

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1338

Calling on the United States Government and the international community to support a transition to sustainable peace in Sri Lanka by encouraging an international human rights monitoring presence, protecting the work of civil society and media, facilitating access of humanitarian operations, and retaining democratic principles in which rule of law and justice pervades.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 10, 2008

Mr. SHERMAN (for himself, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. WELLER of Illinois) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States Government and the international community to support a transition to sustainable peace in Sri Lanka by encouraging an international human rights monitoring presence, protecting the work of civil society and media, facilitating access of humanitarian operations, and retaining democratic principles in which rule of law and justice pervades.

Whereas beginning on July 23, 1983, Sri Lanka experienced 10 days of brutal violence known as “Black July” during which an attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) killed 13 Sri Lankan Army soldiers and the Government of Sri Lanka failed to stop mobs that killed

a reported 3,000 or more ethnic Tamils and destroyed an estimated \$300,000,000 worth of property;

Whereas the conflict of the last 25 years has seen the deaths of over 75,000 primarily Tamil people and the emigration of as many as 1,500,000 civilians, who were forced to flee the fighting;

Whereas a ceasefire agreement was reached in February 2002 between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka;

Whereas the breakdown of the 2002 ceasefire has resulted in the killing of hundreds of civilians and internal displacement of over 200,000 people since mid-2006;

Whereas the LTTE has been responsible for reprehensible acts of violence against civilians of all ethnicities, including the forcible eviction of as many as 80,000 Muslims from the Northern Province in 1990, the killing of hundreds of people since 2006, as well as suicide bombings, and other violent actions that have obstructed the peace process;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has pursued a military solution to the conflict, which has led to increased numbers of disappearances and been used to justify severe restrictions on humanitarian aid workers, which have severely undermined the chances of a renewed peace process;

Whereas neither the Government of Sri Lanka nor the LTTE are actively engaged in pursuing a political solution to the conflict;

Whereas the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), a paramilitary group now formally allied with the Govern-

ment of Sri Lanka, continues to commit serious human rights violations and criminal acts with impunity;

Whereas both the LTTE and the government-supported TMVP have been documented to use and recruit child soldiers, and this practice, despite recent releases by the TMVP, remains a significant concern to the United States and the international community; and

Whereas numerous other human rights violations have been committed by all sides in the conflict and continue to be reported, including extrajudicial killings, shelling and bombing of civilian areas, unnecessary prevention of the delivery of humanitarian aid, undue restrictions on the freedom of movement of internally displaced persons, and widespread impunity for serious human rights violations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the 25th anniversary of “Black
3 July” and mourns its victims and the victims of the
4 ongoing violence in Sri Lanka that has followed;

5 (2) expresses concern for the human rights and
6 humanitarian crises that are still occurring in Sri
7 Lanka and condemns the denial of adequate human-
8 itarian aid to the civilian population and attacks on
9 the media with impunity;

10 (3) condemns the continued attacks on civilian
11 populations by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
12 (LTTE) and urges the immediate cessation of vio-
13 lence;

1 (4) urges the LTTE and the Tamil Makkal
2 Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) to immediately end all
3 recruitment of children as soldiers and to release all
4 child soldiers currently in their ranks;

5 (5) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to pur-
6 sue a political resolution, rather than a military so-
7 lution, to the conflict, to allow all necessary relief
8 supplies to reach the Northern Province unhindered,
9 to investigate and prosecute the numerous dis-
10 appearances and attacks on humanitarian workers
11 and the media, to take immediate steps to address
12 the legitimate grievances of the Muslim, Tamil, and
13 all other minority communities and to provide safe
14 living conditions for internally displaced people;

15 (6) calls upon the President to publicly urge Sri
16 Lanka to accept an international human rights mon-
17 itoring presence on the island, which would deter,
18 monitor, investigate, and report attacks; and

19 (7) supports United States efforts to work with
20 the Government of Sri Lanka, other relevant stake-
21 holders to the conflict, and the international commu-
22 nity to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian op-
23 erations, hold accountable violators of human rights
24 and international humanitarian law, and promote
25 conditions for a lasting peace through political dia-

- 1 logue that respects the rights of all ethnic and reli-
- 2 gious groups in Sri Lanka.

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