

and his people are; and how, as the distinguished gentleman said just a moment ago, they turn girls into sex slaves and killers and the young men into killing machines. It is a terrible, horrible indictment on how low the individual can sink to.

And Joseph Kony, as we all know, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for serious crimes against humanity. And, regrettably, this killing continues to go on.

I urge Members to read the book. It is an awakening not just on how she suffered, but also how a person when surrounded by people who love her and give her the kind of support that any individual like herself needs to get, how they can come back, the resiliency of the human spirit. She is a soft-spoken, poised, gentle, lovely young woman who has a great future, but she has been through a nightmare. We ought to keep her and her friends in our prayers.

She also pointed out just last week in a meeting that we had announcing her book that she cries out and prays every day for her friends, many of whom she does not know what happened to them. They are still there, she thinks. They may be dead. But she has no idea. I think that puts additional impetus on us to do more, to save these children, this lost generation.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 20 years as many as 1.5 million persons, an estimated 90 percent of the population of the Acholi area in northern Uganda have been forced into internally displaced camps as a result of the violence between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda. Nearly half of these internally displaced persons are children under the age of 15, people like Grace Akallo.

One quarter of the children in northern Uganda over 10 years of age have lost one or more parents. About a quarter of a million children receive no education at all. The fact that 60 percent of the schools in northern Uganda no longer function is directly attributable to the war. I point out that those that do function do so in a very meager way.

Because of the war in the north, Uganda has developed a lost generation that has grown up in dire circumstances with fear and deprivation as their constant companions. Nearly half of the children in one town are stunted from malnutrition. They are likely to never recover.

The latest 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices summarized in a chilling fashion the horror that has been perpetrated on the people of northern Uganda, particularly by the head of the Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony. It states that "at the height of the war, the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, committed serious abuses and atrocities, including abduction, rape and the killing of civilians. The LRA used children as soldiers, held children and others in slave-like conditions, and subjected female captives to

rape and other forms of severe sexual exploitation."

This resolution tries to put additional focus, additional girth, behind the effort to finally find a negotiated solution to this ongoing killing fields, and we all hope and pray this will have at least a happier ending than thus far.

Again, I urge Members to read the book by Grace Akallo, "Girl Soldier."

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 80, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution calling on the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to recommit to a political solution to the conflict in northern Uganda by engaging in good-faith negotiations, and urging immediate and substantial support for the ongoing peace process from the United States and the international community."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NOTING KILLINGS OF DOZENS OF INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS IN RUSSIA AND CALLING ON RUSSIAN PRESIDENT TO AUTHORIZE COOPERATION WITH OUTSIDE INVESTIGATORS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 151) noting the disturbing pattern of killings of dozens of independent journalists in Russia over the last decade, and calling on Russian President Vladimir Putin to authorize cooperation with outside investigators in solving those murders, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 151

Whereas Paul Klebnikov, the editor of the Russian version of Forbes Magazine, who was investigating suspect business dealings and corruption cases in Russia, was shot to death in Moscow on July 9, 2004;

Whereas Mr. Klebnikov's murder remains unsolved;

Whereas Anna Politkovskaya, an acclaimed Russian journalist and human rights activist who wrote numerous articles critical of Russia's prosecution of the war in Chechnya, of human rights abuses by the Russian government and of Russian President Vladimir Putin was shot to death in Moscow on October 7, 2006;

Whereas Ms. Politkovskaya's murder remains unsolved;

Whereas Ivan Safronov, a military affairs reporter for the Russian newspaper

"Kommersant" who wrote articles criticizing the failure of Russian military programs and who was planning to report on potential Russian arms sales to Middle Eastern countries, including to state sponsors of terrorism Iran and Syria, died in mysterious circumstances, falling five stories from a window in the stairwell of his apartment building in Moscow on March 2, 2007;

Whereas, Russian prosecutors subsequently suggested that Mr. Safronov may have committed suicide, although he left no suicide note and the circumstances surrounding his death raised unanswered questions;

Whereas the cause of Mr. Safronov's death remains undetermined;

