

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 244

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the Government of Saudi Arabia's lack of protection of internationally recognized human rights and the absence of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 15, 2003

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

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the Government of Saudi Arabia's lack of protection of internationally recognized human rights and the absence of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia.

Whereas the Department of State has concluded that human rights conditions remain poor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and that religious freedom does not exist in that country;

Whereas the Commission on International Religious Freedom concurs that religious freedom does not exist in Saudi Arabia and has concluded that the Government of Saudi Arabia forcefully limits the public practice or expression of religion to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam;

Whereas security forces of the Government of Saudi Arabia continue to abuse and torture detainees and prisoners, including those individuals held on account of their religious beliefs or practices;

Whereas the way religious law is interpreted and enforced in Saudi Arabia affects every aspect of the lives of Saudi and foreign women and results in serious violations of their human rights;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia severely limits the freedom of movement of women and discriminates against women in education, employment, access to healthcare, marriage, and inheritance, among other things;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia does not allow for freedom of association and strictly limits freedom of expression and freedom of the press;

Whereas the Saudi religious police, otherwise known as the “Mutawaa”, arbitrarily raid private homes and exercise broadly defined, vague powers, including the ability to use physical force and detain individuals without due process;

Whereas the Mutawaa intimidate, harass, abuse, and detain citizens and foreigners of both sexes;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia severely restricts non-Wahhabi places of worship and denies non-Wahhabi clerics entry into the country;

Whereas, although the Government of Saudi Arabia has publicly affirmed that all Saudi residents have the liberty to worship in private, for several years and as recently as May 2003, Shi’a clerics have been arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for expressing their religious views and

some foreign workers have been arrested, detained, tortured, and deported for worshipping in private;

Whereas offensive and discriminatory language has been found in Saudi Government-sponsored school textbooks, sermons in mosques, and articles and commentary in the media about Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia, which enjoys access to the United States media, refuses to allow the transmission of Radio Sawa, which promotes values of democracy, tolerance, and respect for human rights in Saudi Arabia; and

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has made public statements pledging political, economic, and educational reforms and the improved treatment of foreign residents, yet no discernible improvements are evident: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3            (1) calls on the Government Saudi Arabia—

4            (A) to uphold its international commit-  
5            ments by respecting and protecting the human  
6            rights of citizens and foreigners of both sexes in  
7            Saudi Arabia;

8            (B) to ratify and fully comply with inter-  
9            national human rights instruments and cooper-  
10           ate with United Nations human rights mecha-  
11           nisms, and, in particular, to sign, ratify, and

1 implement the International Covenant on Civil  
2 and Political Rights;

3 (C) to implement immediately promised ju-  
4 dicial, political, economic, and educational re-  
5 forms;

6 (D) to permit the establishment of inde-  
7 pendent nongovernmental organizations to ad-  
8 vance human rights and to promote tolerance,  
9 and to take action to create an independent  
10 human rights commission for the same pur-  
11 poses;

12 (E) to safeguard the freedom of non-Mus-  
13 lims, and of those Muslims who do not follow  
14 the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, to worship  
15 in private;

16 (F) to permit non-Wahhabi places of wor-  
17 ship, such as churches, to function openly in  
18 special compounds or zones for foreigners or in  
19 unadorned buildings designated for this pur-  
20 pose; and

21 (G) to permit the broadcasting of Radio  
22 Sawa throughout the country; and

23 (2) urges the United States Government—

24 (A) in both public and private fora, to  
25 raise concerns at the highest levels with the

1 Government of Saudi Arabia regarding its on-  
2 going and repeated human rights violations;

3 (B) to designate Saudi Arabia a “country  
4 of particular concern” under the International  
5 Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for its system-  
6 atic, ongoing, and egregious violations of reli-  
7 gious freedom;

8 (C) to encourage the Government of Saudi  
9 Arabia to implement expeditiously its publicly  
10 stated plans for judicial, political, economic,  
11 and educational reform;

12 (D) to develop and expand specific initia-  
13 tives and programs in Saudi Arabia to advance  
14 human rights, including religious freedom, the  
15 rights of women, and the rule of law, through,  
16 for example, the Department of State’s Middle  
17 East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Middle  
18 East Democracy Fund (MEDF), and Human  
19 Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF), and  
20 through international broadcasting, and other  
21 public diplomacy programs; and

22 (E) to report publicly to Congress on its  
23 efforts to raise concerns regarding human  
24 rights, including religious freedom, with the

- 1 Government of Saudi Arabia, including the re-
- 2 sults of those efforts.

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