

AUGUST AS PSORIASIS
AWARENESS MONTH**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the National Psoriasis Foundation and of August as Psoriasis Awareness Month, I would like to bring attention to this often overlooked and serious disease that affects as many as 7.5 million Americans. Psoriasis is a chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there are limited treatments and no cure. Ten to 30 percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. Psoriasis is widely misunderstood and undertreated. In addition to the pain, itching and bleeding caused by psoriasis, many affected individuals also experience social discrimination and stigma. Many people mistakenly believe psoriasis to be contagious. Psoriasis typically strikes between the ages of 15 and 25 and lasts a lifetime. As such, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis impose significant burden on individuals and society; together they cost the nation 56 million hours of lost work and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion in treatments each year.

I am pleased that the 89,000 affected Oregonians have access to the knowledgeable support offered by the Oregon affiliate of the National Psoriasis Foundation. Support group interaction and discussion provides individuals affected by this debilitating disease with much-needed comfort, assistance and resources. The work of the support groups in Oregon is invaluable, and I commend the efforts of those involved.

I thank the National Psoriasis Foundation for all of its efforts and leadership over the last 38 years. This year, the National Psoriasis Foundation had nearly one hundred participants join in its Capitol Hill Day to elevate awareness and understanding of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and have policymakers take action to address access to care and boost the nation's research efforts.

CONGRATULATING MAJOR PHILLIP
GARRETT**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Major Phillip Garrett on his newest posting as Chief of Police of Mobile, Alabama.

Major Garrett was born on December 26, 1950, in Prentiss, Mississippi. His education and specialized training is extensive, including attending the 194th session of the FBI Academy and receiving a bachelor of science degree from Troy State University in Criminal Justice Administration. He has served on the Mobile Police Department for 33 years, starting his career as a patrol officer. Since 1999, Garrett has served as head of the department's Community Services Division.

Major Garrett has received many commendations and recognitions, including the

Chief's Commendation from Chief Sam Cochran, the Life Saving Award from the Mobile Police Department, and the Medal of Valor from the Mobile Police Department. He has also been recognized for his outstanding performances on Competitive Promotional Exams, and in 2004, he was recognized as the top scorer on the Competitive Promotional Exam for Major.

Garrett is considered an innovator amongst his colleagues and has worked to improve relationships between officers and the community. He served on the Envision Coastal America Steering Committee, the Underage Drinking Taskforce, and the Clean Start Pre-natal Substance Abuse Committee. He is also a member of the board of directors for Camp Rap-A-Hope, a children's oncology summer camp. Major Garrett is married to Tammy Smitherman and has three children: Phillip M. Garrett, Jr., Sergeant Matthew Ryan Garrett of the Mobile Police Department, and Kendall W. Smitherman.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize Major Phillip Garrett and commend him for his hard work and this well-deserved appointment as Chief of Police of Mobile, Alabama. I know Major Garrett's family and friends join me in praising his accomplishments and extending thanks for his efforts on behalf of the citizens of Mobile.

REPRESSION IN INDIA EXPOSED

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the London Institute of South Asia recently published an edition of its Journal. It included many excellent articles on the plight of minorities in India. There were articles about the Sikhs, Dalits, Muslims, and others. A writer named Tim Phares wrote a very comprehensive article on the subject that I would like to share with my colleagues.

He took note of the plight of the Sikhs, the Dalits, the Muslims, the Christians, and other minorities in India. He noted that Christians have become "the targets of choice." He noted that the Indian constitution bans the caste system but it remains in place, a vehicle of oppression of minorities. He reported that India's constitution denies people their fundamental right of self-determination. That is the essence of democracy, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how a country can call itself democratic when it denies people such a fundamental democratic right.

The article takes note of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), formed in support of the fascist movement, publishing a booklet on how to frame Christians and other minorities in fake criminal cases. It comments on anti-conversion laws. It details some of the violence that has come about due to such laws. Shouldn't a person's religion be a fundamental freedom, Mr. Speaker?

The article notes the studies that have been done on the massacre in Chithisinghpura in which at least 35 Sikhs were murdered. It notes that they have come to the common conclusion that the Indian government's forces carried out this massacre. It notes the government's involvement in the Gujarat massacres.

The article does an excellent job of detailing incident after incident of repression against minorities in India.

Mr. Speaker, we must do what we can to support freedom throughout the world. It is time to stop our aid and trade with India until it stops being the repressive regime that it is and starts being the democracy that it says it is. We should declare our support for a free and fair plebiscite in Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagalim, and everywhere people are seeking their freedom in South Asia.

