

nations are not supporting our efforts. I am very concerned China, Russia and Arab League states have thwarted attempts to enact stronger sanctions and more quickly deploy international peacekeepers. There is a genocide occurring in Sudan, and all Nations are duty-bound to end it.

In August of last year the Arab League supported Sudan's refusal of a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur, and then passed a resolution calling for more time for the Sudanese government to improve conditions there. Madam Speaker, how much time should we give them? How many lives will be lost in the meantime?

Stronger action to end the genocide must be swift and resolving this crisis must be one of our world's highest priorities. Having the assistance, or at least ending the willful neglect of the genocide by Sudan's Arab League neighbors, would be extremely helpful.

I thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, as well as other members who have championed this issue, including FRANK WOLF and TOM LANTOS, for bringing this important resolution to the floor, and urge its passage.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to support H. Con Res. 7, which strongly urges the League of Arab States to step up their diplomatic efforts to stop the genocide in Darfur. This resolution urges the League of Arab States and each individual Member State to:

(1) Declare the systematic torture, rape, and displacement of the people of Darfur a genocide;

(2) Pass a resolution at their next meeting to support and accept a United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force to enforce the ceasefire, protect civilians, and ensure access to humanitarian assistance in Darfur; and

(3) Work with the United Nations, the African Union and the United States Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan, Andrew Natsios, to bring about real and lasting peace and stability in Darfur, the refugee camps, and along the Chadian border.

On August 20 of last year, the League of Arab States met in Egypt and supported Sudan's refusal to allow a United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur. The following month, the League of Arab States called for the United Nations Security Council to give the government of Sudan more time to improve security conditions in Darfur. By that time, it had already been estimated that over 450,000 people had died as a result of genocide in Darfur. Since then the death toll has continued to mount.

Last year, I visited the Darfur region with my good friend, Speaker NANCY PELOSI, and I was deeply disturbed by what I saw. As far as the eyes could see, there were crowds of displaced people who had been driven from their homes, living literally on the ground with little tarps just covering them. It is unconscionable that this has been allowed to continue for yet another year.

There can be no doubt that what is taking place in Darfur is genocide, and the government of Sudan is responsible. The League of Arab States should tell the government of Sudan that their time is up. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution, and I urge the League of Arab States to take a firm stand against the crime of genocide in Darfur.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 7, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1678) to amend the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 to authorize appropriations to provide assistance for domestic and foreign programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1678

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR DOMESTIC TREATMENT CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Section 5(b)(1) of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2152 note) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Health and Human Services for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (a) \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009."

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FOREIGN TREATMENT CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Section 4(b)(1) of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2152 note) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 pursuant to chapter 1 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry out section 130 of such Act \$12,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009."

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 pursuant to chapter 3 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President for a voluntary contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture \$12,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank the distinguished ranking member of the Africa and Global Health Subcommittee, my very good friend, CHRIS SMITH, for his longstanding leadership in the fight against torture. I am very proud to be a co-sponsor of this very important piece of legislation before us today.

The Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 is a landmark piece of legislation that enshrines the fundamental commitment of this Nation to assist all survivors of torture, wherever and whenever they might be.

The programs supported by the TVRA combat the effects of the most despicable of all human rights violations: The increasing use of torture around the world.

Although exact figures are difficult to ascertain, according to Amnesty International, a well-respected defender of human rights, more than 150 countries worldwide still engage in torture.

An estimated 400,000 to 500,000 foreign torture victims reside in the United States, and over 100 million may exist worldwide. More than 250 treatment centers operate internationally with the sole purpose of providing medical, psychological and social services to torture survivors. These crucial facilities provide a distinctive type of treatment to those victims.

In the U.S., the Center for Victims of Torture, located in Minnesota, was the first of its kind in the United States and the third torture victims treatment center in the world.

The personal ramifications of torture are beyond the comprehension of those who have not gone through it. Torture leaves no victim unscarred. It shapes the remainder of their lives. While physical wounds may ultimately heal, torture survivors need ongoing psychological services and therapy to cope with post-traumatic stress that afflicts them daily. Recovering from torture is a long-term process. It can take years before torture survivors can once again feel emotionally stable and comfortable in society.

