

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 346

Commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first democratic elections held in South Africa, recognizing the historical significance of the momentous event, and honoring the South Africans who dedicated their lives to promoting and championing democracy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 8, 2003

Mr. RANGEL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first democratic elections held in South Africa, recognizing the historical significance of the momentous event, and honoring the South Africans who dedicated their lives to promoting and championing democracy.

Whereas many pivotal events in South Africa's history mark that country's struggle for democracy and racial equality;

Whereas in 1950 and 1952 the South African Government created race base policies that severely restricted access to land and movement by blacks;

Whereas during the 1950's the African National Congress (ANC), formed in 1912 to bring all Africans together as

one people to defend their rights and freedoms, was re-energized to aggressively fight for the rights of blacks;

Whereas a mass mobilization campaign began shortly thereafter in reaction to these laws, a consequence of which was the creation of the Freedom Charter, based on principles of human rights and racial equality adopted in 1955 at the Congress of the People in Soweto;

Whereas on March 21, 1960, during a rally protesting the laws that restricted movement of blacks, 69 unarmed people were killed by police officers in the Sharpeville incident;

Whereas in 1962, a new stage of international pressure on the South African Government to change its repressive policies began when the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 1761 which called on its members to institute economic sanctions against South Africa;

Whereas Nelson Mandela, who secretly exercised his leadership in the ANC, was arrested and sentenced to five years imprisonment in 1962 for incitement;

Whereas several of Mandela's senior ANC colleagues, including Walter Sisulu, were arrested and Mandela was brought from jail to trial with his ANC colleagues resulting in sentences of life imprisonment for Mandela and his colleagues;

Whereas during a protest march against being taught in the Afrikaans language in 1976, police fired on youth in Soweto killing 13 year old Hector Petersen and at least three others precipitating a massive flood of violence;

Whereas Stephen Biko, the founder of the new Black Consciousness movement, was killed as a result of police brutality in 1977;

Whereas in 1990, South African President F.W. de Klerk lifted restrictions on 33 opposition groups, including the African National Congress;

Whereas Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years of imprisonment on February 11, 1990;

Whereas Nelson Mandela and President F.W. de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993;

Whereas on April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections and Nelson Mandela, as the leader of the ANC party, was elected unopposed as President of South Africa in 1994; and

Whereas during his presidential inaugural speech, which was attended by the largest gathering of international leaders ever held in South Africa, Nelson Mandela called for a “time of healing” and stated that his government would fight against discrimination of any kind: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) recognizes and commemorates the tenth an-
4 niversary of South Africa’s first democratic elec-
5 tions;

6 (2) remembers and honors the individuals who
7 contributed to and dedicated their lives to promoting
8 championing democracy in South Africa, most nota-
9 bly Nelson Mandela, Stephen Biko, F.W. de Klerk,
10 Chris Hani, Helen Joseph, Thabo Mbeki, Walter

1 Sisulu, Joe Slovo, Helen Suzman, Oliver Tambo and
2 Desmond Tutu;

3 (3) recognizes the exceptional character of Nel-
4 son Mandela for his dedication to humanity, commit-
5 ment to democratic ideals, and continued display of
6 tolerance and spirit of conciliation for the world; and

7 (4) recognizes the pivotal events in South Afri-
8 ca's history that mark the struggle for democracy
9 and racial equality.

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