[From the Journal of the London Institute of South Asia, July 2006]

REPRESSION IN INDIA

(By Tim Phares)

It is not safe to be a minority in India. As U.S. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-Cal.) pointed out, if you're a Sikh, Muslim, Christian, or other minority, "India might as well be Nazi Germany." While democratic elections occur, they have little effects on minorities except to change the faces.

India has committed or allowed to be committed numerous actions against people (men, women and children) within its borders, actions that, if committed against Americans anywhere would be condemned by us as terrorism.

In India, the overwhelming issues are caste and religion. The caste system defines the rights that people enjoy based on a system of social stratification founded on ancestry and occupation. Unless you are born a Brahmin or other upper-caste Hindu, you are a slave in India. The term Brahmin, for all practical purposes, incorporates all the Hindu upper-castes of India. The Brahmins claim that they were the "chosen people of God." Brahmins believe that whatever exists belongs to the Brahmin.

Under BJP rule, a new term—Hindutva—came into use that bundled all the peoples of India (except those of foreign faiths—Christians Muslims and Parsis) into the fold of Hinduism. A Cabinet member in the previous government led by BJP was open about it. He said that in India, either you must be a Hindu or you are subservient to Hinduism. Despite the fact that India's constitution bans the caste system, it remains the foundation of Hinduism and the Hindu supremacist system.

India's constitution ignores that India is many nations brought together only under foreign imperial rule and denies its peoples their right to self-determination as recognized under International Law.

The target of choice these days seems to be the Christians. Indian Christians have faced many hardships. Christians in India report that they or fellow believers have faced threats, physical attacks, and jail time for sharing their faith. Baptisms, in particular, became a significant challenge for local churches. Under the anti-conversion laws, anyone who chose to become baptized was legally obligated to seek permission from the government, as well as provide them with the name of the person performing the baptism. Fearing repercussions, many new Christians did not make this outward profession of faith until after the laws were repealed.

Human-rights organizations report that more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland have been killed by the Indian government. In addition, tens of thousands of Christians have been killed throughout the country. Priests have been killed, nuns have been raped and forced to drink their own urine, churches have been burned, Christian schools and prayer halls have been attacked. No one is ever punished for these activities.

In 2002, the Associated Press reported an attack on a Catholic church on the outskirts

of Bangalore in which several people were injured. The assailants threw stones at the church, then broke in, breaking furniture and smashing windows before attacking worshippers. The February 25, 2002 issue of the Washington Times reported another church attack in which 20 people were wounded. Earlier that month, two church workers and a teenage boy were shot at while they prayed. The boy was injured. Two Christian missionaries were beaten with iron rods while they rode their bicycles home. A Christian cemetery in Port Blair was vandalized. Indian police broke up a Christian religious festival with gunfire.

The Hindu militant Rashtriya Swaysmewak Sangh (RSS), of which all the leaders of the BJP and its various allies and factions are members (founded in support of the Fascists in Italy), published a booklet on how to file false criminal cases against Christians and other religious minorities.

The attacks on Christians continue and the oppression of Christians that has been going on since Christmas 1998 is unabated. In fact, the atrocities have been increasing in the past year. According to Rev. Dave Stravers, President of Mission India, "There is no question that extremists are trying to instill fear in Christians. They want to make Christians afraid to assemble or share their faith." These Hindu militants accuse Christians of forcibly converting people, then they forcibly reconvert them to Hinduism.

Several Indian states have passed laws forbidding anyone to convert to any religion other than Hinduism. These laws range from requiring a government fee for converting to forcing Dalits to appear before a magistrate and prove a level of education before converting. They often restrict the religious speech of minority believers as those of a certain income or education level are prohibited from discussing religious matters with uneducated, poor Dalits.

On January 28, 2006, a group of Christians in Madhya Pradesh were engaged in prayer. A mob of Hindu militants stormed the hall, a private facility, and severely beat eight Christians. Five of them are still in the hospital as of this writing. The attack appears to be premeditated. The attackers burst in and knew precisely where to go. They arrived on motorbikes, broke windows, and forced the doors open.

On December 29, 2005 a landmine was planted in the Lengjen (Ngarichan) Committee Hall in Tamenglong District which is a Naga inhabited area in the state of Manipur. The land mine exploded when the children of the village went and played at the hall. One 12-year-old boy died in the hospital. Another boy's limb was ripped off and several others were seriously injured.