The bill before the House today funds our very important fight against torture, both nationally and internationally. For international programs, this legislation authorizes \$12 million per

year for centers and programs administered through USAID's Victims of Torture Fund. It also authorizes an additional \$12 million a year for centers and programs administered through the U.N. Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture.

Domestically, our legislation authorizes \$25 million annually for the Department of Health and Human Services so that HHS can assist domestic treatment centers fully and sufficiently.

The sad truth is that torture is not waning; if anything, it is on the rise. As a moral force and a Nation that exhibits empathy to those in most need, it is our firm responsibility to help the victims of torture with these comprehensive programs. The funds authorized are urgently needed to achieve this goal. I strongly support this legislation, and encourage every Member of the House to do so as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman LANTOS for his very strong support for the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2007. His longstanding concern about torture victims is legendary, and I want to thank him for that. And I want to thank Mr. ACKERMAN for his leadership as well, and for presenting the bill before the House today.

Madam Speaker, an estimated 400,000 foreign torture survivors reside in the United States today. Worldwide it is virtually impossible to count the numbers, although we know it is very high. As witnesses have repeatedly testified before Congress, the paralyzing scars from the physical and psychological wounds of torture can and do remain for years. Torture impacts not only on individual victims, especially as it relates to post-traumatic stress disorder, but their families and society as well.

I would note parenthetically, Madam Speaker, that we don't have to look very far to know there are torture victims in our own Congress. SAM JOHNSON, a very brave and dedicated soldier of the Vietnam war, suffered terrible hardship and torture when he was incarcerated in Hanoi. Because of his faith and courage, SAM overcame unspeakable torture and abuse and is today an inspiration to us all. The same goes for Senator JOHN MCCAIN, who also suffered horrible torture, survived and overcame. But they are really the exception. They are not the norm. So many people who do suffer never recover—unless they get significant help. They suffer irreparable psychological damage and live a life of real misery, pain and flashback, unless they get help.

My own involvement in torture victims relief began in 1981 when I read a book titled "Tortured for Christ," written by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand in Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania. That

book detailed despicable tortures that were routinely imposed upon Pastor Wurmbrand and other religious prisoners in Romania by the securitate. Pastor Wurmbrand appealed to all to help the persecuted.

I also read Solzhenitsyn's book, "The Gulag Archipelago," and another book called "Against All Hope" by Armando Valladares in which he chronicled what Castro does routinely to people in his gulags—it is sickening and pathetic.

I would encourage Members and the listening public to pick up one of those books or others like them and read what really happens in dictatorships—and Castro's abuses continue to this day—where torture is used as a weapon against dissidents. Sadly, torture is used with impunity in China and North Korea.

Armando Valladares tells us in his book in one particular chapter how the political prisoners were marched into a huge vat of human excrement, and submerged. Many of the men got permanent disabilities and infection from it. The beatings were unceasing.

Torture is horrible. It is degrading and inhumane. It also constitutes grave violations of U.N. treaties and U.S. law and must be stopped wherever it rears its ugly head.

In the 1990s, FRANK WOLF and I visited the infamous Perm Camp 35 in the Ural Mountains—1,000 miles outside of Moscow—the place where Natan Sharansky spent years of his life, and met with many torture victims while they were still incarcerated and saw the mix of anger and hopelessness in their eyes and in their faces.

In 1998, Madam Speaker, Congress took a historic step towards repairing the broken lives of torture victims with the passage of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998. I sponsored that legislation and three reauthorizations that followed. As important as these congressional measures have been, there continues to be an enormous unmet need for us to try to reach out and robustly address, and that is what this legislation at least attempts to do. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this. This helps us to help those who have been hurt.

The domestic provision of H.R. 1678 is designed to ensure that particular attention is given to torture victims in regions with significant immigrant and refugee populations. The measure authorizes \$25 million for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to the Department of Health and Human Services to assist domestic treatment centers. This maintains the current \$25 million authorization level for those centers.

Currently, 20 torture treatment centers in 15 States are assisted by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement. These programs include treatment for the physical and psychological effects of torture as well as social and legal services for torture victims. In addition to direct assistance, many of these centers also provide training in the

specialized treatment of torture victims to mainstream providers in the health care, education and social service fields.

