

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 440

Calling for urgent international action on behalf of Iraqi and Syrian civilians facing a dire humanitarian crisis and severe persecution because of their faith or ethnicity in the Nineveh Plain region of Iraq and Khabor, Kobane, and Aleppo regions of Syria.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Mr. TROTT (for himself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. DOLD, Mr. BENISHEK, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. DENHAM) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling for urgent international action on behalf of Iraqi and Syrian civilians facing a dire humanitarian crisis and severe persecution because of their faith or ethnicity in the Nineveh Plain region of Iraq and Khabor, Kobane, and Aleppo regions of Syria.

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated in its Global Trends report that in 2014, the total population of concern in Iraq and Syria numbered nearly 12,000,000 people, including refugees and internally displaced persons, many of whom face grave deprivation and imminent threats to life, health, and safety;

Whereas recent extremist attacks on civilians in Hassake, Syria, and the Nineveh Plains have exacerbated the serious dislocations and pressures facing individuals within this population of concern, and have had a particularly severe effect on ethnic and religious minority communities such as Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Christians, Armenians, Yezidis, Shabak and other minorities in the region, where civilians require immediate and urgent access to potable water, health care, fuel, electricity, and basic security;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council stated on July 22, 2014, “The members of the Security Council further recall that widespread or systematic attacks directed against any civilian populations because of their ethnic background, religious beliefs or faith may constitute a crime against humanity, for which those responsible must be held accountable”, and denounced the persecution of Iraqi Christians and other minorities, including Yezidis and Mandeans;

Whereas many of the Christian communities of the Khabor region of Syria fled Simele, Iraq, in 1933 as a result of a massacre of over 3,000 Assyrians, and were resettled along the Khabor River in Syria, and have once again been forced to flee due to violent persecution;

Whereas, on July 14, 2014, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2165, which provides guidance for urgent action in Iraq, as it addresses similarly grave humanitarian needs in neighboring Syria;

Whereas the Syriac Military Council along with the Kurds have provided security for the Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Christians in the greater Hassake region of Syria and re-

quire immediate assistance to continue combating the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant;

Whereas villages in the Khabor region have been planted with IEDs to discourage repatriation by ethnic minorities who previously resided therein;

Whereas grotesque acts of violence have been committed against the ancient Yezidi population, including killings, torture, and selling women and girls into sexual slavery; and

Whereas the grave humanitarian crisis facing ethno-religious minorities in Iraq and Syria will have serious consequences for the broader stability of those countries and other nations in the region: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) deplores and condemns the religious bigotry,
3 intimidation, and violent attacks directed against in-
4 nocent civilians, as well as the vandalism and de-
5 struction of property and ancient sites, by armed ex-
6 tremists in Iraq and Syria;

7 (2) calls on the relevant parties to protect all
8 citizens in the region, and recognizes the responsi-
9 bility of the relevant governments to uphold the con-
10 stitutional rights of their own citizens;

11 (3) calls on the President, Secretary of State,
12 and United States Permanent Representative to the
13 United Nations, working through the United Na-
14 tions Security Council and its member states as ap-
15 propriate to accelerate the implementation of an im-

1 mediate, coordinated, and sustained response to pro-
2 vide humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, build
3 resilience, and help reestablish livelihoods for dis-
4 placed and persecuted persons in their communities
5 of origin;

6 (4) calls on the United States Permanent Rep-
7 resentative to the United Nations to work with the
8 relevant United Nations agencies, including the
9 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on
10 a sustained basis to document human rights abuses
11 against Iraqi and Syrian refugees and develop an
12 immediate plan to facilitate safe humanitarian ac-
13 cess to potable water, health care, fuel, electricity,
14 and basic security for the most vulnerable refugee
15 populations;

16 (5) calls on the relevant United Nations agen-
17 cies to collaborate and coordinate with international
18 humanitarian organizations working in Iraq and
19 Syria—

20 (A) to develop an effective resettlement
21 strategy for displaced and persecuted popu-
22 lations in beleaguered areas, including the an-
23 cestral villages in the Nineveh Plain, that incor-
24 porates micro-enterprise activities and business
25 startup loans for the displaced, builds resilience,

1 and facilitates a transition from emergency re-
2 lief to longer-term economic development in
3 communities of origin; and

4 (B) to develop transparent, accountable
5 mechanisms to ensure that assistance reaches
6 vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities and is
7 not diverted; and

8 (6) calls on the Secretary of State and the Sec-
9 retary of Defense—

10 (A) to support the training and equipping
11 of vetted local Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Chris-
12 tians security forces in Iraq and Syria; and

13 (B) to work to ensure that minority com-
14 munities in Iraq and Syria are fully integrated
15 into any future security forces in Iraq and
16 Syria.

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