Whereas, according to Reporters Without Borders, twenty-one reporters have been murdered in Russia since March 2000 and many of those murders remain unsolved;

Whereas, according to Reporters Without Borders, Russia was one of the six most dangerous countries for journalists to work in during 2006;

Whereas a number of those reporters who were murdered had reported on alleged corruption, malfeasance and other controversies at the federal, provincial and local levels of government in Russia;

Whereas a number of those murdered had reported on alleged human rights abuses by the Russian Government;

Whereas a number of those murdered had reported on the Russian government's conduct of the war in Chechnya, which has involved numerous allegations of gross human rights violations and corruption;

Whereas, if journalists are killed or silenced through undue pressure with impunity, a vibrant and participatory civil society sector cannot emerge and democratic developments are stalled; and

Whereas, according to the President of the International News Safety Institute, "murder has become the easiest, cheapest and most effective way of silencing troublesome reporting, and the more the killers get away with it the more the spiral of death is forced upwards": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recalls the essential role that transparency and the free flow of information play in creating and preserving democratic institutions and civil society in any country;

(2) recognizes the vital contribution made by independent journalists in Russia in bringing transparency and a free flow of information to readers after decades of Communist censorship and repression;

(3) notes the disturbing trend of murders of independent journalists in Russia over the last decade;

(4) encourages the President of the United States to formally offer Russian President Vladimir Putin and other officials of the Russian Government United States Government law enforcement investigative assistance to help identify and bring to justice those responsible for the many unsolved murders of journalists in Russia during the past decade; and

(5) urges President Putin to seek out competent, outside law enforcement assistance in the investigation of the unsolved murders of numerous independent journalists in Russia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

□ 1730

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. 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 resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I would like to commend our distinguished colleague Mr. CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey for introducing this important resolution that emphasizes the vital necessity of free speech in a democratic state. Often people consider freedom of speech as just icing on the cake of a society that treats its citizenry well. It's a nice touch but not the most essential component.

But let me be clear, freedom of the press is not just a bourgeois middle class concern. It is not just an American concern. It is the essential component of democracy, as much as in Russia as anywhere else.

Freedom of the press sharpens the tools of democracy and holds a government's feet to the fire. It is the only real way to inform the people about their own country and mobilizing them around crucial issues.

Nowhere is this more important than in Russia, where nascent independent press formed in the early 1990s had suddenly dissipated under fear of government reprisal. It is no mistake that this decline has been accompanied by a simultaneous acquiescence of democratic opposition in the country.

The threat to reporters writing about government decisions and engaging in investigative journalism is immediate and real. It has reached the point that journalists in Russia that dare to criticize the government are constantly looking over their shoulders in fear.

According to Reporters Without Borders, 21 reporters have been murdered under mysterious circumstances since Putin took office in March of 2000. Almost all of those mysteries remain unsolved because the Putin government refuses to investigate fully and honestly.

In the case that has led to perhaps the greatest outcry, Anna Politkovskaya was shot to death in the elevator bank of her apartment building in Moscow. She and her family had feared for her life ever since she emerged as an acclaimed journalist and human rights activist. She wrote numerous articles critical of Kremlin human rights abuses and misdeeds in Chechnya, and she paid the highest price for it.

Paul Klebnikov, the editor of the Russian version of Forbes magazine, investigated suspect business dealings and was subsequently shot to death in Moscow.

Ivan Safronov, a military affairs reporter who criticized the failure of Russian military programs, died in mysterious circumstances after falling five stories from a window in his apartment building.

These three deaths, as well as the tragic loss of many of their brave colleagues, remain unresolved. It appears that the Russian government, which is led by a former KGB colonel, somehow no longer knows how to investigate such crimes. I find that awfully curious.

We cannot allow this repression, this silencing of an independent media, to continue, especially in a country with a nascent democracy and starved for objective information.

There was a fleeting moment in Russia in the early 1990s when an independent media flourished and new publications cropped up overnight. Now, the brave critical journalists who remain cower in fear.

So I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, which highlights the disturbing trend of these suspicious deaths in Russia. It stresses the importance of a free flow of information to a democratic society, and praises the courageous men and women who seek to bring transparency to the Russian people after so many years of Communist secrecy.