H.R. 1678 also authorizes \$12 million for both fiscal year 2008 and 2009 for foreign treatment centers and programs administered by the USAID Victims of Torture Fund. In fiscal year 2006, the Victims of Torture Fund supported treatment programs in 28 countries throughout the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Near East and Europe and Eurasia.

Treatment centers often provide services beyond rehab, to include forensic documentation, written and verbal testimony to courts and legislatures, and advocacy for the rights of brutalized religious, ethnic and minority groups. This is the expertise Congress sought to foster when we first adopted the TVRA back in 1998.

Lastly, the measure increases current authorization levels of \$7 million for fiscal year 2007 to the U.N. Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture to \$12 million for both 2008 and 2009. Through this U.N. mechanism, the voluntary fund supports 175 projects in 64 countries in 2006, including within the United States. The type of humanitarian assistance provided by organizations which receive those grants from the fund consists mainly of psychological, medical, social, legal and economic assistance.

Madam Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill, and I urge its passage.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, to the gentlewoman from the 18th District of Texas, the chairwoman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, and also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, I yield 3 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

□ 1145

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, we almost wish we did not have to come to the floor of the House to address this question of ongoing torture in 2007. Again, I offer my appreciation for this work, your leadership and leadership of this committee, and to Mr. SMITH who has articulated his ongoing struggle with a crisis that will break your heart.

Even today we know that torture goes on in 150 nations around the world. We know that some 4- to 500,000 torture victims have found their way to the United States. Many of us have heard of the lost boys, some of us know the story of Sierra Leone and mutilation that occurred in Rwanda, children who were child soldiers who were victimized. But do we understand the ongoing psychological, traumatic experiences that requires necessary psychological services and therapy to cope with posttraumatic stress?

Now with the Iraq War and Afghan War, we hear of prisoners of war and the unending suggestions of torture that have occurred, and so we know that even in our own House we must respond to the crisis.

I rise to support this legislation, H.R. 1678, because its journey is not yet finished. Let me applaud the author of this legislation, as I am a cosponsor, that authorizes \$12 million per year for centers and programs administered through USAID's victims of torture fund, an additional \$12 million per year for centers and programs administered by the U.N. voluntary fund for victims of torture, and \$25 million for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Let me also salute the Darfur Coalition for Peace. I believe these resources can be utilized for the Darfurian women who have reportedly and repeatedly been raped, a very, very difficult and brutal form of torture. These women have not only been raped, but they have been mutilated. They have been carved and scarred. They have bled, and they have a mass of psychological devastation.

The Darfur Peace Coalition will be attempting to place tents on the soil in Darfur, the only kind of structure that can then have counselors who will help these torture victims, these victims of rape.

This legislation can certainly be a partner in finding and weeding out torture where it is, but more importantly, in dealing with the torture victims who may have some small chance of regaining their lives again.

I rise to support this legislation in sadness, because its work is yet not done, and every day we know that there may be a victim of torture. I am proud of this Congress in moving forward on this legislation, and I ask for its passage.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, due to an event at the White House on malaria, I ask unanimous consent to yield the remainder of our time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and that he be able to control the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, we do not have any more speakers. Can I ask the gentleman if he has any more?

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the gentleman. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), the chairwoman of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Congressman SMITH for his work to bring this reauthorization and this important issue to the House floor, and I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Chairman LANTOS, for moving the bill so quickly, and our wonderful chairman of

the subcommittee for running the floor today in such a good manner.

The United States has long been a haven for those who have been persecuted and those who have been victimized. One of our national symbols, actually the Statue of Liberty, opens her arms to welcome the most needy.

This bill reaffirms our commitment, the United States commitment, to victims of torture. It will provide for essential services for these victims such as treatment of the physical and psychological effects of torture. It will provide for social and legal services. It will provide for research and training of health care providers to deal with the trauma of these victims.

Madam Speaker, in a world that sometimes seems to be overrun with violence, a world that sees so much brutality, this bill actually provides hope for a group of people, those who have so little and need so much.

I thank the authors of this bill for bringing it forward, and I certainly hope that every single Member of this body will vote in favor of it.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I want to express my strong support for the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act, H.R. 1678. This important legislation funds treatment centers for torture survivors who now live in the U.S.

