

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 559

Condemning the terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses against the
civilian population of Sierra Leone.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 1998

Mr. EHLERS (for himself and Mr. ROYCE) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning the terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses
against the civilian population of Sierra Leone.

Whereas the ousted Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military junta and the rebel fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have mounted a campaign of terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses on the civilian population of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the AFRC/RUF violence against civilians continues with at least 1,200 persons having hands or feet amputated by rebels (and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that every victim who makes it to medical help is only 1 of 4 who have been mutilated);

Whereas the AFRC/RUF continues to abduct children and forcibly train them as combatants, in numbers estimated by UNICEF to exceed 3,000 since March 1998;

Whereas the humanitarian consequences of this campaign have been the flight of more than 250,000 refugees to Guinea and Liberia in the last 6 months and the increase of internally displaced Sierra Leoneans to over 250,000 in camps and towns in the north and east;

Whereas the governments of Guinea and Liberia are having great difficulty caring for the huge number of refugees, now totaling 600,000 in Guinea and Liberia, and emergency appeals have been issued by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for \$7,300,000 for emergency food, shelter, sanitation, medical, educational, psychological, and social services;

Whereas starvation and hunger-related deaths have begun in the north with more than 500 people dying since August 1, 1998, a situation that will only get worse in the next months;

Whereas the humanitarian community is unable, because of continuing security concerns, to deliver food and medicine to the vulnerable groups within the north and east of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its military peacekeeping arm called ECOMOG are doing their best, but are still lacking in the logistic support needed to either bring this AFRC/RUF rebel war to a conclusion or force a negotiated settlement;

Whereas arms and weapons continue to be supplied to the AFRC/RUF in direct violation of a United Nations arms embargo;

Whereas United Nations Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Sergio Viera de Melo, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Refugees International, following May through June 1998 visits to Sierra Leone, have condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrible human rights violations done by the AFRC/RUF rebels to civilians; and

Whereas the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, following a May 1998 visit to Sierra Leone, called upon the United Nations to make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects in the rehabilitation of child combatants: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) urges the President and the Secretary of
3 State to give high priority to solving the conflict in
4 Sierra Leone and to bring stability to West Africa
5 in general;

6 (2) urges the State Department and the United
7 Nations to give the needed logistical support to
8 ECOMOG and the Government of Sierra Leone to
9 bring this conflict to a rapid conclusion;

10 (3) condemns the use of children as combatants
11 in the conflict in Sierra Leone;

5 (10) encourages and supports, Olara Otunnu,
6 United Nations Special Representative of the Sec-
7 retary General for Children and Armed Conflict, to
8 continue in his efforts to work in Sierra Leone in
9 the establishment of programs designed to rehabili-
10 tate child combatants.

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