



Plenary sitting

B8-0377/2017

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 notably the case of Dr Merera Gudina
(2017/2682(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0377/2017

European Parliament resolution on Ethiopia notably 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 last one of 21 January 2016 on the situation in Ethiopia,
- having regards to the press realise by the Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Elena Valenciano, on 5 December 2106;
- having regard to the statement of 10 April 2017 by European Union Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis visits Ethiopia to launch Strategic Engagement on human rights and governance,
- having regard to, 13 April 2017, Declaration by the High Representative F. Mogherini on behalf of the EU on the 15th anniversary of the decision on the border delimitation by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission;
- having regard to, 17 March 2017, press realise after the meeting between Federica Mogherini and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn
- having regard to the latest Universal Periodic Review on Ethiopia before the UN Human Rights Council,
- having regard to the visit to Ethiopia by UN Human Rights Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, which concluded on 4 May 2017,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia adopted on 8 December 1994, 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 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Ethiopia in 1994,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regards to its rule of procedure,

- A. whereas due to the humanitarian crisis currently occurring in the Horn of Africa Region which trigger Ogaden region and beyond in Ethiopia, with cholera and shortage of food supply that already caused the death of many people and put thousands at risk especially since the beginning of March is of grave concern; whereas the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched their largest appeal for \$96.4 million to assist 1.19 million refugees and former refugees in Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic; “whereas due to the humanitarian crisis currently occurring in the Horn of Africa Region which trigger cholera and shortage of food supply putting thousands at risk in Ogaden and beyond in Ethiopia especially since the beginning of March is of grave concern; whereas the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched their largest appeal for \$96.4 million to assist 1.19 million refugees and former refugees in Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic;
- B. whereas the economic growth continued apace, along with significant foreign investments, including in the agriculture, construction and manufacturing sectors, large scale development projects such as hydroelectric dam building and plantations, and widespread land-leasing, often to foreign companies, precautions should be taken not to drive farmers as well as pastoralists from their homes;
- C. whereas the Ethiopian prime minister declared the state of emergency, in the entire country, on October 9th 2016 for six month after months of protests against the government, whereas the state of emergency has brought relative calm in the country; Whereas on 15 March 2017, the government announced that many restrictions around the state of emergency have been lifted, stating that the command post would no longer be able to arbitrarily arrest people or conduct property searches without warrants, further, that curfews and some restrictions on media reporting would end; whereas the state of emergency was prolonged for four months unanimously by the Ethiopian Parliament on 29 March 2017,
- D. whereas the human rights situation in Ethiopia was already dire with mass arrests, media restrictions, and clashes between security forces and local communities; whereas restrictions on opposition activities limitation of movement hindering access to healthcare facilities, and trade embargoes causing critical food shortages; Whereas numerous person who have been arrested for their violent protests were released;
- E. whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission’s report disclosed on 19th April 2017 that between June and October 2016, 462 civilian people and 33 security forces have died and 338 civilian people and 126 security forces have been injured;
- F. whereas independent media have been dismantled through harassment and repressive legislation, causing journalists and bloggers to choose between self-censorship, harassment and arrest, or exile; whereas government affiliated media are the only accessible sources of information;