With help, torture survivors can recover from their trauma, rebuild successful lives, and be contributing members of our society. When these new Americans rebuild their lives, we all have much to gain.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of Survivors of Torture, International (SURVIVORS) in my district of San Diego, California. SURVIVORS is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for survivors of politically-motivated torture and their families living in San Diego County.

Approximately 11,000 torture survivors are living in San Diego County today. These survivors are from countries where the systematic use of torture is documented, including nations in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Since its founding in 1997, SURVIVORS has helped more than 650 torture survivors from more than 50 countries to recover from their trauma through a holistic program including medical, dental, psychiatric, psychological, legal and social services. There is also a need to continue to make services even more comprehensive.

SURVIVORS empowers torture survivors to reclaim the strength and vitality that were stolen from them by brutal dictators and governments. The specialized care SURVIVORS provides these vulnerable individuals helps them to become self-sufficient, healthy members of their own families and of our community. SURVIVORS currently serves more than 300 survivors of torture and their families living in San Diego County.

SURVIVORS works with refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, and immigrants who are survivors of torture. By working with this large population in San Diego County, SURVIVORS is strengthening the Nation: many of its clients move to other communities in the United States after receiving the care and services necessary to successfully build a new life

here. As SURVIVORS continues to work in the community, it receives an increasing number of referrals and requests for services each year.

The professional backgrounds of SURVIVORS' clients include: business, religious, government, and farm leaders; university students and educators; journalists; physicians and nurses. The significant majority of SURVIVORS clients suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, or both. These are normal yet disabling reactions for ordinary people who have endured the extreme trauma of torture.

Madam Speaker, the TVRRA also authorizes a contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). Funding from the U.N. helps many centers feel more secure in the dangerous work of aiding those that a regime has identified as its enemies. The UNVFVT supports nearly 200 treatment programs all over the world, including nearly all U.S. centers.

H.R. 1678 is a vital piece of legislation which funds essential services for survivors of torture throughout the 53rd District of California and San Diego County, and enhances the standing and reputation by exporting America's values in the form of support for foreign treatment centers. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill that is so important to so many.

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1678, Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2007, which was passed under suspension of the rules today. I rise also to pay tribute to those who provide these tragically essential services.

I am privileged to represent the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights. The BCRHHR, based at Boston Medical Center, cares for survivors of torture, slavery, oppression, and war. Its dedicated physicians, therapists, and social workers provide individual counseling and group support, as well as legal, social, and vocational services to individuals and families who, in many cases, have nowhere else to turn. Patients have suffered terrible injuries, both physical and psychic, and most are grieving the loss of close friends and relatives. Above all, the Center recognizes the essential connection between health and human rights. Its clinical work succeeds, I believe, because it helps people regain their sense of dignity and worth as human beings.

Doctors work closely with pro bono lawyers to support political asylum applications and to reunite families of refugees and asylum seekers. Shame and anxiety may keep torture survivors from seeking asylum because, in order to gain asylum, applicants must recount their sufferings in a judicial setting. Thus, in order to secure their patients' freedom to remain in the United States, doctors must help them as they relive their traumas. They give them courage to persevere and they sustain the hope that, once asylum is granted, surviving spouses and children can enter the United States.

One wishes our world did not need services for survivors of torture, but we do need them. We are privileged, as Members of Congress, for this opportunity to recognize and support this work.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If the gentleman will yield back the balance of his time, we are prepared to do so as well.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1678.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EXPRESSING DEEP CONCERN OVER THE USE OF CIVILIANS AS HUMAN SHIELDS

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 125) expressing deep concern over the use of civilians as "human shields" in violation of international humanitarian law and the law of war during armed conflict, including Hezbollah's tactic of embedding its forces among civilians to use them as human shields during the summer of 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and the State of Israel, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 125

Whereas the term "human shields" refers to the use of civilians, prisoners of war, or other noncombatants whose mere presence is designed to protect combatants and objects from attack;

Whereas the use of human shields violates international humanitarian law (also referred to as the Law of War or Law of Armed Conflict);

Whereas throughout the summer of 2006 conflict with the State of Israel, Hezbollah forces utilized human shields to protect themselves from counterattacks by Israeli forces;

