

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 174

Acknowledging the growing threat of anti-Semitism throughout South America, namely in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Argentina.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging the growing threat of anti-Semitism throughout South America, namely in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Argentina.

Whereas anti-Semitism is a pernicious and global phenomenon;

Whereas recent events in South America have raised serious concerns about the spread of anti-Semitic violence and hatred;

Whereas Venezuela's Jewish community of approximately 15,000 persons and Argentina's Jewish community of approximately 25,000 have been subject to hateful rhetoric, intimidation, and vandalism to their communal and personal property, as well as the targets of boycotts to their businesses, institutions, and events;

Whereas Jewish children in Argentina face mounting anti-Semitism in their schools, including swastikas being painted on walls and graffiti demanding that Jews leave the country;

Whereas, on January 6, 2009, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez expelled Israel's ambassador to Venezuela along with six other Israeli diplomats;

Whereas, on January 14, 2009, Bolivian President Evo Morales announced that Bolivia was breaking diplomatic relations with Israel by expelling the Israeli ambassador to Bolivia and urging that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Shimon Peres be declared war criminals;

Whereas later that day, Venezuelan President Chavez severed relations with Israel, ending 60 years of diplomatic ties and deepening the vulnerability of South American Jews;

Whereas, on January 21, 2009, in the Plaza Israel in the Bolivian capitol of La Paz, vandals removed a large Star of David from a celebrated monument, spray-painted "plaza Palestina" over the plaza's Judaic murals, and left behind a burning American flag;

Whereas, on January 30, 2009, one of Venezuela's most prominent synagogues, Tiferet Israel, was violently attacked by armed men who fired tear gas and then desecrated the place of worship and its historic Torah scrolls, stealing cherished private property;

Whereas President Chavez and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro are to be acknowledged for publicly condemning this appalling attack, and for their stated commitment to apprehend the perpetrators;

Whereas Venezuela has arrested 11 suspects, 8 of whom are government-employed police officers, believed to have

been involved in planning or carrying out the attack against Tiferet Israel;

Whereas the failure to duly punish the culprits of these acts would reward anti-Semitic behavior and encourage the spread of anti-Semitism as a legitimate form of public expression;

Whereas despite this recognition of anti-Semitism, members of the Venezuelan Government have largely fostered anti-Semitism, including continuing to unjustly question the loyalties of Venezuelan Jews and their connections to Israel;

Whereas these events and others indicate that a climate of intolerance is being fostered by the aforementioned governments; and

Whereas it is the long standing policy of the United States to stand firm against crimes of hatred wherever and whenever they occur and to work with allies to ensure that justice is done: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reiterates its condemnation of the attack on
3 Tiferet Israel Synagogue in Caracas, Venezuela, on
4 January 30, 2009, and expresses sorrow towards the
5 victims of this heinous act;

6 (2) welcomes the Venezuelan Government's
7 strong denunciation of the January 30, 2009, at-
8 tack;

9 (3) calls upon the Venezuelan, Argentinean, and
10 Bolivian Governments to take all necessary steps to

1 ensure that anti-Semitism is not tolerated in South
2 America and that the long-term safety of South
3 America's Jewish communities are secure;

4 (4) calls upon said governments to denounce
5 the hateful anti-Jewish coverage in the media;

6 (5) calls upon President Luiz Inacio Lula da
7 Silva of Brazil and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner
8 of Argentina to insist that President Chavez live up
9 to the commitments he made in the 2009 Declara-
10 tion Against Racism signed by all three leaders;

11 (6) desires a lasting and warm relationship be-
12 tween the United States and Venezuela built on mu-
13 tual abhorrence of intolerance and a commitment to
14 peace, stability, and democracy in the Western
15 Hemisphere; and

16 (7) directs the Clerk of the House of Represent-
17 atives to transmit a copy of this resolution to the
18 President, The United States Senate, the United
19 States Permanent Representative to the United Na-
20 tions, and the United States Permanent Representa-
21 tive to the Organization of American States.

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