

Public Law 100-305
100th Congress

Joint Resolution

May 2, 1988
[S.J. Res. 235]

Deploring the Soviet Government's active persecution of religious believers in Ukraine.

Whereas 1988 marks the Millennium of the Christianity of Kievan Rus', adopted by Prince Volodymyr in a ceremony on the banks of the Dnieper River;

Whereas today freedom of religion is a fundamental right which is explicitly guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe;

Whereas the Soviet Government has violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe by engaging in the persecution of religious believers in the Soviet Union, including the systematic liquidation of the historic and national churches in Ukraine;

Whereas the Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic churches, both forcibly liquidated in the 1930's and 1940's, respectively, have remained outlawed while their clergy and laity have been murdered, imprisoned, or exiled for their religious beliefs;

Whereas, despite decades of severe persecution, Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic believers to this day continue to practice their faiths clandestinely for fear of persecution by Soviet authorities;

Whereas the Soviet Government has, in addition, sought to restrain and undermine the spiritual mission of the Evangelical Church in Ukraine, and has established restrictive legislation in direct contravention of the Biblical precepts that undergird the evangelical movement;

Whereas many members of the Ukrainian Evangelical churches, in particular unregistered Baptist and Pentecostal congregations, are currently imprisoned and harassed for their faith;

Whereas suspected clergy and lay members of the Ukrainian Orthodox, Ukrainian Catholic, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches are victimized by job discrimination, their access to religious literature is restricted, and they are subject to various forms of harassment such as house searches, interrogations, and arbitrary arrests by Soviet authorities;

Whereas, despite the Soviet government's policies of religious persecution in Ukraine, faith in God is widespread among Ukrainians as evidenced by the underground Ukrainian Catholic movement which embraces hundreds of priests headed by a number of secret bishops assisted by more than 1,000 religious women in orders; and

Whereas Ukrainian Catholic catacomb bishops, priests, and laity have placed themselves in direct danger of persecution by appeal-

ing to the Kremlin to end its prohibition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress of the United States deplores the Soviet Government's active persecution of religious believers in Ukraine, as well as the forcible liquidation of the Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic Churches.

Human rights.

SEC. 2. On the occasion of the Millennium of Christianity in Kievan Rus', the Congress of the United States—

(1) discourages official participation by the Government of the United States in ceremonies of the Millennium in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, so long as individuals remain harassed and imprisoned for their religious beliefs, are denied access to religious literature and the opportunity to receive religious instruction, and the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches remain outlawed;

(2) sends its greetings to the Ukrainian people as they mark this solemn event in the history of the Ukrainian nation;

(3) voices its concern for those Ukrainian religious believers who are persecuted for attempting to exercise their rights to religious worship;

(4) urges the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the United States delegation to the United Nations, the United States Delegation to the Vienna Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to continue to speak out forcefully against violations of religious liberty throughout the Soviet Union and specifically in Ukraine during this anniversary year;

(5) calls upon the Soviet Government to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and release all those imprisoned for their religious beliefs; and

(6) urges, in observance of the Christian Millennium, the Soviet Government to legalize the Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic Churches.

Approved May 2, 1988.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 235:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):

Mar. 4, considered and passed Senate.

Apr. 19, considered and passed House.