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H. RES. 839

Condemning the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 15, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Condemning the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.

Whereas Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island, and home to up to 150,000 species of unique flora and fauna;

Whereas during the last 20 years, with the support of the U.S. Government and others, Madagascar has made substantial progress in stopping environmental degradation, effectively managing natural resources and preserving its unique biodiversity;

Whereas these natural resources provide essential benefits and services for the basic needs of the majority of Madagascar's people, three-quarters of whom live in rural areas and two-thirds of whom live on less than \$2 per day;

Whereas these natural resources also provide economic development in the tourism sector, drawing an estimated \$390,000,000 per year;

Whereas the Obama Administration has condemned Marc Ravalomanana's forced resignation as President of the Republic of Madagascar, and Andry Rajoelina's installation as de facto head of state, as tantamount to a coup d'état, undemocratic, and contrary to the rule of law;

Whereas in March 2009, the Obama Administration announced a suspension of non-humanitarian assistance to the de facto Andry Rajoelina government;

Whereas, given that $\frac{2}{3}$ of people live off the natural resources, decreased assistance for conservation efforts is having dire humanitarian consequences;

Whereas the African Union and the Southern African Development Community have suspended Madagascar's participation until constitutional order is restored;

Whereas in October 2009, the World Wide Fund (WWF), Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society condemned an interministerial order issued by the current administration granting sweeping authorization to export raw and semi-processed hard wood as "legaliz[ing] the sale of illegally cut and collected wood onto the market; allow[ing] for the potential embezzlement of funds in the name of environmental protection and constitut[ing] a legal incentive for further corruption in the forestry sector";

Whereas the following natural resource degradation is occurring under the de facto government's watch—

(1) open and organized plundering of precious wood from natural forests, including World Heritage Sites such as Marojejy and Masoala National Parks;

(2) intimidation and menace of legitimate local community management structures, and expropriation of revenue and benefits from them, causing suffering and impoverishment;

(3) intensified smuggling of endemic and protected species and species parts and/or products to the national and international markets;

(4) proliferation of destructive practices such as illegal mining and slash-and-burn agriculture within protected areas and environmentally sensitive areas;

(5) degradation of forests, pushing some rosewood and ebony species to the brink of extinction; and

(6) the degradation of the resource base upon which rural communities depend representing an immediate and future threat to local governance, local incomes, and food security; and

Whereas the vast majority of this precious wood is destined for global export markets: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on people of Madagascar to imme-
3 diately undertake a democratic, consensual process
4 to restore constitutional governance, culminating in
5 free, fair and peaceful elections;

6 (2) strongly condemns the illegal extraction of
7 Madagascar's natural resources and its impact on
8 biodiversity and livelihoods of rural communities, in-

1 including illegal logging, smuggling of wild species,
2 and illegal mining;

3 (3) supports action by competent authorities
4 and the people of Madagascar to stop this illegal
5 devastation and bring those perpetrating these
6 crimes to justice;

7 (4) calls upon importing countries to intensify
8 their inspection and monitoring processes to ensure
9 that they do not contribute to the demand for ille-
10 gally sourced precious woods from Madagascar; and

11 (5) calls upon consumers of rosewood and
12 ebony products to check their origin, and boycott
13 those made of Malagasy wood, until constitutional
14 order is restored.

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