

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 515

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the persecution of Christians worldwide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 1996

Mr. WOLF (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. HEFLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the persecution of Christians worldwide.

Whereas the worldwide persecution and martyrdom of Christians has increased and intensified to such an extent that more Christians have died for their faith in the 20th century than in all prior 19 centuries combined;

Whereas in many places throughout the world, Christians are restricted in or forbidden from practicing their faith, victimized by a “religious apartheid” that subjects them to inhumane, humiliating treatment, and are imprisoned, tortured, enslaved, and killed;

Whereas in some countries proselytism is forbidden, and extremist elements persist unchecked by the government in

their campaigns to eradicate Christians and force conversions through intimidation, rape, and forced marriage;

Whereas in several Islamic countries conversion to Christianity from Islam is a crime punishable by death;

Whereas the militant Muslim Government of Sudan is waging a jihad (religious war) against the Christian southern part of the country, enforcing Shari'a (Islamic law) against non-Muslim African Sudanese, torturing, starving, killing, and displacing over 1,000,000 people, and enslaving tens of thousands of women and children. Today in Sudan, a human being can be bought for as little as \$15;

Whereas Christians in China have experienced the worst persecution since the pre-Deng period in the 1970's. There are more documented cases of Christians in prison or in some form of detention in China than in any other country. Both Evangelical Protestant house church groups and Roman Catholics have been targeted and named "a principal threat to political stability" by the Central Committee of China's Communist party. In recent months, in separate incidents 3 Chinese Christian leaders were beaten to death by Chinese authorities simply for their religious activities;

Whereas an Islamic court in Kuwait has denied religious liberty to a convert from Islam to Christianity, and the judge recommended that he be put to death;

Whereas 3 Christian leaders in Iran were kidnapped and murdered during 1994 as part of a crackdown on the Iranian Christian community;

Whereas severe persecution of Christians is also occurring in North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and certain countries in the Middle East, to name merely a few;

Whereas religious liberty is a universal right explicitly recognized in numerous international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that “practice discrimination against Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, going even so far as to refuse them the right to meet in private for prayer,” declaring that “this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation not only of all the norms of current international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one’s faith openly,” stating that this is for human beings “their reason for living”;

Whereas the National Association of Evangelicals in January 1996 issued a “Statement of Conscience and Call to Action,” subsequently commended or endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America. They pledged to end their “silence in the face of the suffering of all those persecuted for their religious faith” and “to do what is in our power to the end that the Government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths”;

Whereas the World Evangelical Fellowship has declared September 29, 1996, and each annual last Sunday in September, as an international day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians. That day will be observed by nu-

merous churches and human rights groups around the world;

Whereas the United States of America since its founding has been a harbor of refuge and freedom to worship for believers from John Winthrop to Roger Williams to William Penn, and a haven for the oppressed, and has guaranteed freedom of worship in this country for people of all faiths;

Whereas, unfortunately, the United States has in many instances failed to raise forcefully the issue of anti-Christian and other religious persecution at international conventions and in bilateral relations with offending countries; and

Whereas, however, in the past the United States has forcefully taken up the cause of other persecuted religious minorities, and the United States has the ability to intervene in a similar manner for persecuted Christians throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) unequivocally condemns the egregious
3 human rights abuses and denials of religious liberty
4 to Christians around the world, and calls upon the
5 responsible regimes to cease such abuses;

6 (2) strongly recommends that the President ex-
7 pand and invigorate United States international ad-
8 vocacy on behalf of persecuted Christians, and initi-
9 ate a thorough examination of all United States poli-
10 cies that affect persecuted Christians;

1 (3) encourages the President to proceed as ex-
2 peditiously as possible in appointing a White House
3 special advisor on religious persecution; and

4 (4) applauds the actions of the World Evan-
5 gelical Fellowship in declaring an annual inter-
6 national day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Chris-
7 tians.

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