the Commission, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the institutions of the African Union, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Pan-African Parliament.