On November 4, 2005, a Hindu mob attacked Pastor Feroz Masih of the Believers Church of India. He was threatened with death and arson. After beating Pastor Masih, the Hindu militants told him that unless he and his 60 church members took part in a reconversion, they would be burned to death.

Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons, ages 8 and 10, were burned to death while they slept in their jeep by a mob of Hindus chanting "Victory to Hannuman," a Hindu god with the face of a monkey. Staines' widow was expelled from the country, but only one person was ever brought to trial for the Staines murder.

American missionary Joseph Cooper was beaten so badly that he had to spend a week in an Indian hospital. Then he was expelled from India. No one has ever been brought to justice for Cooper's beating.

The missionaries are having a good deal of success in converting members of the lower castes, especially Dalits, also known as "Untouchables." This removes the lower-caste

people from the stratification of the caste system, which is essential to the Hindu religion and its social structure. Recently, in response to the history of caste and its problems, hundreds of thousands of Indians, Dalits particularly, have turned away from Hinduism to join other religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism. This practice created a backlash from a sizeable portion of the Indian population.

Even though they are officially considered Hindus, the Dalits may be the most oppressed people on Earth. The 250 million lower castes include 170 million people called the Scheduled Castes (Untouchables) and 70 million people called the Tribals. Both are looked upon by upper-caste Hindus as less than human and to touch a Dalit renders a person himself "Untouchable." They are called impure, they are shunned, they are banned from Hindu temples, and they are considered to be so low on India's social scale that they are outside of the caste system.

The Untouchable Dalits and Sudras (another low caste) make up 70 percent of the population of India. Most live in very impoverished conditions. At least half the population of India lives below the international poverty line. Forty percent live on less than two dollars per day.

A few years ago, a Dalit girl was hit across the eyes and blinded by her teacher. Her crime had been to drink from the community water pitcher. A Dalit constable took shelter in a Hindu temple one day, only to be stoned to death by the upper-caste Hindus there. Discrimination against Dalits includes education inequality, economic disenfranchisement, religious discrimination, a poor system of medical care, and targeted violence against women. Dalit students are often denied the opportunity to receive the public education guaranteed by the Indian constitution. Rape is widespread and massively underreported.

On August 31, 2005, upper-caste villagers in the village of Gohana burned more than 60 Dalit residences, driving over 2,000 Dalit families out of Gohana. In 1998, a judge in Allahabad cleaned the courtroom with blessed water from the Ganges River because it was previously occupied by a judicial officer belonging to a Scheduled Caste.

When Dalits are walking in the presence of a Brahmin, they can be beaten or killed with impunity. Under strict interpretation of the caste system, Dalits are obligated to perform certain manual duties for upper-caste families without compensation. These duties include cleaning latrines, skinning dead animals, and crafting leather shoes, and other menial tasks.

The Sikhs are also highly victimized by the Indian government. Over 250,000 Sikhs have been killed since the military attack on the Golden Temple in June 1984, according to the book *The Politics of Genocide* by Inderjit Singh Jaijee. The figures were compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy, which represents the judiciary of Punjab. A report issued by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR) showed that India admitted to holding 52,268 political prisoners. Amnesty International reports that tens of thousands of other minorities are also being held as political prisoners. How can a democracy hold political prisoners?

According to many reports, some of these political prisoners have been in custody for almost two decades. Amnesty International reported last year that tens of thousands of minorities are being held as political prisoners. These prisoners continue to be held under a law called the "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act" (TADA), which expired in 1995. It empowered the government to hold people virtually indefinitely for any offence or for no offence at all.

In June 2005, at the observance of the Indian government's 1984 military attack on the Golden Temple, a group of Sikhs marched, then made speeches in support of independence for Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987, and hoisted the Sikh flag. For this they were arrested. This follows the arrest of 35 Sikhs in January 2005, when they made speeches and raised the Khalistani flag at a Republic Day event. Some of the leaders were held for 50 days without trial.

MASR also co-sponsored with the Punjab Human Rights Organization an investigation of the March 2000 massacre of 35 Sikhs in the village of Chithisinghpura in Indian Kashmir on the eve of the visit of President Clinton to India. It concluded that Indian forces carried out the massacre. The apparent intent was to make use of the presence of the world press to blame Muslims for massacre and vilify the resistance to the occupation of the state by India. A separate investigation conducted by the International Human Rights Organization came to the same conclusion. So did reporter Barry Bearak of the New York Times magazine.

