

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 381

Remembering and commemorating the lives and work of Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, who were executed by members of the Armed Forces of El Salvador on December 2, 1980.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2007

Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Remembering and commemorating the lives and work of Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, who were executed by members of the Armed Forces of El Salvador on December 2, 1980.

Whereas on December 2, 1980, four churchwomen from the United States, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, were violated and executed by members of the National Guard of El Salvador;

Whereas in 1980, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford were working in the parish of the Church of San Juan Bautista in Chalatenango, El Salvador, providing food, transportation, and other assistance to refugees, and Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan were working in the parish of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in La Libertad, El Salvador, providing assistance and support to refugees and other victims of violence;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States dedicated their lives to working with the poor of El Salvador, especially women and children left homeless, displaced, and destitute by the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States were among the more than 70,000 civilians who were murdered during the course of the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas on May 23 and May 24, 1984, five members of the National Guard of El Salvador, Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman, Daniel Canales Ramirez, Carlos Joaquin Contreras Palacios, Francisco Orlando Contreras Recinos, and Jose Roberto Moreno Canjura, were found guilty by the El Salvador courts of the executions of these four churchwomen from the United States and were sentenced to 30 years in prison, marking the first time in El Salvador history in which a member of the Armed Forces of El Salvador was convicted of murder by an El Salvador judge;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador was established under the terms of the historic January 1992 Peace Accords that ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and was charged to investigate and

report to the El Salvador people on human rights crimes committed by all sides during the course of the civil war;

Whereas in March 1993, the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador found that the execution of these four churchwomen from the United States was planned, that Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman carried out orders from a superior to execute them, that then Colonel Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, then Director-General of the National Guard and his cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar, then Commander of the Zacatecoluca military detachment where the murders were committed, and other military personnel knew that members of the National Guard had committed the murders pursuant to orders of a superior, and that the subsequent coverup of the facts adversely affected the judicial investigation into the murders of the churchwomen;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador determined that General Jose Guillermo Garcia, then Minister of Defense, made no serious effort to conduct a thorough investigation of responsibility for the murders of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States continue their efforts to determine the full truth surrounding the murders of their loved ones, appreciate the cooperation of United States Government agencies in disclosing and providing documents relevant to the murders of the churchwomen, and pursue requests to release to the family members the few remaining undisclosed documents and reports pertaining to the case;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States appreciate the ability of those harmed by violence to bring suit against El Salvador military officers in United States courts under the Torture Victim Protection Act of 1991 (28 U.S.C. 1350 note);

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have, for the past 27 years, served as inspiration for and continue to inspire Salvadorans, Americans, and people throughout the world to answer the call to service and to pursue lives dedicated to addressing the needs and aspirations of the poor, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged, especially among women and children;

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have also inspired numerous books, plays, films, music, religious events, and cultural events;

Whereas schools, libraries, research centers, spiritual centers, health clinics, women's and children's programs in the United States and in El Salvador have been named after or dedicated to Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

Whereas the Maryknoll Sisters, headquartered in Ossining, New York, the Ursuline Sisters, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, numerous religious task forces in the United States, and the Salvadoran and international religious communities based in El Salvador annually commemorate the lives and martyrdom of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the historic January 1992 Peace Accords ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and have allowed the Government and the people of El Salvador to achieve significant progress in creating and strengthening demo-

cratic, political, economic, and social institutions in El Salvador; and

Whereas December 2, 2007, marks the 27th anniversary of the deaths of these four spiritual, courageous, and generous churchwomen from the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) remembers and commemorates the lives and  
3 work of Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, and Doro-  
4 thy Kazel and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

5               (2) extends sympathy and support for the fami-  
6 lies, friends, and religious communities of these four  
7 churchwomen from the United States;

8               (3) continues to find inspiration in the lives and  
9 work of these four churchwomen from the United  
10 States;

11              (4) calls upon the people of the United States  
12 and religious congregations to participate in local,  
13 national, and international events commemorating  
14 the 27th anniversary of the martyrdom of these four  
15 churchwomen from the United States;

16              (5) recognizes that while progress has been  
17 made in El Salvador during the post-civil war pe-  
18 riod, the work begun by these four churchwomen  
19 from the United States remains unfinished and so-

1       cial and economic hardships persist among many  
2       sectors of El Salvador society; and

3               (6) calls upon the President, the Secretary of  
4       State, the Administrator of the United States Agen-  
5       cy for International Development, and the heads of  
6       other United States Government agencies to con-  
7       tinue to support and collaborate with the Govern-  
8       ment of El Salvador and with private sector, non-  
9       governmental, regional, international, and religious  
10      organizations in their efforts to reduce poverty and  
11      hunger and to promote educational opportunity,  
12      health care, and social equity for the people of El  
13      Salvador.

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