Philadelphia City Council Adopts Resolution Recognizing Ethiopian Musician Teddy Afro

Resolution expresses concern regarding freedom of expression in Ethiopipia



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Nov 27, 2026 (Issuewire.com**)** - Philadelphia City Council Adopts Resolution Recognizing Ethiopian Musician Teddy Afro and Raising Concerns About Press Freedom in Ethiopia

Philadelphia City Council has adopted a resolution recognizing Ethiopian musician Tewodros Kassahun,

widely known as Teddy Afro, for his contributions to freedom of expression, democracy, peace and national unity in Ethiopia. The resolution also expresses solidarity with Ethiopian journalists, artists, human rights defenders and others advocating peacefully for democratic rights.

The American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC), which supported the initiative, welcomed the Council's action as an important recognition of the challenges facing freedom of expression and independent journalism in Ethiopia.

The resolution, drafted by Councilman Jimmy Harrity, recognizes Teddy Afro's influence as one of Ethiopia's most prominent contemporary musicians and acknowledges his use of music to address issues of justice, political accountability, peace and national unity.

Born in Addis Ababa in 1976, Teddy Afro rose to national prominence with his third album, Yasteseryal. Its title track, which addressed political corruption and the country's disputed 2005 elections, attracted widespread attention. Several songs from the album were subsequently banned from broadcast by Ethiopian authorities, according to the resolution.

His subsequent albums, including Ethiopia, further established his influence in Ethiopian music and among audiences in the Ethiopian diaspora. His work has frequently addressed themes that extend beyond music to questions of national identity, freedom and democratic governance.

The Council's resolution also draws attention to concerns about press freedom and the detention of journalists in Ethiopia. Citing documentation by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the resolution references five journalists who have reportedly remained in detention for approximately three years while awaiting trial. It also raises concerns about the reported arrest of young people for listening to Teddy Afro's music and the detention of Mahlet Solomon, identified in the resolution as the artist's spokesperson and assistant manager.

The resolution affirms the right of artists to express their views peacefully through music and other creative forms without intimidation, censorship or retaliation. It also calls attention to the importance of protecting journalists and individuals who advocate for democracy, accountable governance and equality before the law.

"Philadelphia's action sends an important message that freedom of expression, artistic independence and a free press are fundamental democratic principles," said Mesfin Tegenu, Chairman of the American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee. "Teddy Afro's music has become an influential platform for expressing the aspirations of millions of Ethiopians. Recognizing his contributions also brings attention to the journalists, artists and citizens who face intimidation or imprisonment for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights."

Tegenu added that the resolution underscores the importance of international solidarity with Ethiopians seeking greater democratic freedoms and respect for human rights.

AEPAC welcomed the Philadelphia City Council's recognition and called on Ethiopian authorities to uphold due process, protect independent journalism, and ensure that artists and citizens can express their views peacefully without fear of retaliation.

The resolution was adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia.

About AEPAC

The American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) is a national Ethiopian American advocacy organization working to strengthen U.S.-Ethiopia relations and advance democracy, human rights, religious freedom, the rule of law and accountable governance in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

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