

AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_ Calendar No. \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: To amend the preamble.

**IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—115th Cong., 1st Sess.**

**S. Res. 168**

Supporting respect for human rights and encouraging  
inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

Referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ and  
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended  
to be proposed by Mr. CARDIN

Viz:

1 Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the United States and Ethiopia have closely  
partnered in areas of mutual interest, including security,  
development, and humanitarian aid;

Whereas democratic space in Ethiopia has steadily dimin-  
ished since the general elections of 2005 and has ranked  
in the bottom tier of Freedom House annual global  
rankings since 2011, dropping further in 2017;

Whereas elections were held in 2015 in which the ruling Ethi-  
opian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front and its  
affiliates claimed 100 percent of parliamentary seats;

Whereas the 2016 Department of State Human Rights Re-  
port on Ethiopia cited serious human rights violations,  
including arbitrary arrests, killings, rape, and torture  
committed by security forces as well as increased restric-

tions on freedom of expression and freedom of association, politically motivated trials, harassment, intimidation, and arrest of opposition members and journalists;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has repeatedly abused laws such as the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation to limit press freedom, silence independent journalists, and persecute members of the political opposition;

Whereas laws such as the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation have been used to restrict the operation of civil society and nongovernmental organizations in Ethiopia across a range of purposes, particularly those investigating alleged violations of human rights by governmental authorities;

Whereas the case of the “Zone 9 Bloggers”, whose arrest and detention in 2014 and subsequent trials on terrorism charges brought international attention to the restrictions on press freedom in Ethiopia, is indicative of the coercive environment for civil society, including journalists;

Whereas the arrest, detention, and demeaning treatment of hundreds of dissidents, including leaders of legally registered opposition parties such as Bekele Gerba, arrested in December 2015, and Merera Gudina, arrested in November 2016, of the Oromo Federalist Congress, Yonatan Tesfaye Regassa, arrested in December 2015, of the Semayawi Party (the Blue Party), and the arrest and sentencing of Okello Akway Ochalla, former governor of the Gambella region, are indicative of repressive political conditions that prevail in the country;

Whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Council reported last year at least 102 protestor deaths from November 2015 to February 2016 across 9 administrative zones, Human

Rights Watch reports that Ethiopian security forces have killed at least 500 peaceful protestors, and Amnesty International reported that more than 800 protestors have been killed since November 2015 and that number is likely higher;

Whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission also conducted an investigation into the deaths and injuries that occurred during the protest period and submitted the report with its recommendations to the House of Peoples Representatives, but the full text of the report has not yet been made public;

Whereas, on October 9, 2016, the Government of Ethiopia imposed a far-reaching, six-month State of Emergency that restricted a broad range of actions, including blocking mobile Internet access and social media communications, undermining freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful assembly, which led to the arrest of over 26,000 persons, and which was extended by four months on March 30, 2017;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia lifted the State of Emergency after ten months, but, according to Human Rights Watch “thousands remain in detention without charge, none of the protestors’ underlying grievances have been addressed, and politically motivated trials of key opposition leaders, artists, journalists, and others continue”;

Whereas, on October 10, 2016, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the United Nations Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances and on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions publicly called on the Government of Ethiopia to allow an international com-

mission of inquiry to investigate the protests and the violence used against peaceful demonstrators;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has acknowledged that its people have legitimate grievances and expressed its willingness to address a number of issues including lack of basic social services, poor governance, and corruption, and some of those engaged in corrupt practices were removed from office and prosecuted;

Whereas former detainees report torture, lack of rations, and other forms of serious abuse in detention facilities;

Whereas state-sponsored violence against citizens exercising their rights to peaceful assembly in Oromia and elsewhere in the country, and the abuse of laws to stifle journalistic and political freedoms, stand in direct contrast to democratic principles and in violation of Ethiopia's constitution;

Whereas the 2007 counter-insurgency operations, declared by then President Meles Zenawi in response to violent attacks by the Ogaden National Liberation Front in the Somali region of Ethiopia, continues today and have reportedly consisted of serious abuses by Ethiopian Federal and regional security forces that may in some cases constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity;

Whereas, to date, the Government of Ethiopia has so limited access and reporting from the Somali region such that no independent verification can be made as to the reports of gross human rights violations and the conduct of security forces and militants there;

Whereas, to date, despite the acknowledgement by the Government of Ethiopia of misgovernance and security force abuses as well as a stated commitment to hold account-

able those responsible for such abuses, the Government of Ethiopia has failed to hold anyone accountable for these crimes; and

Whereas, despite the July 2015 visit of President Barack Obama to Addis Ababa, during which Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn expressed his government's commitment to deepen the democratic process and work towards the respect of human rights and improving governance and noted the need to step up efforts to strengthen institutions, the Government of Ethiopia has failed to take clear, consistent and sustainable actions to follow through with this commitment: Now, therefore be it