

government leaves us little choice but to impose these restrictions. Only when the Government of Liberia ends its participation in activities that support the RUF will the United States review this policy.

NOTE: The proclamation of October 10 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on Congressional Action on Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Legislation

*October 11, 2000*

I congratulate the Congress on its bipartisan work to pass the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, which contains legislation to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as legislation to strengthen and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). These initiatives have been important priorities of my administration, and I look forward to signing this bill into law.

My administration strongly supports this comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation as part of our vigorous campaign to combat trafficking in persons, a modern day form of slavery, and to punish the international criminal organizations that engage in it. Trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in the world, ensnaring up to 2 million additional victims around the world each year, including 50,000 annually here in the United States. On March 11, 1998, I issued an executive memorandum directing my administration to combat this insidious human rights abuse through a three-part strategy of prosecuting traffickers, providing protection and assistance for trafficking victims, and preventing future trafficking. This strategy has established the framework for our work in this country and abroad. The legislation approved by Congress today will strengthen this approach, providing new tools to protect trafficking victims and punish traffickers. It will institutionalize our Government's response, laying the groundwork for fu-

ture administrations to carry this important work forward, and will ensure that trafficking of persons assumes the prominent place on the world's agenda that it deserves until we put an end to this horrible practice.

I signed VAWA into law as part of my crime bill in 1994, and during the last 6 years, VAWA has made a crucial difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of women and children. The Violence Against Women Act has enabled communities to expand prevention efforts, enhance the safety of more victims, and hold perpetrators of violence against women accountable for their acts. But more needs to be done. From 1993 through 1998, on average, 22 percent of all female victims of violence were attacked by an intimate partner. The legislation approved by the Senate today will do more to help these women by reauthorizing critical VAWA grant programs, providing important protections for battered immigrant women, reauthorizing the domestic violence hotline, and helping State and tribal courts improve interstate enforcement of protection orders. It is especially fitting that Congress passed this crucial legislation in the month designated as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

NOTE: The National Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation of September 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.