

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 761

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the violation of the human rights of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Sigma Huda, and others, by the caretaker government of Bangladesh.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 18, 2007

Mr. WOLF submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the violation of the human rights of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Sigma Huda, and others, by the caretaker government of Bangladesh.

Whereas the Constitution of Bangladesh, ratified in 1972 following a war of independence, established a democracy ruled by and for the people;

Whereas the government of Bangladesh has been controlled by a military-backed emergency “caretaker” government since January 2007;

Whereas the caretaker government under President Iajjudin Ahmad imposed a state of emergency, subsequently suspending the fundamental rights of the people;

Whereas United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Sigma Huda, has been an important leader and humanitarian in the global effort to combat trafficking in persons;

Whereas United Nations Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda is suffering from coronary artery disease, diabetes mellitus, and chronic renal failure, requiring special medical attention and surgery;

Whereas the Anti-Corruption Commission established by the caretaker government forced United Nations Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda to leave hospital treatment in an ambulance to come before a special court, lying on a stretcher in hospital attire;

Whereas United Nations Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda has been subjected to pretrial detention and imprisonment ever since July 5, 2007, under harsh conditions that threaten her life;

Whereas, according to her attorneys, Sigma Huda's family had been barred from visiting her, delivering food, or securing safe storage of her prescribed medicines in the concluding days of her trial;

Whereas the Anti-Corruption Commission's special court failed to observe an independent judiciary and abide by Bangladeshi rule of law in the trial and treatment of United Nations Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda;

Whereas United Nations Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda was convicted of extortion on August 27, 2007, and sentenced to serve 3 years in prison;

Whereas numerous anti-government demonstrations and protests have taken place in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, in recent weeks, leading the government to shut down numerous universities and enforce a curfew throughout the capital and other major cities;

Whereas the caretaker government has agreed to schedule elections by the end of 2008, keeping Bangladesh in a state of emergency until then; and

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has placed Bangladesh on its Watch List due to concerns about Islamist radicalism and violence and the threatening conditions for and discrimination against religious minorities, particularly Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadis: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) calls on the Secretary of State to investigate  
3               and determine if the charges brought against United  
4               Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Per-  
5               sons, Sigma Huda, constitute a retaliation by the  
6               military-backed emergency “caretaker” Government  
7               of Bangladesh for her family’s alleged political ac-  
8               tivities;

9               (2) encourages the Secretary of State and  
10              United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to  
11              investigate the fairness and legitimacy of the trial  
12              and resulting conviction of United Nations Special  
13              Rapporteur Sigma Huda;

1           (3) urges the Secretary of State to condemn the  
2           ill treatment of human rights defenders and to call  
3           on the caretaker government to ensure due process  
4           and equal treatment under the rule of law for all  
5           suspects, accused, and witnesses;

6           (4) asks the President to direct the United  
7           States Permanent Representative to the United Na-  
8           tions to submit a resolution to the United Nations  
9           condemning the caretaker government for its contin-  
10          ued human rights violations; and

11          (5) proposes that the President recognize the  
12          return of democracy to Bangladesh as a high pri-  
13          ority of United States foreign policy and assume a  
14          leadership role in restoring a publicly-elected govern-  
15          ment in Bangladesh.

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