

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1210

Affirming the role of the United States in eliminating sexual violence in conflict.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2022

Ms. MENG (for herself, Mr. WALTZ, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. JACOBS of California, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. JACKSON LEE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Affirming the role of the United States in eliminating sexual violence in conflict.

Whereas sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war throughout history, whether to subjugate, terrorize, or ethnically cleanse populations;

Whereas the term “conflict-related sexual violence” refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict;

Whereas conflict-related sexual violence directly correlates with the resurgence of hostilities, militarization, the pro-

liferation of small arms and light weapons, mass population displacement, the rise of violent extremism, the collapse of the rule of law and social support systems;

Whereas conflict-related sexual violence has been considered a war crime, crime against humanity, and an act of genocide and torture under international jurisprudence;

Whereas despite the numerous international resolutions, conventions, and treaties, sexual violence continues to occur in many conflicts across the world with almost total impunity;

Whereas, in 2021, 3,293 verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence were committed, 800 more than in 2020, representing a significant increase;

Whereas substantial gaps remain in the areas of prevention, accountability, and compliance;

Whereas many prescribed prevention measures are inadequately implemented and enforced;

Whereas when perpetrators go unpunished, they are emboldened to strike again, perpetuating and encouraging vicious cycles of sexual violence even when a country emerges from conflict;

Whereas rendering justice to the victims is a precondition for reconciliation and peace to take hold;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic led to a global spike in gender-based violence and increased challenges to accessing services for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence;

Whereas the lockdowns, curfews, quarantines, and pandemic-related mobility restrictions compounded the chronic underreporting of conflict-related sexual violence and fur-

ther complicated the pursuit of justice and redress as the work of investigators, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers was impacted;

Whereas women and girls in congested refugee and displacement settings were among the hardest hit by the intersecting crises of COVID–19 and conflict, facing elevated risks of sexual violence, child marriage, exploitation, and trafficking, a situation that was exacerbated by an overall decline in humanitarian reach and resources;

Whereas an individual’s gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, or displacement status may increase their vulnerability to becoming a victim of conflict-related sexual violence;

Whereas harmful cultural and social norms related to honor, shame, victim blaming, and gender discrimination persist as both a root cause of sexual violence and an obstacle to effective prevention and response efforts;

Whereas conflict-related sexual violence is also targeted at men and boys;

Whereas a staggering number of children living in conflict areas are living near armed groups that perpetrate sexual violence;

Whereas, since 2006, more than 20,000 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were perpetrated against children;

Whereas sexual violence against children can be especially damaging to their physical and mental health, both in the near- and long-term, and can prevent them from reaching their full potential;

Whereas access to safe and effective emergency health care, clinics and shelters, reporting mechanisms, justice, and

redress for victims are essential to eliminating sexual violence in times of conflict;

Whereas the United States recognizes that successfully eliminating conflict-related sexual violence requires meaningful inclusion of women in peace and security processes;

Whereas the United States continues to serve as a global leader in efforts to promote and elevate the women's participation in economic, civic, and security decisionmaking and peace processes; and

Whereas, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed June 19 of each year the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict to raise awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence, to honor the victims and survivors, and to pay tribute to all those who have devoted their lives to standing up for the eradication of these crimes: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) affirms the leadership and commitment of
3 the United States Government in efforts to prevent
4 conflict-related sexual violence to support and pro-
5 tect survivors of, conflict-related sexual violence;

6 (2) calls on the United States to ensure mecha-
7 nisms to hold perpetrators of sexual violence ac-
8 countable are included in peacebuilding resolutions,
9 and that women participate fully in such peace proc-
10 esses in accordance with the Women, Peace, and Se-
11 curity Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–68);

1 (3) calls on the Secretary of State and the Ad-
2 ministrators of the United States Agency for Inter-
3 national Development to commit to strengthening
4 legal reforms and justice for all conflict-related sex-
5 ual violence survivors, including as part of transi-
6 tional justice processes, while also advocating for
7 women's safe and meaningful participation in such
8 processes;

9 (4) recognizes that no peace agreement can be
10 comprehensive if the weapon of conflict-related sex-
11 ual violence continues unchecked; and

12 (5) stands in solidarity with the survivors of
13 conflict-related sexual violence, and those working to
14 support them, to ensure they are not forgotten.

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