- G. whereas the situation deteriorated in mid-April 2014, when the government announced implementation of the "Addis Ababa Integrated Regional Development Plan" which proposes to expand facilities to the city's surrounding areas belonging to the National Regional State of Oromia, the largest Ethiopian region surrounding Addis Ababa;
- H. whereas on 14 January 2016 the government decided to cancel the disputed large-scale urban development plan; whereas the enlargement of Addis Ababa has already displaced many of Oromo farmers and trapped them in poverty;
- I. whereas expropriations are perceived as a will of land grabbing, proof of corruption and personal enrichment due to the sharp rise in property prices around an overcrowded capital;
- J. whereas according to Human Rights Watch, the government had detained over 20,000 people in rehabilitation camps since the state of emergency was declared, whereas widespread and long-standing restrictions on media and civil society groups continue to be enforced;
- K. whereas, according to Human Rights organisations, security forces killed hundreds and arbitrarily detained tens of thousands of protesters in Ethiopia's Oromia and Amhara regions during the last year, many of those who were released reported that they were tortured in detention;
- L. whereas opposition leaders remain in detention on politically motivated charges, including Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) leader Dr. Merera Gudina, who was arrested on 1 December 2016 following his attendance at a briefing on November 9 2016 in the European Parliament; whereas Dr Gudina is facing allegations of criminal and terrorist acts, which he has rejected;
- M. whereas Dr. Merara Gudina is accused of deliberately breached article 2 of the decree issued to implement the state of emergency,
- N. whereas numerous prisoners of conscience, imprisoned in previous years solely on the basis of the legitimate exercise of their freedom of expression and opinion, including journalists and members of opposition parties, remain in detention; whereas among others Andargachew Tsege, a British-Ethiopian citizen and leader of an opposition party living in exile, was arrested in June 2014; whereas Mr Tsege had been condemned to death several years earlier in his absence;, whereas continued imprisonment and lack of access to a lawyer is a serious concern;
- O. whereas Fikru Maru, in custody since May 2013, is accused of leading a prison rebellion despite his proven absence from prison grounds being treated at the hospital for a server health condition; whereas Mr. Maru is now prosecuted for a terrorist offense, which carries the risk of both life imprisonment and the death penalty;

- P. whereas the EU announced in March 2017 an additional €165 million in assistance for the region, for the South Sudan crisis and neighbouring countries, as well as the drought in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya;
- Q. 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;
- R. Whereas the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, visited Ethiopia on 4-6 April 2017, whereas the visit launched a sectorial dialogue on Human Rights and Governance,
- S. Whereas the EU-Ethiopia Strategic Engagement Agreement was signed on 14 June 2016; whereas it acknowledges the crucial role played by Ethiopia in Africa and the international community, as well as its significant economic growth and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals ; whereas the EU supports Ethiopia's constructive role in peace and security in the Horn of Africa,
1. calls on the authorities to respect the Constitution, in particular from article 13 and following on the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, and to respect the rule of law; urges the government, to duly implement the recommendations of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission on the recent violent protests, in particular to brought to justice the members of the various security forces responsible of violence, to prevent targeted attack against nationalities and to defend people the right to justice; but also to implement good governance, job creation for the youth; urges the government to allow for an independent UN inquiry;
 2. encourages the Government to continue lifting restrictions included in the state of emergency and to implement them responsibly
 3. calls on the Ethiopian authorities to prevent any ethnic or religious discrimination and to encourage and take action in favour of a peaceful and constructive dialogue between all communities;
 4. expresses its concern regarding legislation that severely restricts rights to freedom of expression, information, association and peaceful assembly, as well as human rights monitoring;
 5. expresses its concerns on severe restrictions of the freedom of the press, with the repression of independent reporting, detention of journalists and bloggers, the blocking of mobile internet, restriction of social media and ban of communication with foreign groups;

6. calls on the Ethiopian Government to immediately stop harassing the opposition and all of its citizens and enforce the right to freedom of speech in the country in accordance with Article 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution;
7. warns against the misuse by the authorities of an excessively broad definition of terrorism to silence journalists and opposition members;
8. calls for the immediate release of all unjustly jailed prisoners, including those individuals jailed for criticising the state;
9. recalls that Ethiopia is the second most populated country in Africa, was one of the fastest growing economies in Africa but nevertheless remains one of the poorest; recalls that Ethiopia with 5,328 kilometers of borders has to face the fragility of its neighbors facing permanent influxes of migrants, hosting approximately 800 000 refugees;
10. reaffirms the strategic geographical situation of Ethiopia in the sub-region; believes that it is essential for the European Union to conduct a political dialogue with this key country;
11. expresses deep concern about the current devastating climatic conditions in Ethiopia which have led to the worsening of the humanitarian situation in the country; welcomes the additional €165 million in assistance for the region, for the South Sudan crisis and neighbouring countries, as well as the drought in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya;
12. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Institutions of the African Union and the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development), The Secretary General of the UN, the UN General Assembly, the Co-Chairs of the Parliamentary Assembly Joint ACP-EU-African Parliament.