Finally, it calls on President Putin to seek outside help in investigating these unsolved crimes and on the United States Government to formally offer such assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 151, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

As the gentlewoman from California has pointed out, Mr. Speaker, this important resolution deals with a strange and quite troubling pattern of the killing of independent journalists in Russia over the past decade. We have different estimates, but one places the number of murdered reporters at 21 over the past 7 years, that estimate coming from the esteemed organization, Reporters Without Borders. Another estimate from the International News Safety Institute puts the number at close to 90 reporters killed in Russia over the past 11 years.

Now what is truly strange is that most of these murders remain unsolved. Many of the murdered journalists have made it their personal cause to investigate corruption and the abuse of power at all levels of the Russian government.

Perhaps many of our colleagues will recall how just a few weeks ago a brave Russian reporter was shot in the head on a street in Moscow. She had written articles criticizing the Russian government for its human rights abuses. Her murder remains unsolved.

Perhaps our colleagues will recall the more recent death of a reporter who died in March of this year, as the gentlewoman pointed out, falling five stories from a window in the stairway of his apartment building. He was a military affairs reporter who had criticized the Russian Government in his articles, and he had been planning to publish a report on the arms sales of Russia to the state sponsors of terror, Iran and Syria.

All of these seekers of truth did not deserve to die for their journalistic efforts. Bringing to justice the murderers of these reporters does deserve the strongest possible support of their government, their police, their prosecutors, and yet it appears to be strangely absent.

Mr. Speaker, a free and democratic society requires freedom of the press, freedom of the media and respect for the safety of those who at times risk their lives to uncover the truth. Russia will not be a free and democratic society until that is the case in their country.

We can and we should ask the Russian government to stand up in defense of its independent media and the safety of its reporters, but the unwillingness of the Russian government to solve so many of these murders and the successful efforts of the Kremlin to use state-owned or influenced companies to buy up and censor the Russian media shows that our voices may be falling on willingly deaf ears.

Nevertheless, that is what we should do. We should call on the Russian government to respect human rights and the rule of law by investigating these crimes with vigor and with sincerity. And that is the message, Mr. Speaker, of the resolution before us.

This resolution also calls on our President to specifically offer our assistance to help the Russian government investigate those crimes.

We should also ask the Russian president to seek out and accept competent outside law enforcement assistance to investigate these crimes, and this resolution calls for that.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we recognize the tremendous contributions made by independent journalists in Russia, most especially those who suffer a bitter death as an unjust reward for their efforts. It is critical that we condemn in the strongest possible form the brutal murders of those who died trying to bring accurate and honest information to the Russian people about what is happening in their country.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. SMITH's resolution to honor these intrepid reporters whose murders cry out for justice.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to

the author of this resolution, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding, and I want to thank Ambassador WATSON for being one of the co-sponsors of this resolution, as well as all of those who join us today in making this collective statement to the Russians that there needs to be significant change, a reform, as to how they treat journalists.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 151, a resolution which calls upon Russian President Putin to seek outside law enforcement assistance in investigating the unsolved murders of dozens of Russian journalists over the past decade. We also encourage President Bush to formally offer President Putin law enforcement assistance from the United States.

Most observers think, Mr. Speaker, that some Russian officials have ordered or at least connived at these murders since most of the murdered journalists were investigating government corruption or involvement in human rights abuses. There is good reason to think that people in high places are still protecting the murderers.

Mr. Speaker, Russia holds the second worst position in the world in the number of journalists killed in the last 10 years, according to the International News Safety Institute. Reporters Without Borders counts 21 murdered journalists since March of 2000. This is a conservative number. It does not include the death under extremely suspicious circumstances of Ivan Safronov. It does include the murders of Paul Klebnikov and Anna Politkovskaya.

Mr. Speaker, any Member can do this, do a Google search, put in Russian journalists and murders, and you come up with one headline after another and one news story after another, usually in the Western press, of individuals being killed.

