

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 520

Calling for an end to attacks on Syrian civilians and expanded humanitarian access.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 14, 2014

Mr. ROYCE (for himself and Mr. ENGEL) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling for an end to attacks on Syrian civilians and expanded humanitarian access.

Whereas March 2014 marks the third year of the crisis in Syria, which has resulted in the world's largest ongoing humanitarian disaster, and the urgent need for a resolution to the conflict;

Whereas Bashar al-Assad and supporting militias, including Hezbollah, continue to carry out sectarian mass atrocities, which have included mass targeted killings, mass graves, the extermination of entire families, including their children, incidents of ethnic cleansing, sexual violence, widespread torture, aerial bombardment of residential areas, and otherwise forced displacement of certain Syrian civilians especially from areas in western Syria

where Assad is attempting to increase the dominance of his own loyalists;

Whereas the United States Government should not continue to officially recognize a regime that is guilty of such vicious abuses of basic human rights on such a vast scale;

Whereas the United States Department of State took appropriate action on March 5, 2014, in restricting the movements of Assad's loyal representative to the United Nations, Bashar al-Jaafari, to within a 25-mile radius of New York City;

Whereas approximately 140,000 people have been killed, including more than 11,000 children, many more have been seriously wounded, and civilian casualties continue to mount as widespread and systematic attacks on schools, hospitals, and other civilian facilities persist in violation of international norms and principles;

Whereas the United Nations has registered more than 2,500,000 Syrian refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, while regional governments and the United Nations estimate that the total number of refugees already has reached more than 3,000,000;

Whereas the United Nations expects the total refugee count to reach over 4,000,000 Syrians by the end of 2014;

Whereas approximately half of Syrian refugees are children, including nearly 500,000 under the age of 5, and thousands have been separated from their parents and are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation;

Whereas the United Nations estimates that over 9,000,000 civilians are in need of humanitarian assistance within Syria, more than 40 percent of the country's total population, including 6,500,000 internally displaced persons;

Whereas Bashar al-Assad's forces, supporting militias, and other parties to the conflict are systematically blocking humanitarian aid delivery, including food and medical care, from many civilian areas in violation of international norms and principles;

Whereas the United Nations estimates that 3,000,000 Syrians are trapped in hard-to-reach or besieged areas, with an estimated 250,000 cut off from assistance for over a year;

Whereas the crisis has worsened already difficult conditions for Syrian women and girls, who are especially vulnerable to economic hardship and gender-based violence, including early marriage, forced marriage, trafficking, sexual violence, or the fear of sexual violence;

Whereas over 5,000,000 children affected by the conflict desperately need food, clean water, shelter, and medical care;

Whereas millions of Syrian children have been forced out of school, and an entire generation of young Syrians are being shaped by violence, displacement, and persistent lack of opportunity and are therefore at high risk of exploitation, life-long underdevelopment, and radicalization;

Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 70 percent of Syria's medical professionals, up to 80,000 people, have fled the country, while remaining professionals are deliberately targeted by parties to the conflict;

Whereas regional states, including Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq, are hosting well over 2,000,000 refugees;

Whereas despite the attention and resources refugee camps receive, most refugees from Syria, 83 percent regionally, do not live in formal refugee camps but rather among host communities where resources and services, including

health, water and sanitation, electricity, and other systems are strained at the municipal and national level;

Whereas many members of the Syrian-American community, especially medical professionals, have generously donated their time and money, while taking great personal risk, in heroic efforts to reach those in need inside Syria with humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the United Nations launched its largest appeal in its history for a single humanitarian emergency in December 2013, requesting an unprecedented \$6,500,000,000 in 2014 for the Syrian response, representing nearly half of the United Nations entire global humanitarian request; and

Whereas the United States has provided \$1,700,000,000 in assistance to those suffering inside Syria, as well as refugees and host communities in neighboring countries and has committed to continue to increase its humanitarian contributions for those affected by the conflict: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) strongly condemns all parties' attacks on ci-
 3 vilians and civilian infrastructure in Syria, including
 4 attacks on medical personnel, schools, and health fa-
 5 cilities, and the use of explosive weapons, including
 6 “barrel bombs” and missiles, in populated areas,
 7 and calls on Bashar al-Assad's regime and sup-
 8 porting militias, as well as all other parties to the
 9 conflict in Syria, to end the violence against civil-
 10 ians, respect international norms and principles, and

