

110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 1127

Condemning the endemic restrictions on freedom of the press and media and public expression in the Middle East and the concurrent and widespread presence of anti-Semitic material, Holocaust denial, and incitement to violence in the Arab media and press.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 2008

Mr. ACKERMAN (for himself, Mr. PENCE, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. POE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Condemning the endemic restrictions on freedom of the press and media and public expression in the Middle East and the concurrent and widespread presence of anti-Semitic material, Holocaust denial, and incitement to violence in the Arab media and press.

Whereas a free press and the right of free expression are both fundamental, universal human rights and are essential to making governments accountable to the people from whom their powers are derived;

Whereas the nations of the Middle East, with Israel being the sole exception, suffer profound deficits when compared to the global community with regard to both measures of

human development and measures of human freedom and dignity;

Whereas the Middle East is a region of vital national security interest to the United States and the twin deficits in human freedom and human development negatively affect United States efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and to stabilize the region for the benefit of all;

Whereas overt censorship, intimidation, harassment through the civil courts, assaults by government agents on journalists and political activists, arbitrary press, and emergency laws, and extra-legal restrictions on the kinds of topics which may be addressed are endemic practices in the Middle East, though in varying in degree and extent in the different Arab countries;

Whereas many of the countries engaged most actively in efforts to stifle public debate, suppress political discussion, and impose capricious limits on thought and expression are among the largest recipients of United States foreign assistance, potentially giving the mistaken impression that the United States endorses or condones the restrictive policies of the recipient countries;

Whereas the extensive restrictions on speech and expression in the Arab world are uniquely counterposed by the space left open by Arab governments for grotesque anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, incitement to violence, and glorification of terrorism;

Whereas the exception from censorship and restrictions on expression for certain kinds of hate speech are not only exploited by government proxies, but often even by Arab governments themselves, including states that nominally prohibit racial, religious, or ethnic hate speech;

Whereas in the Middle East, where the press is generally not free, where there are rules for what can and cannot be said, the persistent promulgation of hate-speech indicates an obvious and dangerous form of state endorsement; and

Whereas many of the same Arab governments to which the United States has turned for assistance in ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are themselves responsible for using their government-owned, government-sanctioned, or government-controlled publishing houses and media to promulgate stories of imaginary Israeli massacres, Jewish blood-libels, alleged Israeli medical experiments on Palestinian children, and to produce Arabic translations of anti-Semitic tracts such as, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *Mein Kampf*: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) strongly condemns the endemic restrictions  
3               on freedom of the press and expression in the Arab  
4               world and the concurrent and widespread presence  
5               of anti-Semitic material, Holocaust denial, and in-  
6               citement to violence in the Arab media and press;

7               (2) deplores the methods and practices utilized  
8               by the governments in the Middle East to exert con-  
9               trol over the press, and on public expression, includ-  
10              ing—

11                       (A) overt censorship;

12                       (B) intimidation and harassment of report-  
13              ers, editors, and publishers by government

1 agents, and through manipulation of the civil  
2 courts;

3 (C) assaults by government agents on jour-  
4 nalists and political activists;

5 (D) arbitrarily enforced press and emer-  
6 gency laws; and

7 (E) extra-legal restrictions on the kinds of  
8 topics which may be addressed either in public  
9 or in private;

10 (3) expresses deep concern that many of the  
11 same Arab governments to which United States has  
12 turned for assistance in ending the Israeli-Pales-  
13 tinian conflict, are themselves responsible for using  
14 their government-owned, government-sanctioned, or  
15 government-controlled publishing houses and media  
16 to promulgate insidious, incendiary and poisonous  
17 speech regarding Israel and the Jewish people that  
18 makes United States efforts to help resolve the  
19 Arab-Israeli conflict all the more difficult;

20 (4) affirms the unshakeable belief of the Amer-  
21 ican people in the universal right of all persons to  
22 freely and peaceably express themselves, to publish  
23 and advocate for their nonviolent beliefs, and to peti-  
24 tion their government for redress of their grievances;  
25 and

1           (5) calls on the President, the Secretary of  
2           State, and all United States ambassadors to Arab  
3           countries to consistently protest the lack of freedom  
4           of thought and expression, and to advocate for the  
5           importance of free speech and a free press as essen-  
6           tial components of development and political reform.

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