

Resolution concerning the situation in Ethiopia

Whereas, Ethiopia – a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country – has been in the news for over four decades affected by natural and human caused disasters, drought, famine and war; and

Whereas, due to severe political persecution under three successive Ethiopian regimes over the last four decades has meant targeted imprisonment and killing, especially of the Oromo people, the largest group in Ethiopia; and

Whereas, the Oromo people belong to many faiths – Evangelical Christian (Lutherans), Islam, and Waaqeffataa – and members of these groups are refugees, many of whom fled on foot to neighboring countries to seek safety in different parts of the world; and

Whereas, since late 1970s and early 1980s the largest Oromo refugees were assisted and resettled by Lutheran Social Services and International Institute of Minnesota, by extension the largest East African communities are in our State of Minnesota; and

Whereas, among those refugees there were members of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), which is the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia – the most targeted group because of members’ faith, especially under the Marxist regime (1974-91) and again by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front regime (1991-2018) – who were targeted because of their demand for human rights and justice; and

Whereas, some of those refugees (former members of EECMY) faithfully continued to worship the Lord by setting up Bible studies groups in their own Oromo language in their newly adopted country and soon grew to become full-fledged congregations – Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota (OROECM); and

Whereas, members of OROECM still have their friends and family members back in Ethiopia under continued persecution, severe human rights violation, and total insecurity which has led to starvation, absolute poverty, and a state of war; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Office of the Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, where so many Ethiopian expatriates now call home, contact the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that, as soon as possible, ELCA representatives contact representatives of the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to seek a resolution to the arrest, detention, incarceration and human rights violations of Oromo people within Ethiopia.

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