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H. CON. RES. 87

Observing the 15th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and calling on all responsible nations to uphold the principles of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 30, 2009

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. PENCE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. INGLIS, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Observing the 15th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and calling on all responsible nations to uphold the principles of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Whereas historically, ethnic Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda followed the same religion, intermarried, and lived intermingled, and through marriage and clientage Hutus could become “hereditary Tutsis” and Tutsis could become “hereditary Hutus”;

Whereas the manipulation of ethnic identity by colonial powers, including the issuance of ethnic identity cards and the introduction of an apartheid system of governance favoring the Tutsi minority, exacerbated existing tensions

between Hutus and Tutsis and contributed to periodic episodes of ethnic violence;

Whereas a revolt by Hutu political activists, supported by Belgium, resulted in the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy in November 1959, and the subsequent fleeing of an estimated 160,000 Tutsi refugees to neighboring countries;

Whereas, on October 1, 1990, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A) invaded Rwanda from its base in Uganda;

Whereas after two years of fighting, the RPF/A signed a peace accord with the government of President Juvénal Habyarimana in Arusha, Tanzania, in August 1993, paving the way for the formation of a power-sharing government, the return of Rwandan refugees, and the deployment of a United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR);

Whereas following the signing of the Arusha Accords, broadcasts of “hate radio” directed against Tutsis and moderate Hutus intensified and numerous credible reports confirmed the existence of government-run training camps for militias, widespread killings of civilians, targeted assassinations against senior members of the coalition government, and massive influxes of weapons from France, Egypt, China, and South Africa;

Whereas the commander of UNAMIR, General Romeo Dallaire, repeatedly warned the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) about the potential for mass slaughter in Rwanda, even sending an urgent fax to DPKO headquarters explicitly describing the blueprint for genocide on January 11, 1994;

Whereas DPKO responded to these warnings by informing General Dallaire that UNAMIR did not have a mandate to seize weapons, to jam radio broadcasts, or even to protect Dallaire's informant;

Whereas, on April 6, 1994, a plane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down as it approached Kigali International Airport;

Whereas the Rwandan Armed Forces, the presidential guard, and Interhamwe militia immediately responded by unleashing a highly organized, systematic campaign of genocide against Tutsi leaders and moderate Hutu politicians who had been identified on "hit lists" months earlier;

Whereas consistent with the warning issued by General Dallaire three months earlier, the Rwandan prime minister and her 10 Belgian bodyguards were among the first victims, prompting Belgium to withdraw its forces from UNAMIR on April 14, 1994;

Whereas the killing spree swiftly spread across the country as security forces and Interhamwe militia armed with machetes, clubs, guns, and grenades began slaughtering tens of thousands of Tutsi civilians, while uninterrupted broadcasts of "hate radio" helped pinpoint the locations of Tutsis and urged killers not to spare women or children;

Whereas ordinary Hutu citizens also were called upon, and often forced, to join in the killing, and reportedly did so "with a radio in one hand and a machete in the other";

Whereas many other Rwandans resisted the genocide and displayed amazing courage while protecting civilians, includ-

ing Paul Rusesabagina, who is credited with saving over 1,200 Tutsis and moderate Hutus who took shelter at the Mille Collines hotel in Kigali;

Whereas despite General Dallaire's assertion that he could halt the genocide with 5,000 well-equipped troops and a robust mandate, the United Nations Security Council reduced UNAMIR's strength from 2,548 to 270 on April 21, 1994;

Whereas while calls to neutralize Radio Mille Collines were growing, the State Department Legal Advisor's Office reportedly issued a finding against radio jamming in May 1994, citing international broadcasting agreements and the United States commitment to free speech;

Whereas in response to irrefutable evidence of mass slaughter and mounting pressure by some Member States and determined human rights advocates, including the late Alison Des Forges, the United Nations Security Council finally recognized that "acts of genocide may have been committed" in Rwanda and authorized the deployment of 6,800 peacekeeping troops with a mandate to protect civilians on May 17, 1994;

Whereas the troops associated with UNAMIR II did not arrive until after the genocide had been halted;

Whereas, on July 4, 1994, the RPF/A, led by General Paul Kagame, captured Kigali and formed an interim government of national unity on July 17, 1994;

Whereas, over the course of just 100 days, an estimated 800,000 people were killed in Rwanda and over 2,100,000 refugees, including members of the Hutu-led government, fully armed contingents of the Armed Forces of Rwanda (ex-FAR), Interhamwe militia, and other

genocidaires poured into neighboring Zaire, Burundi, and Tanzania;

Whereas the effects of the genocide in Rwanda were profound and far-reaching, and the continued presence of ex-FAR/Interhamwe militias in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, remains a major source of regional instability;

Whereas, in March 1998, former President Clinton expressed his regret for failing to take action to halt the forces of genocide in Rwanda, stating, “[a]ll over the world there were people like me sitting in offices who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror”;

Whereas, on April 7, 2004, as world leaders gathered in Kigali to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared to the United Nations Human Rights Commission that reports of ethnic cleansing from the Darfur region of western Sudan had left him with “a deep sense of foreboding”; and

Whereas given its own tragic experience in 1994, Rwanda responded to warnings of genocide in Darfur by committing, with support from the United States, three battalions to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and its successor, the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) with explicit orders to protect civilians: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) solemnly observes the 15th anniversary of
 4 the Rwandan genocide, which claimed the lives of an

1 estimated 800,000 people over the course of just 100
2 days;

3 (2) remembers those who were lost in this
4 senseless campaign of mass slaughter and expresses
5 sincere condolences to the families of the victims;

6 (3) honors the heroic actions of those who
7 sought to draw attention to and stop the genocide;

8 (4) recognizes that despite countless pledges of
9 “never again”, the forces of genocide have again
10 been unleashed in Darfur, Sudan;

11 (5) commends the commitment of Rwandan
12 peacekeepers who have taken effective action to pro-
13 tect civilians in Sudan; and

14 (6) urges all responsible nations to uphold the
15 principles of the Convention on the Prevention and
16 Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and seek to
17 halt genocide wherever it may occur.

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