

# American Association for Ethiopian Jews

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For Release: IMMEDIATE

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## U.S. CONGRESS PASSES ETHIOPIAN JEWRY RESOLUTION

Washington, D.C., Sept. 17 -- The U.S. House of Representatives on September 11th unanimously passed a resolution which urges President Reagan to take all necessary steps to help the Jews of Ethiopia immigrate freely to Israel. As the Senate approved the legislation last November, it will now be sent on to the White House.

With more than 10,000 Ethiopian Jews languishing in disease-ridden camps on Ethiopia's border, several Members of Congress underscored the significance of this legislation and the need for immediate action to save the Jews in the camps as well as the 7,000 - 8,000 very old, sick and young Ethiopian Jews remaining in Ethiopia. In a statement made on the House floor, Congressman Ben Gilman (R-NY) explained that "it is important that our official position on this important human rights matter be relayed to the White House and all relevant foreign governments."

While there are now approximately 7,000 Ethiopian Jews in Israel (close to 4,000 arrived in the last year and a half) the rescue of Ethiopian Jews from the refugee camps dropped off dramatically during the past four months when less than 300 Ethiopian Jews reached Israel. "At a time when reports indicate that many Ethiopian Jews in the refugee areas are dying of malnutrition, dehydration, and dysentery there is a growing concern on capitol hill for the welfare of these people," stated Nathan Shaprio, President of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews.

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), one of the original co-sponsors of the

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of the House resolution added, "It was at one point hoped that much of the pressure on the Ethiopian Jewish refugee population could be alleviated over the past summer. I am very sorry that this has not proved to be the case. ... It should be clear U.S. policy to do everything we can to aid this community and to enable them to settle in Israel."

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