Recently in the state of Uttaranchal Pradesh, Sikh farmers were forced out of their farms, which were bulldozed, and they were thrown out of the state. They received no compensation and have nowhere to go to find roof over their heads or livelihood for their families. The truth is that discrimination against and oppression of minority faiths is so widespread that it draws little attention within or outside India. Although outsiders are allowed to buy land in the Punjab, Sikhs cannot buy land in neighbouring Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. This discriminatory policy prevents Sikh farmers from making a living. It has impoverished them forcing many to migrate overseas.

About 50,000 Sikhs were ruthlessly killed by the Punjab Police and their bodies were secretly disposed of to hide the crime. Young Sikhs were abducted, tortured and killed in Police custody. Their bodies were then declared "unidentified" and cremated incinerating all proof of the Indian State's barbarity. Countless bodies were consigned to the canals which abound in the Punjab. The secret cremation policy was exposed by human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra who was arrested for publishing his report and was murdered while in police custody.

Narinder Singh, a spokesman for the Golden Temple, the seat of the Sikh religion, was interviewed in August 1997 by National Public Radio. He told his interviewer, "The Indian government, all the time they boast that they are secular, that they are democratic. But they have nothing to do with a democracy, nothing to do with secularism. They just kill Sikhs to please the majority."

The Indian government has murdered over 300,000 Muslims in Kashmir. They have sent over 700,000 troops to suppress the people of Kashmir.

On February 27, 2002, a fire on a train in Godhra in Gujarat killed fifty-eight passengers, among them fifteen children. This gave rise to massacres in which 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims were murdered. According to a policeman in Gujarat who was quoted in an Indian newspaper, the government pre-planned the massacre. In an eerie parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in November 1984, the police were kept from intervening.

In a 70-page report on the massacre, Human Rights Watch reported that not a single person has been convicted in these massacres. More than one hundred Muslims have been charged under India's much-criticized Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) for their alleged involvement in the train massacre in Godhra. No Hindus have been charged under POTA in connection with the violence against Muslims.

In Lunawade village in Panchmahal district of Kashmir, during the last week of December 2005, a mass grave was discovered. It contained the bodies of at least 26 victims of the Indian government's pogrom against the Muslims. Their crime? The Kashmiri people were promised a referendum on their status in 1948, but that vote has never been held. In 1989, when all hope of that promise being fulfilled had evaporated, violent resistance began that is being ruthlessly crushed resorting to pogroms and genocide that has led to 100,000 resistance fighters being killed by the Indian military.

The Sikhs were promised their own sovereign state by the leaders of the Congress Party (which rules India today) in exchange for their active support to the freedom movement led by it. The Sikhs have continued to press that the promise be kept. Their representatives did not sign and endorse the Indian constitution for it did not fulfill that promise. Instead of respecting "the glow of freedom" that Nehru and Patel promised to the Sikhs, the government declared them a "criminal class" as soon as the ink was dry on the constitution. It is because of betrayal of such promises that currently there are 17 freedom movements going on within India's borders.

Some Members of the U.S. Congress have called for sanctions against India and for an end to American aid. Some have also endorsed self-determination for the peoples seeking freedom from India through a plebiscite on independence. The Indian government's negotiations with the freedom fighters in predominantly Christian Nagaland have taken a turn for the worse lately, as the ceasefire there has been called off. Former Home Minister L.K. Advani said that once Kashmir achieves freedom, it will cause India to break apart. The truth is India can only survive if it conceded the right of self-determination to those areas where peoples have been betrayed. India must fulfill its promises to the people of Punjab, Khalistan (the Sikh homeland), predominantly Christian Nagaland, predominantly Muslim Kashmir, and the tribal peoples of Assam.

India clearly has a problem with its untouchables who are a majority in many states of India. It has failed to assimilate or integrate them. Since they do not belong to a single race, caste or religion, they are increasingly drawn towards Christian egalitarianism to throw off the yoke of slavery imposed by the caste system. I believe that those who ignore the oppression of the low castes and foreign faiths in India and declare India a 'natural ally' and the friendship of the 'biggest democracy' a state objective of the U.S., do not understand India at all. They help perpetuate systematic oppression and humiliation of a vast segment of humanity—700 million people—who have nothing, not even hope for anything. Even if India continues to make rapid economic rise as it is doing, this segment of humanity would be completely bypassed.

CAHABA RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE EXPANSION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership, Chairman POMBO, Subcommittee Chairman GILCHREST and Ranking Member PALLONE for allowing the House to consider this legislation. The bill before us today, H.R.

