



Kinijit International Council

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Washington Update

There will be an announcement made by the Senate's Africa subcommittee about the upcoming hearing regarding The Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia.

We will let you all know about the details as soon as they are announced.

The hearing is intended to advise the Senate on how to proceed with H.R. 2003 (or similar legislation). As we all know Ethiopian democracy achieved a major milestone on October 2nd of last year when the House passed H.R. 2003, the Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007. This was evidence of the strong commitment of the congress to the cause of democracy in Ethiopia. It also showed interest in fostering progress in development in Ethiopia.

This public vote sent a strong message to American diplomats and was heard by the Meles regime. Now the next step is to win in the Senate. For this we need to contact our state's Senators and very importantly the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joseph Biden (D - DE), and the ranking member, Richard Lugar (R - IN). We also should contact the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, Russ Feingold (D - WI), and the ranking member, John Sununu (R - NH).

Also we should send out thanks and condolences to the late Tom Lantos, Chairman of the House International Relation Committee who tragically passed away yesterday. He was a true champion of human rights and a key supporter of Ethiopia. He will be missed.

In the last weeks our distinguished advocate for democracy and development in Ethiopia, Engineer Hailu Shawel, President of Kinijit also known as Coalition for Unity and Democracy in Ethiopia (CUD) addressed Ethiopians in the US - in Las Vegas and Dallas where he met enthusiastic audiences concerned with progress in Ethiopia. He presented his vision for Ethiopia, one with human rights, economic development and democracy. He was joined by Wzr. Nigest G/Hewoit who urged Ethiopian women to participate in the democracy movement. Doctor Taye Woldesemiat also spoke about unity for all Ethiopians as a necessary step forward.

Finally, we have a new video to be shown on February 17th at the Washington, DC Convention Center documenting the CUD's organization of Ethiopian citizens in Ethiopia. This covers a range of the whole of the country! All invited! Please come!

Mesfin Mekonen, Kinijit International Council Foreign Relations