

particularly Afghan women, children, and refugees.

More Afghan girls are attending school than ever before in the history of Afghanistan. Millions more adult women are either returning to school to make up for being forbidden to attend school during the Taliban regime, or taking vocational training classes to prepare for the job market. Now, women in Afghanistan are able to work outside the home and hold positions in all levels of government and in private sector organizations, something unheard of during the Taliban regime.

In order for women to fully participate in Afghan society, they must have the right to vote, the right to run for office, equality of opportunity, and access to health care, education, and employment. This is why I am joined by my colleagues today to advocate that women's human rights should be guaranteed in the Afghanistan Constitution.

I have traveled to Afghanistan and seen the plight of these women. I have heard their stories of hardships and their wishes for a better life for them and their children. I support this resolution because I know how timely and vital it is for the future of Afghani women to have these rights. The United States is actively involved in encouraging the full inclusion and participation of Afghan women in the political and economic life of their country, and must continue to do so throughout the reconstruction process. We must continue to urge the participation of women in the continued efforts toward a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

RECOGNIZING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 423 which properly recognizes the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. The International Religious Freedom Act is an essential demonstration of our commitment to observing religious freedom for all human beings throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker this Nation was built by those who escaped persecution in their own homelands. Today we continue to see people throughout the world who still can not freely practice their faith. The International Religious Freedom Act created the Office of International Religious Freedom in the Department of State and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. This has resulted in a greater awareness of religious persecution both in the United States and abroad. It is vital in order to protect the principles of freedom that this nation was founded on, that we protect the ability of each person in the United States to freely observe their religious practices. This also means that we as a Nation must push other countries throughout the world to meet this same ideal standard on religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker it is truly tragic that so many people throughout the world have been mur-

dered, raped, tortured, and brutalized simply because of the faith they belong to. This type of religious hatred must be countered strongly by this body. We can not insist on having full religious freedom for our own citizens and then turn a blind eye to the plight of oppressed people throughout the world. The International Religious Freedom Act was a step in the positive direction of eliminating this global scourge. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right as affirmed by numerous international declarations and covenants, as well as by the United Nations General Assembly. I stand proud of this body's work to pass the International Religious Freedom Act five years ago and I remain hopeful that we will continue with further efforts to fight religious intolerance.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003, H.R. 1813, would authorize appropriations for domestic and foreign torture victims treatment centers and for the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

In many places around the world, the survivors of torture have to grapple with the lingering effects of their torture alone. In the United States, we have 20 torture treatment centers that provide treatment and care for torture survivors. These centers help the survivors to overcome debilitating psychological and physical problems such as post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, limbs rendered useless, chronic pain, and excessive guilt. Moreover, torture assaults the victim's core values as a human being, including his humanity and his sense of trust in himself and in the world around him. The treatment centers also assist the victim in restoring these values and in getting on with his life.

Although funding has been increasing, it still remains insufficient to meet the treatment needs of torture survivors. The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003 would help address these funding issues by authorizing the appropriation of \$37 million for the treatment and care of torture survivors both in the United States and overseas. This would include \$20 million to fund United States treatment centers, \$11 million to fund treatment centers overseas, and \$6 million to fund the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

With the additional funding, it is estimated that the American centers would have the capacity and ability to serve an additional 2,800 torture survivors per year.

The overseas funding would serve dual purposes. In addition to providing resources needed for treatment, it also would provide resources that the centers need to combat torture in their respective countries, some of which continue to have serious problems with torture.

I urge you to vote for H.R. 1813, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003.

HONORING VICTIMS OF CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE THAT TOOK PLACE FROM APRIL 1975 TO JANUARY 1979

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 83 which honors the victims of the Cambodian Genocide. Truly, this recognition is overdue for a people who suffered for so long under the brutal dictatorship of Pol Pot. It is unfortunate that the plight of the Cambodian people has not been more recognized in the United States. I want to thank Rep. MILLENDER-MCDONALD for introducing this legislation which affects not only the large Cambodian population in her district, but so many Cambodian people throughout the world who were forced to leave their homeland due to the brutalization they faced.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that between April 1975 and January 1979, up to 3 million Cambodians were deliberately and systematically killed shows the depth of suffering that the Cambodian people had to endure. Not only were scores of people brutally killed but they had to suffer through a vicious system of forced labor. In 1975, Pol Pot led the Communist guerilla group, the Khmer Rouge, in a large-scale insurgency in Cambodia that resulted in the removal of Cambodians from their homes and into labor camps in an attempt to restructure Khmer society. The Khmer Rouge maintained control by mass public tortures and executions. Families were separated. Men, women and young children were sent into labor camps and forced to do strenuous farm work with very little food. Famine and disease were epidemic while health care was non-existent. Literally these Cambodians were put through hell in order to maintain Pol Pot's hold on the nation.

We as a body must try to ensure that events like the Cambodian Genocide never go unnoticed again. Too many lives were lost and many of those who were killed were simply disposed of by the regime, in their effort to ensure that the victims would be forgotten. This resolution demonstrates that the victims of the Cambodian Genocide will not be forgotten by this Congress or by anyone of conscious. Many of those who suffered during the Cambodian Genocide are now residing in the United States. They are a living testament to the fact that brutality can not crush the spirit of even the most oppressed people.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a supporter of S. 1824 which amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to reauthorize the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. It is important that we as a Nation continue these efforts to invest abroad.

This resolution will continue a successful program of overseas investment that was begun more than four decades ago.

I am also encouraged by the provisions in this resolution that outreach to minority-owned and women-owned businesses. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation will collect data on the involvement of minority-owned

and women-owned businesses. Indeed, this outreach is needed as minorities and women continue to lag behind their counterparts when it comes to establishing businesses. This economic disparity often results in social inequality that this body must continue to work against. We have made efforts to support

these same businesses in the United States and we must make similar efforts abroad.

I want to thank Chairman HYDE and Ranking Member LANTOS for their work in reauthorizing this important endeavor. In the future, I hope we will continue to come together as a body to support increased overseas investment especially among the disenfranchised.