4947, represents a 2nd major step by this Congress in protecting and preserving one of the most biologically diverse areas of the United States.

In 2000, I introduced the legislation that created the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge. That bill passed this Congress and was signed into law. Since that time, each year the Appropriations Committee has dedicated funding for land acquisition. The initial 3,500 acres authorized in that bill have been completely purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The strong support of local elected officials and property owners, coupled with that of many environmental organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, The Cahaba River Society, and The Land Trust has fostered plans to expand the existing boundaries of The Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge.

Alabama is the 5th most biologically diverse State in the country, but it also has the unfortunate distinction of being the most extinction-prone State in the continental United States, with at least 98 species extinct. The Cahaba River basin alone supports 69 rare and imperiled species. The river is recognized nationally for its unique biological diversity; the Cahaba Shiner, a federally endangered species is just one of more than 131 species of fish that call the Cahaba home. That is more species of fresh water fish than inhabit the entire State of California. The Cahaba's wealth of fish species is greater than any other river of its size in North America.

The Cahaba River also harbors the world's largest population of the imperiled shoals lily, known locally as the "Cahaba Lily." Recently a population of Cahaba pebble-snails was discovered in the refuge. Once thought to be extinct, this marked the first time this species had been seen since the 1960s, an accomplishment that can be attributed to the protection offered by the Cahaba's designation as a Wildlife Refuge.

The proposed expansion of the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge would:

Increase direct protection of the banks of the mainstem Cahaba River from the current 3.5 miles to approximately 8 miles, thereby giving additional protection to additional large populations of the globally imperiled shoals spider lily (aka Cahaba lily), and many other rare species.

Provide large enough areas of forest to support viable breeding populations of declining Neotropical migratory birds, both in the longleaf pine forests (e.g. Northern Bobwhite Quail, Brown-headed Nuthatch) and in hardwood forests (e.g. Swainson's Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Acadian Flycatcher).

Provide significant increase in public access to the Cahaba River for canoeing, fishing and other riverine recreational activities.

Provide a significant increase in acreage available to the public for hunting, hiking, birding and other outdoor wildlife-based activities (Alabama has only about 3 percent public land, less than most other States in the Nation).

Provide a significant boost in revenue to Bibb County, one of the poorest counties in the Nation. Due to low prevailing property tax rates, the revenue to the County coffers from the Federal Refuge Revenue Sharing Program (payments in lieu of taxes) have averaged about \$6 per acre per year (versus a yield of about \$1 per acre per year as privately owned timberland).

H.R. 4947 authorizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to purchase up to an additional 3,600 acres of land and waters. This would double the number of protected acres of the Cahaba, all of which will be purchased from willing sellers. Protecting the land upstream from the original refuge will add to the buffer zone needed to shield this critical habitat and watershed.

The bill before us will help protect one of the greatest natural treasures in my State of Alabama and I urge a "yes" vote.

JUMPSTART'S READ FOR THE RECORD

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, literacy development begins at the early stages of a child's life and is the building block to future success. If we as a nation want to enhance our competitive edge in the global marketplace, we must ensure that our children have the basic reading skills to become successful in the classroom and later in the workplace.

On August 24, 2006, people around the country will participate in Jumpstart's "Read for the Record." This unique event will attempt to set the world record for the number of children reading a single book, or being read to, and at the same time allow people of all ages to work together in overcoming the school readiness issues facing our country.

This reading experience will use one of the best known child motivational stories ever produced—The Little Engine That Could. In honor of this day, a special edition of the story was created to include proven reading techniques to help our children grasp core reading foundations. This custom edition was funded solely by a private company dedicated to reading excellence.

Mrs. Laura Bush is the Honorary Chair of Jumpstart's "Read for the Record" project. As a former teacher, Mrs. Bush understands the need for strong reading development.

Demonstrating this project's importance, NBC's Today Show will host a special segment to cover proven reading techniques. Matt Lauer will then read this classic book to children.

I would like to thank Principal Mary Ellen Parks Shell Point Elementary School in Beaufort, South Carolina, for inviting me on August 24th to read to a group of kindergarten students. As an award-winning school dedicated in closing the achievement gap in learning, I am extremely encouraged that the faculty and staff at Shell Point are totally committed to early childhood development through enhanced reading skills.

Jumpstart's "Read for the Record" will raise the necessary awareness and emphasize the importance of early learning in every family. Participation in this event will support the goal that every child can read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. For more information on how you too can foster stronger reading skills in our children, please visit www.readfortherecord.org.