

H. Res. 99

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

March 23, 1999.

Whereas the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, is an international mechanism to express support for the protection and defense of the inherent natural rights of humankind and a forum for discussing the human rights situation throughout the world and condemning abuses and gross violations of these liberties;

Whereas the actions taken by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights establish precedents for further courses of action and send messages to the international community that the protection and promotion of human rights is a priority;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guides global human rights policy asserts that all human beings are born free and live in dignity with rights;

Whereas international human rights organizations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Department of State all concur that the Government of Cuba continues to systematically violate the fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens;

Whereas it is carefully documented that the Government of Cuba propagates and encourages the routine harassment,

intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention, imprisonment, and defamation of those who voice their opposition against the government;

Whereas the Government of Cuba engages in torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment against political prisoners including the use of electroshock, intense beatings, and extended periods of solitary confinement without nutrition or medical attention, to force them into submission;

Whereas the Government of Cuba suppresses the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association and recently enacted legislation which carries penalties of up to 30 years for dissidents and independent journalists;

Whereas religious freedom in Cuba is severely circumscribed and clergy and lay people suffer sustained persecution by the Cuban State Security apparatus;

Whereas the Government of Cuba routinely restricts workers' rights including the right to form independent unions;

Whereas the Government of Cuba denies its people equal protection under the law, enforcing a judicial system which infringes upon fundamental rights while denying recourse against the violation of human rights and civil liberties;

Whereas in recent weeks the Government of Cuba has carried out a brutal crackdown of the brave internal opposition and independent press, arresting scores of peaceful opponents without cause or justification;

Whereas the internal opposition in Cuba is working intensely and valiantly to draw international attention to Cuba's deplorable human rights situation and continues to strengthen and grow in its opposition to the Government of Cuba;

Whereas at this time of great repression, the internal opposition requires and deserves the firm and unwavering support and solidarity of the international community; and

Whereas the Congress of the United States has stood, consistently, on the side of the Cuban people and supported their right to be free: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns in the strongest possible terms the repressive crackdown by the Government of Cuba against the brave internal opposition and the independent press;

(2) expresses its profound admiration and firm solidarity with the internal opposition and independent press of Cuba;

(3) demands that the Government of Cuba release all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, labor unions, and the press, and schedule free and fair elections;

(4) urges the Administration, at the 55th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, to take all steps necessary to secure international support for, and passage of, a resolution which condemns the Cuban Government for its gross abuses of the rights of the Cuban people and for continued violations of all international human rights standards and legal principles, and calls for the reinstatement

of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cuba;

(5) declares the acts of the Government of Cuba, including its widespread and systematic violation of human rights, to be in violation of the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(6) urges the President to nominate a special envoy to advocate, internationally, for the establishment of the rule of law for the Cuban people; and

(7) urges the President to continue to actively seek support from individual nations, as well as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Union, and all other international organizations to call for the establishment of the rule of law for the Cuban people.

Attest:

Clerk.