Whereas the majority of civilian casualties of that conflict might have been avoided and civilian lives saved had Hezbollah not employed this tactic;

Whereas the news media made constant mention of civilian casualties but rarely pointed to the culpability, under international law, of Hezbollah for their endangerment of such civilians;

Whereas United States and international leaders attempted to call the use of human shields to the world's attention;

Whereas on August 11, 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated, "Hezbollah and its sponsors have brought devastation upon the people of Lebanon, dragging them into a war that they did not choose, and exploiting them as human shields . . .";

Whereas on August 14, 2006, President George W. Bush stated, "Hezbollah terrorists targeted Israeli civilians with daily rocket

attacks. Hezbollah terrorists used Lebanese civilians as human shields, sacrificing the innocent in an effort to protect themselves from Israeli response . . .";

Whereas Jan Egeland, United Nations Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, accused Hezbollah of "cowardly blending . . . among women and children";

Whereas for states parties to Additional Protocol I, such as Lebanon, Article 50(1) to the Geneva Convention defines civilian as, "[a]ny person who does not belong to one of the categories of persons referred to in Article 4(A)(1), (2), (3), and (6) of the Third Convention and in Article 43 of this Protocol. In the case of doubt whether a person is a civilian, that person shall be considered a civilian.";

Whereas for states parties to Additional Protocol I, such as Lebanon, Article 51(7) to the Geneva Convention states, "[T]he presence or movement of the civilian population or individual civilians shall not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations, in particular in attempts to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield, favour or impede military operations. The Parties to the conflict shall not direct the movement of the civilian population or individual civilians in order to attempt to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield military operations."; and

Whereas Convention IV, Article 28, Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of the Geneva Convention states, "The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations."; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) strongly condemns the use of innocent civilians as human shields, including Hezbollah's use of this brutal and illegal tactic during the summer of 2006 conflict with Israel;

(2) calls on responsible nations to condemn the use of civilians as human shields as a violation of international humanitarian law; and

(3) calls on responsible nations and experts in the area of international humanitarian law to focus particular attention on the use of human shields in violation of international humanitarian law and make further recommendations on the prevention of such violation in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I might consume.

Last year, we witnessed a tragic conflict in Lebanon, instigated by Hezbollah's unprovoked cross-border raid into Israel. This Hezbollah action

resulted in the killing of eight brave Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of two others, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

The suffering of the Lebanese people was immense as thousands fled their homes in the subsequent fighting. Many homes were damaged or destroyed, and lives were lost.

The key reason that civilian areas were destroyed was the cynical strategy of Hezbollah guerrillas to stage their attacks from the middle of towns and residential areas.

The use of civilians as human shields is reprehensible and is in direct violation of all the laws of warfare. Indeed, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court provides that such conduct is a serious violation of the laws of war and should be prosecuted.

This resolution properly condemns the use of human shields and, in particular, the conduct of Hezbollah in this bloody conflict. Let us make no mistake. The loss of civilian life in Lebanon was due solely to Hezbollah's cruel and uncivilized use of civilian areas as military bases. Meanwhile, Hezbollah used rocket fire to murder Israeli civilians indiscriminately and to destroy Israeli civilian areas that were of no military value whatsoever.

This resolution calls on all responsible nations to condemn such heinous acts and to work to eliminate them. No nation that calls itself a member of the international community can engage in such barbaric practices. In conflicts all over the globe, human shields have been used for various purposes. None of them are acceptable.

Let us urge the President and our friends and allies to join us and do their utmost to stop the use of human shields once and for all.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to support the resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During last summer's war between Israel and Lebanon, which was initiated by Hezbollah jihadist militants breaching Israel's border and killing and kidnapping Israeli soldiers, Hezbollah extremists used Lebanese civilians as human shields to protect themselves from counterattacks by Israeli forces.

Hezbollah jihadists embedded their forces among innocent civilians in violation of international law.

According to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "Hezbollah and its sponsors have brought devastation upon the people of Lebanon, dragging them into a war that they did not choose, and exploiting them as human shields."

To express deep concern over the use of civilians by Hezbollah and to condemn these actions, my distinguished colleagues, Congressman RON KLEIN and Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, introduced this bill.