1 pursue all appropriate diplomatic options to work to-
2 ward a negotiated end to the crisis;

3 (2) demands that Bashar al-Assad's regime and
4 supporting militias, as well as all other parties to the
5 conflict in Syria, immediately cease attacks upon ci-
6 vilians and civilian infrastructure, facilitate unfet-
7 tered humanitarian access, especially that of domes-
8 tic and international medical professionals, through-
9 out the country, respect the safety and security of
10 humanitarian workers, and ensure freedom of move-
11 ment for humanitarian workers and organizations so
12 they may deliver aid to those most in need;

13 (3) calls for the immediate and full implementa-
14 tion of the provisions of the October 2013 United
15 Nations Security Council Presidential Statement, es-
16 pecially including facilitation of the expansion of hu-
17 manitarian relief operations in accordance with
18 international humanitarian norms;

19 (4) calls for the immediate, full and United Na-
20 tions-monitored implementation of the provisions of
21 the 2014 United Nations Security Council Resolu-
22 tion 2139 to promptly allow unhindered humani-
23 tarian access, including across conflict lines (for the
24 United Nations and its partners) to people in need
25 throughout Syria;

1 (5) urges the Administration and allies of the
2 United States to formally withdraw their recognition
3 of Bashar al-Assad’s regime as the rightful Govern-
4 ment of Syria, unless and until the Assad regime
5 and its supporting militias discontinue their barbaric
6 slaughter, systematic starvation, and other grave
7 human rights abuses and are granted full and unfet-
8 tered access for deliveries of humanitarian assist-
9 ance, even as other negotiations with Assad’s regime
10 may continue;

11 (6) further calls upon the United Nations Secu-
12 rity Council, acting under Article 5 of the Charter
13 of the United Nations, to suspend the Government
14 of Syria’s rights and privileges of membership by the
15 General Assembly until such time as the Assad re-
16 gime has ceased attacks upon civilians, and granted
17 free and unfettered access for deliveries of humani-
18 tarian assistance throughout the territory of Syria;

19 (7) urges all donors, regional and otherwise, to
20 meet the 2014 United Nations humanitarian fund-
21 ing appeal;

22 (8) commends regional governments and com-
23 munities for continuing to host Syrian refugees and
24 urges them to keep their borders open to civilians
25 fleeing the Syria conflict;

1 (9) calls upon the Assad regime, the Syrian op-
2 position, and all other parties to the conflict, the Ad-
3 ministration, and the United Nations to improve
4 their facilitation and support for the Syrian-Amer-
5 ican community, especially medical professionals, as
6 they work to aid the Syrian people with all forms of
7 humanitarian assistance;

8 (10) calls for continued international support of
9 neighboring countries and host communities that are
10 supporting refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict;

11 (11) calls for international investment in edu-
12 cation in host countries to expand learning opportu-
13 nities for refugee children, and support programs
14 that help them gain access to quality instruction,
15 protect them from violence and abuse, and provide
16 counseling;

17 (12) calls on the international community to en-
18 sure that vulnerable refugee and displaced women
19 and girls have access to services and programs, im-
20 plement steps to mitigate risks and prevent gender-
21 based violence, and assure the protection of women
22 and girls against sexual exploitation, early marriage,
23 human trafficking, and rape;

24 (13) calls for the meaningful participation of
25 Syrian civil society, including women representatives,

1 in the overall humanitarian response, political proc-
2 esses, and peace negotiations;

3 (14) urges international donors and aid agen-
4 cies to integrate humanitarian relief and longer-term
5 development programs through a comprehensive
6 strategy to address the protracted Syrian crisis; and

7 (15) calls on the President of the United States
8 to develop and submit to Congress within 60 days
9 from adoption of this resolution a strategy for
10 United States engagement on the Syria crisis, with
11 a specific focus on humanitarian assistance and de-
12 velopment, and protecting human rights inside Syria
13 and in the region.

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