



PRESS RELEASE

April 02, 2018

EACC and EAN welcomes the news of the election of Dr. Abiy Ahmed earlier this week to replace Hailemariam Desalegn who resigned his post as Prime Minister in mid - February. Desalegn said his decision was to allow announced reforms to be pursued.

However, we have continued concerns of the structural elements of the ruling party which may pose immovable obstacles for meaningful reform in Ethiopia. Since coming to power in 1991, there have been two Prime Ministers with two distinctive power structure directly corresponding to the ethnic origin of each of the Prime Ministers. Unlike Hailemariam Desalegn, Meles Zenawi who is from Tigray ethnic group enjoyed the full authority of the Prime Minister's office under the constitution including the role of the Commander-in-Chief of the national armed forces. However, many Ethiopians believe Prime Minister Desalegn who is not from Tigray never had similar political power in his entire tenure.

We believe the state of Emergency which was announced on February 17 shortly after the resignation of Prime Minister Desalegn is in part a cautionary move by TPLF to mitigate the possible appointment of Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who is from the Oromo ethnic group. Although the question of who will replace Desalegn has now taken its course, what remains is the full implementation of Article 74 of the Ethiopian Constitution which defines the Powers and Functions of the Prime Minister. Recent arrest including of those Ethiopians who came out jubilantly to celebrate his appointment as Prime Minister vividly demonstrates this concern.

We believe TPLF (Tigray People Liberation Front) is busy creating a state within a state by firmly controlling the security and military apparatus which had preoccupied Desalegn's administration exasperating the political situation to go from bad to worse. Regardless of the political order within the ruling coalition party, the Ethiopian people demands for human right and political freedom shall continue unabated.

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If true reforms is to prevail and systemic changes to take place, the new Prime Minster should be willing and able to address the following main political objectives within a reasonable time frame:

- Release all political prisoners, dissidents, activists, and journalists.
- Lift the state of emergency, and fully implement Articles 29 and 30 of the Ethiopian constitution.
- The immediate repeal of Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation.
- Stop the killing of peaceful protesters.
- Convene a national conference of all stakeholders to discuss an all-inclusive transitional arrangement.
- Allow a rapporteur appointed by the United Nations to conduct an independent examination of the state of human rights in Ethiopia.

H Res.128 and its important provisions is a direct outcome of this political crisis more relevant today than when the resolution was first drafted. It remains an indispensable tool to reformist within the ruling party including the new Prime Minster to support human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia. Consequently, EACC and EAN highly recommends the historic opportunity of the passing of the resolution in order to achieve permanent resolution to the political and humanitarian crisis affecting Ethiopia.

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