

H. Res. 32

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

October 9, 2007.

Whereas human rights violations against women occur around the world and are not limited to times of war, and have been committed for political gain, personal advantage, ethnic hatred, and in the name of deities and fundamentalist religious zeal;

Whereas, in many parts of the world, there is a culture of violence and discrimination which denies women rights equal to those of men and which legitimizes the exploitation of women for personal gratification, political purposes, and financial gain;

Whereas despite the fact that in 1998, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda set a precedent in international law by establishing and prosecuting rape and sexual violence in times of violent conflict as war crimes and crimes against humanity, the rape of women continues to be used as an instrument of armed conflict in the 21st century;

Whereas former Bangladeshi Prime-Minister Sheikh Hasina acknowledged that every year in Bangladesh up to 200 women are horribly disfigured by acid attacks by their spurned husbands or suitors, leaving many of them blind, deaf, or dead;

Whereas according to Amnesty International, 6,000 women are subjected to genital mutilation each day in North Africa, and 135,000,000 women, in at least 46 other countries, have undergone female genital mutilation worldwide;

Whereas Time Magazine reports that about 25,000 women in India each year are doused with gasoline, set on fire, and burned to death because their marriage dowries are deemed too small, and four out of five of these attacks are not reported to or recorded by law enforcement agencies;

Whereas in many societies baby girls are denied food, drowned, suffocated, abandoned, or their spines are broken simply because they are born girls;

Whereas in China, where the male-child is traditionally prized above the female, the “one-child” state policy has multiplied the rate of abandonment, sex-selective and forced abortion and female infanticide, and yielded a skewed population demographic;

Whereas Chinese demographics have exacerbated the abduction, trafficking, and sale of Asian women and girls for the purposes of sex slavery and forced marriage;

Whereas Amnesty International estimates that this year, more than 15,000 women will be sold as sexual slaves in China;

Whereas, according to World Bank figures, at least one in five women and girls around the world has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime;

Whereas the 2002 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe estimates that the leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 through 44 is the violence

to which they are subjected in their own homes, and in the Russian Federation alone, every day 36,000 women are beaten by their husbands or partners;

Whereas in the United States, every day four women die as a result of domestic violence, every year more than half a million women are battered, every year 4,000,000 women are physically abused by their husbands or domestic partners, one-third of American women report physical or sexual abuse by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, over 324,000 pregnant women are victims of intimate partner violence annually, the majority of welfare recipients have experienced domestic violence as adults, and domestic violence causes 100,000 days of hospitalization, 30,000 emergency room visits, and 40,000 visits to a doctor each year;

Whereas, the theme for the 2007 United Nations International Women's Day was "Ending Impunity for Violence Against Women and Girls";

Whereas UNAIDS asserts that the best way to prevent HIV is to raise the status of women because a woman's vulnerability to HIV infection is in direct proportion to her lack of control over the risks of infection;

Whereas the inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people;

Whereas the situation of women is exacerbated by the extreme poverty that affects the lives of the majority of the world's people, in particular women and children;

Whereas families rely on mothers and wives for emotional support, labor, and income needed to raise healthy children and care for other relatives;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, nearly 70 percent of the people who live in abject poverty are women and women perform two-thirds of the world's work, earn less than five percent of its income, and own less than one percent of its property;

Whereas democracy, political stability, and economic development are linked to the welfare of women and children, yet the United Nations estimates that three of every four illiterate adults in the world are women and two-thirds of children denied primary education are girls;

Whereas the exclusion of women from the political process in many countries makes them even more vulnerable to abuse;

Whereas as long as women and girls are undervalued, overworked, and subjected to violence in and out of their homes, the potential of the human family to create a peaceful, prosperous world will not be realized; and

Whereas the leadership of women is strongly linked to social justice, economic prosperity, political stability, peaceful relations, and a healthy population: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) denounces the barbaric practices of female genital mutilation, domestic violence, “honor” killings, acid burning, dowry deaths, and other gender-based persecutions and crimes;

(B) asserts that women are not chattel, should not be trafficked, exploited, or sold for services, and should not be denied the right to education, to own-

ership of property, or to participate in full, economic, social and political life;

(C) demands the cessation of these barbaric practices and the dismantling of social and institutional mechanisms which perpetuate systematic discrimination against women and girls;

(D) calls on all governments to pass enforceable laws banning these practices, prosecute any individuals who persecute or violate women and girls with these acts, and pass measures to empower women and girls and afford them equal access to educational, social, and economic opportunities; and

(E) calls on the President and fellow donor countries to promote the rights, health, and empowerment of women in every aspect of their foreign assistance to developing countries, and discourage continued acts of violence against women and the impunity that often accompanies these acts; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives

that—

(A) participation, protection, recognition, health, and equality of women and girls are crucial to achieving a just, moral, and peaceful society; and

(B) regardless of religion, geography, or form of government, women should not be denied their

human rights, and those rights must be defended and enforced when they are abridged, challenged, or violated.

Attest:

Clerk.