

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 1725

Condemning and deploring the murderous attacks, bombings, kidnappings, and threats against vulnerable religious communities in Iraq, in particular the attack against Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad on October 31, 2010, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 18, 2010

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. WOLF, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. KIRK, Mr. PETERS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. PITTS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Condemning and deploring the murderous attacks, bombings, kidnappings, and threats against vulnerable religious communities in Iraq, in particular the attack against Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad on October 31, 2010, and for other purposes.

Whereas, on October 31, 2010, gunmen stormed Our Lady of Salvation (Sayidat al-Nejat) Church in an historic neighborhood in Baghdad, Iraq, and took hostage more than 100 Catholic men, women, and children worshipping inside;

Whereas over the course of the hostage crisis and rescue operation, 52 police officers and worshippers, including 2 priests, were killed and 75 people were wounded;

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq, an al Qaeda affiliated group, claimed responsibility for the attack;

Whereas, the Iraqi Human Rights Minister, Wijdan Michael, reportedly said at the scene of the attack, “What happened was more than a catastrophic and tragic event. In my opinion, it is an attempt to force Iraqi Christians to leave Iraq and to empty Iraq of Christians.”;

Whereas, on November 9, 2010, and November 10, 2010, more than a dozen homes inhabited by Christians in Baghdad were targeted in coordinated bomb and mortar attacks, killing at least 4 people and wounding dozens more;

Whereas the victims of the November 9, 2010, and November 10, 2010, attacks included at least one family of a victim of the Our Lady of Salvation attack, whom terrorists may have identified by funeral signs hanging outside the home;

Whereas these attacks are only the latest instances of violence directed against Iraq’s vulnerable religious communities, including Assyrians, Chaldeans, Mandeans, Syriacs, Yazidis, and other religious communities;

Whereas Iraq’s ancient and once vibrant Christian population that numbered an estimated 1,500,000 out of a total population in Iraq of 30,000,000 in 2003 has been reduced by at least one half, due to Christians fleeing the violence;

Whereas most of Iraq’s ancient Jewish community also has fled out of fear and the community has almost disappeared;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom noted in its 2010 Annual Report that, “despite the overall drop in violence in the country, violence against religious minorities and their religious sites continued in 2009 and 2010, particularly in the Northern disputed regions.”;

Whereas vulnerable religious communities have been subjected to a specific pattern of violence and discrimination, and as such, require a comprehensive and cohesive strategy for their protection and preservation;

Whereas the survival and prosperity of vulnerable religious communities is critical for the long-term stability of Iraq;

Whereas in fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, Congress appropriated funding specifically for the protection and development of efforts aimed at Iraq’s minority populations, with a particular focus on the Nineveh Plains region; and

Whereas H. Res. 944, passed by the House of Representatives on February 24, 2010, requested that the Secretary of State develop and report to Congress on a comprehensive strategy to encourage the protection of the rights of members of vulnerable religious and ethnic minority communities in Iraq; Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
- 2 resentatives that the United States Government should—
- 3 (1) continue to clearly and forcefully denounce
- 4 any form of violence and other human rights viola-

1 tions committed against vulnerable religious commu-
2 nities in Iraq;

3 (2) assist the Government of Iraq in developing
4 and implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure
5 security at places of worship and other sites where
6 vulnerable religious communities congregate and to
7 include measures to increase the representation of
8 vulnerable religious communities in the Government
9 of Iraq, including the security forces, and the inclu-
10 sion of vulnerable religious communities in economic,
11 social, and political aspects of Iraqi society;

12 (3) assist the Government of Iraq in estab-
13 lishing, funding, training, and deploying police units
14 that include officers representative of vulnerable reli-
15 gious communities for the protection of vulnerable
16 religious communities;

17 (4) strongly urge the Government of Iraq to un-
18 dertake prompt, transparent, and thorough inves-
19 tigations of all allegations of human rights abuses
20 against vulnerable religious communities, including
21 those stemming from sectarian, religiously moti-
22 vated, or other violence by Iraqi security forces, po-
23 litical factions, militias, or any other para-state ac-
24 tors;

1 (5) strongly encourage the Government of Iraq
2 to secure the prosecution of those who perpetrate re-
3 ligiously motivated violence;

4 (6) continue to process Iraqi refugees for reset-
5 tlement to the United States, taking into account
6 the recent and continued targeted violence against
7 members of Iraq's vulnerable religious communities
8 and the P2 designation in the Refugee Crisis in Iraq
9 Act of 2007; and

10 (7) ensure that members of Iraq's vulnerable
11 religious communities scheduled to be resettled to
12 the United States are not delayed unnecessarily by
13 providing adequate personnel to conduct background
14 screening procedures and by enforcing proper appli-
15 cation of the existing waiver of the material support
16 bar to those forced to provide support to terrorists
17 under duress.

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