On June 15, there was a headline, "Russian Journalist Attacked in Moscow"; May of 2005, "Radio Journalist Badly Beaten Up"; April 21, "Russian Reporters Get Beaten Despite Wearing Special Jackets"; April 20, "Russian Activists Skeptical About Special Clothing For Journalists At Protests," they've got to wear special clothing, protective gear, to protect them from the police; April 9, "Television Journalist Found Dead"; April 9, again, "Critical Television Journalist Fears For His Life"; "Photo Journalist Beaten, Injured", on April 5; "Journalist Assaulted During Demonstration"; and the list goes on and on and on. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I see a pattern, and I think other Members do as well.

Let me just say a brief word about the three journalists that all three of us are mentioning today, also delineated in the resolution, whose deaths are sadly illustrative of so many others.

Paul Klebnikov was the editor of the Russian edition of Forbes Magazine. In July 2004, he was shot to death in Moscow while investigating suspect business dealings and corruption cases.

Anna Politkovskaya was an award-winning Russian journalist and human rights activist. She wrote many articles criticizing Russian atrocities committed during the war in Chechnya. In October 2006, she was shot to death in Moscow.

Ivan Savronov reported for the Russian newspaper, Kommersant. He wrote articles criticizing the failure of Russian military programs and was planning to report on potential Russian arms sales to Iran and Syria, state sponsors of terrorism. In March of 2007, he died under suspicious circumstances, as has been recounted by both of my colleagues. He fell five stories from a window in the stairwell of his Moscow apartment building. That was no accident, Mr. Speaker. That was a murder.

None of these cases have been solved, and very few of the less famous cases have been even looked at in a meaningful way.

Many of my colleagues in this House have other concerns about human rights problems in Russia. Xenophobic violence continues throughout the Russian Federation.

□ 1745

People continue to disappear in Chechnya. Local officials still discriminate against non-Orthodox religion, and the rule of just law remains shaky. Of course we all care about these. But I would point out to you that a situation in which journalists can be killed with impunity is a human rights problem of a different order.

It is a human rights problem that mitigates the resolution of other human rights problems. When journalists investigating a corruption case or a human rights abuse can be killed without their killers being brought to justice, or without a convincing effort being made to do so, this intimidates and has a chilling effect on other journalists. It marks off the borders of what others know they must not investigate.

As a result, the Russian press cannot properly fulfill its function of holding officials to account. This is exactly what the killers intend.

I raised this issue recently at a hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I was glad when Daniel Freed, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, acknowledged the nature of the problem and said, "attacks on journalists, including the brutal and still unsolved murders of Paul Klebnikov and Anna Politkovskaya, among others, chill and deter the fourth estate."

Mr. Speaker, journalists fulfill an essential role in every society, and none more than those who uncover the theft of a country's assets by its elected officials or commit human rights outrages

in its name. Journalists who do this at risk of their lives fully deserve to be called heroes. Make no mistake about it. These journalists knew what they were risking as they wrote and wrote and used the power of the pen to expose.

We owe it to them to raise our voice to bring the killers to justice. Mr. Putin, sadly, does not seem to be making any serious efforts to do so. Unfortunately, we have the situation as it exists today in Russia.

Only when journalists can work without fear of intimidation and death will we be able to say that we have a truly democratic Russian Government. Russian journalists, they are the watch dogs, just as they are in this country and every other country.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the great conscience of Russia, said in his Nobel Peace Prize speech in 1970, "Any man who has once proclaimed violence as his method is inevitably forced to take the lie as his principle."

My resolution addresses the violence of the murder of independent journalists, and the lie in the claim that their murders have been seriously investigated. Solzhenitsyn said of Communist Russia, in our country, the lie has become not just a moral category, but a killer of the state. We have to ask ourselves and ask Mr. Putin, was this terrible statement also true of post-Communist Russia?

I think we send a clear message today, and I hope Members in a bipartisan way will support this.

Finally, I just want to thank Mark Milosch and Mark Gauge for their work in helping to put this resolution together.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 151, 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. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. 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.

RECOGNIZING OVER 200 YEARS OF SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 233) recognizing over 200 years of sovereignty of the Principality of Liechtenstein, and expressing support for efforts by the United States to continue to strengthen its relationship with that country, as amended.