

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Calling for a democratic transition in the Republic of Chad and standing with the people of Chad.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MENENDEZ submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Calling for a democratic transition in the Republic of Chad and standing with the people of Chad.

Whereas the people of the Republic of Chad suffered for three decades under the authoritarian rule of Idriss Deby, whose government was characterized by human rights abuses, rampant corruption, gross mismanagement of government resources, the suppression of civil liberties and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression, and internet blockages;

Whereas President Idriss Deby impeded the ability of the people of Chad to change their government by violating constitutionally mandated presidential term limits in 2005, repeatedly postponing legislative elections which were last held in 2011, arresting opposition party mem-

bers and civil society activists, and organizing presidential elections that were neither free nor fair;

Whereas, from 2016 to 2021, authorities in Chad blocked or limited access to the internet for 911 days, totaling two and a half years, to impede the ability of Chadian citizens to criticize their government, organize public protests, hold their government accountable, monitor presidential elections, or access outside information;

Whereas, under the constitution of Chad, upon President Deby's death on April 20, 2021, power should have passed to the President of the National Assembly to organize new democratic elections;

Whereas, instead of adhering to the constitution, a group of Chadian military officers installed President Deby's son, General Mahamat Idriss Deby, as Transitional Military Council (TMC) president, suspended the constitution, and dissolved the government and National Assembly;

Whereas the actions of Mahamat Deby and the Chadian military in April 2021 constituted a coup d'état;

Whereas security forces in Chad used excessive force, including live ammunition, against civilians protesting the coup in April and May 2021, killing at least 7 individuals, wounding dozens more, and arresting hundreds;

Whereas the African Union's Peace and Security Council expressed "grave concern" with the establishment of the TMC and stated on May 14, 2021, its "total rejection of any unconstitutional change of government," noting the appointment of a prime minister and "civilian-led Transitional Government" but categorically asserting that no form of extension of the transition period beyond the 18-month timeline of October 22, 2022, would be acceptable,

and calling on Mahamat Deby and members of the TMC to commit to not contesting or taking part in elections transitional authorities are responsible for organizing;

Whereas the African Union reaffirmed on August 3, 2021, the need for the Transitional Government to respect the 18-month transitional timeline for elections in October 2022 and reiterated that members of the TMC “shall not be eligible to be candidates for the elections at the end of the transition”;

Whereas the TMC released from jail approximately 300 people charged with crimes of opinion, terrorism, and harming the State in November 2021, in advance of a dialogue with armed groups in Qatar;

Whereas the TMC and several dozen rebel groups launched a pre-dialogue process in Qatar in March 2022, in advance of an inclusive national civilian dialogue in Chad scheduled for May 2022;

Whereas a peaceful and democratic Chad is essential for the stability and development of Central Africa and the Sahel;

Whereas Chad faces a dire humanitarian crisis due to threats posed by terrorist organizations and armed groups, regional instability, climate change, food insecurity, and decades of internal mismanagement and corruption by former President Deby’s government;

Whereas the April 2021 coup d’etat was inconsistent with the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which states that AGOA eligible countries must have established or are making continual progress toward establishing the rule of law and political pluralism; and

Whereas United States security assistance to Chad, which has long been prioritized over democracy, human rights, and development assistance, thereby contributing to the militarization of the former Government of Chad, should remain suspended until democratic elections are held and civilian rule is restored: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the April 2021 military takeover
3 in Chad as a coup d’etat;

4 (2) stands with the people of Chad in their
5 democratic aspirations;

6 (3) supports the African Union’s call for transi-
7 tional authorities, including General Mahamat Deby
8 and members of the TMC, to—

9 (A) organize elections by October 22,
10 2022, in accordance with the 18-month time-
11 frame articulated by the TMC; and

12 (B) commit publicly not to stand as can-
13 didates in the elections they are responsible for
14 organizing;

15 (4) calls on General Mahamat Deby and leaders
16 of the TMC to—

17 (A) immediately release all of those arbi-
18 trarily arrested during the April-May 2021 pro-
19 tests;

20 (B) ensure that security forces respect
21 rights related to freedom of peaceful assembly

1 and expression and hold accountable security
2 force members responsible for excessive use of
3 force or other human rights abuses;

4 (C) publicly commit not to run in elections;

5 (D) abide by the 18-month transitional
6 timeline for restoring civilian rule via free, fair,
7 and peaceful democratic elections and return to
8 their barracks;

9 (E) support an inclusive national civilian
10 dialogue by ensuring that all parties may par-
11 ticipate freely and openly;

12 (F) commit to respecting freedom of ex-
13 pression, opinion, the press, and access to infor-
14 mation to include unimpeded internet access for
15 the people of Chad; and

16 (5) calls on the Secretary of State to—

17 (A) identify coup leaders and their accom-
18 plices and enablers working to undermine a
19 democratic process in Chad for consideration
20 for visa restrictions and targeted financial sanc-
21 tions where available;

22 (B) state publicly that those who per-
23 petrate human rights abuses or works to under-
24 mine the democratic process in Chad, including
25 by impeding freedoms of peaceful of assembly,

1 expression, or association, including related to
2 press and access to information, will be held ac-
3 countable, which could include through visa re-
4 strictions and financial sanctions where avail-
5 able;

6 (C) publicly urge TMC leaders to abide by
7 the 18-month transitional timeline, restore civil-
8 ian rule, and publicly commit not to run as can-
9 didates;

10 (D) monitor, discourage, and deter any ef-
11 fort by external parties to support the extension
12 of the TMC's mandate or otherwise delay or
13 interfere with the restoration of civilian rule via
14 free, fair, and peaceful democratic elections;

15 (E) coordinate with other Federal depart-
16 ments and agencies to—

17 (i) suspend non-humanitarian bilateral
18 assistance to the Government of Chad, in-
19 cluding security assistance, until civilian
20 rule is restored via free, fair, and peaceful
21 democratic elections;

22 (ii) prioritize support for an inclusive
23 civilian national dialogue by ensuring the
24 participation of opposition party members,
25 civil society leaders, women, and youth;

1 (iii) prioritize support for a free, fair,
2 and peaceful electoral process by working
3 with electoral authorities, political party
4 representatives, and members of civil soci-
5 ety in Chad;

6 (iv) support, as appropriate, efforts to
7 draft a new constitution;

8 (v) ensure that the United States bi-
9 lateral policy towards Chad is fully aligned
10 with the broader policy for the Sahel called
11 for in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism
12 Partnership Program Act of 2022 (division
13 AA of Public Law 117–103); and

14 (vi) ensure future assistance is appro-
15 priately balanced between defense, diplo-
16 macy, and development; and

17 (F) direct the Department of the Treasury
18 to use the voice and vote of the United States
19 in international financial institutions to ensure
20 there is a mechanism for civil society to have
21 input into the development and oversight of
22 programs and activities being funded, and that
23 support provided through such instructions
24 prioritize the restoration of civilian rule, includ-

1 ing through free, fair, and peaceful democratic
2 elections.