

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 540—RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 15, 2014, AS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY, AFFIRMING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AS A CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRACY, AND ENCOURAGING ALL GOVERNMENTS TO STAND WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 540

Whereas in 2007, September 15 of each year was established by the United Nations as the International Day of Democracy, a day set aside to review the state of democracy in the world;

Whereas democracy is a means of government that makes manifest the free exercise of certain inalienable rights, among them being the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of speech;

Whereas democracy allows for participatory governance, mobilizing citizens to strive for their version of the good and instilling hope that the aspirations of the people may one day be realized;

Whereas an analysis of 84 independent studies shows that democracy has a favorable impact on the formation of human capital, the rate of inflation, the level of economic freedom, and the stability of political institutions;

Whereas democracy promotes tolerance and respect by recognizing the human dignity of all people and is necessary to the full realization of the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines “civil society” as associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties, including community-based organizations, indigenous peoples’ organizations, and non-government organizations (NGOs);

Whereas a vibrant civil society is an essential element of democratic societies and plays a key role in providing transparency, ensuring the legitimacy of elections, advocating for marginalized groups, and making clear the will of the people;

Whereas, since 2012, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law has identified 69 new restrictive measures in over 50 countries hindering the ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to freely operate;

Whereas of the 98 countries for which data is available, research presented in a 2013 article for the Journal of Democracy explains that 12 prohibit and 39 restrict foreign funding of domestic NGOs;

Whereas in 2000, the Community of Democracies was founded “to bring together governments, civil society, and the private sector in the pursuit of a common goal: supporting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world”;

Whereas in 2011, the United States joined other like-minded governments to establish the “Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Fund” to provide small grants to CSOs for immediate needs and to support short-term advocacy projects;

Whereas, through the Open Government Partnership, 63 countries have committed to

protecting the ability of CSOs to operate in a manner that is consistent with the rights to freedom of expression, association, and opinion;

Whereas in September 2013, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, the United States launched a coordinated multilateral effort encouraging countries to stand with civil society and push back against growing restrictions on CSOs;

Whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association stands on the front lines of civil society protection, documenting extensive global threats to civil society and strengthening international norms; and

Whereas the United States remains committed to its stand with civil society by developing new mechanisms to combat restrictions on civil society and bolster civil society’s efforts to support democracy around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of the International Day of Democracy;

(2) recognizes the importance of civil society to the healthy development of nations;

(3) celebrates the invaluable contributions civil society has made to the creation, strength, and preservation of vibrant democracies and democratic institutions;

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the protection, advancement, health, and sustainability of democracy throughout the world;

(5) condemns the use of restrictions, coercion, threats, or force to impede the activities of civil society organizations;

(6) recognizes the important multilateral work of the Community of Democracies, the “Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Fund”, the Open Government Partnership, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association to protect global civil society;

(7) recognizes the important role diplomacy plays in defending global civil society and creating new openings for civic space;

(8) emphasizes the value of programs of the United States Government in protecting civil society and defending civic space, including the work by the Senior Advisor for Civil Society and Emerging Democracies and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the United States Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID);

(9) calls on private sector partners and other governments to develop new tools and leverage existing technologies to support the efforts of civil society; and

(10) encourages the people of the United States and the world to observe the International Day of Democracy, September 15, 2014, with appropriate programs and activities.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the important role civil society plays in the promotion of democracy as we observe International Day of Democracy this September 15.

Twenty-five years ago, I stood in Berlin as the wall was coming down. I will never forget that moment when the will of the people was finally recognized. It’s true that we have seen extraordinary progress over the years. But in too many parts of the globe, basic rights continued to be denied to those fighting for democratic ideals.

Today, there is an unprecedented global crackdown on civil society organizations seeking to express their voice

and exercise their rights. We’ve seen pervasive restrictions on civil society organizations enforced around the globe. Russia, in its worst political crackdown in post-Soviet history, has stamped the label of “foreign agent” on any civil society organization that receives support from other countries. Ethiopia’s 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation continues to hinder the work of human rights organizations and other civil society groups that receive more than 10 percent of their funding from foreign organizations. In 2012, Sudanese security forces violently attacked civil society representatives who were protesting against government restrictions. Egypt has prosecuted over 40 international aid implementers, sentencing them to prison for up to five years. In Laos, activist Sombath Somphone—a leader who dedicated his career to expanding civic space in Laos—has been missing for nearly two years after video footage documented his abduction at a police checkpoint. In 2013, government harassment in Sri Lanka forced the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation to close its office.

The developments that we see today have several notable features. First, the pushback against democracy is a global phenomenon and countries like Russia have established antidemocratic practices that are being emulated elsewhere. Second, global democratic reversals are not merely temporary aberrations but are likely to pose challenges for years to come. Finally, the global response has thus far been inadequate to meet these threats.

Moreover, democratic achievements cannot be taken for granted. A few days ago, Hungary’s National Investigative Office raided the offices of two organizations which help distribute civil society funds from the government of Norway. Thirteen NGOs are currently under investigation in Budapest, including the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, HCLU, the local office of Transparency International, and the Roma Media Centre. These raids signal further deterioration of good governance, the rule of law, and human rights in Hungary.

I regret that the Hungarian government is pursuing practices at odds with the historic path to freedom Hungary pursued 25 years ago when that country opened the door for East German refugees and courageously helped pave the way for the end of communism. At a time when we need more democracy in Europe, not less, Hungary’s actions are not only harmful for democracy in Hungary, they undermine efforts to build democratic institutions throughout the region.

To call attention to widespread infringements upon civil society, I, as Chair of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, introduced the International Day of Democracy resolution. This resolution urges the recognition of the International Day of Democracy,

affirms the role of civil society as a cornerstone of democracy, and encourages all governments to stand with civil society in the face of mounting restrictions on civil society organizations.

We cannot take success for granted; every day we must work to protect democratic progress. As we observe the International Day of Democracy this September 15, the international community must push back on these grave threats to civil society as well as protect the efforts by these organizations to build strong democratic institutions.

I would like to thank my colleagues for joining me in support of the International Day of Democracy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 541—RECOGNIZING THE SEVERE THREAT THAT THE EBOLA OUTBREAK IN WEST AFRICA POSES TO POPULATIONS, GOVERNMENTS, AND ECONOMIES ACROSS AFRICA AND, IF NOT PROPERLY CONTAINED, TO REGIONS ACROSS THE GLOBE, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THIS EPIDEMIC

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 541

Whereas Ebola hemorrhagic fever is an extremely infectious virus that causes severe illness with a fatality rate that can well exceed 50 percent;

Whereas Ebola is spread through contact with blood, secretions, or other bodily fluids of infected humans and animals and can have an incubation period of up to 21 days;

Whereas the Ebola virus first appeared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1976 and has afflicted communities in Africa at least 20 times since then;

Whereas the current Ebola outbreak first occurred in February 2014 in forested areas of southeastern Guinea and subsequently spread to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo recently discovered the outbreak of a separate strain of the virus;

Whereas this is the first outbreak of Ebola in West Africa and the biggest and most complex to date, due to its emergence in populated, transient border areas, making containment a significant challenge;

Whereas, to date, Ebola had infected more than 3,600 people in West Africa and caused almost 2,000 deaths;

Whereas the current Ebola outbreak has occurred in countries with some of the weakest health systems in the world facing severe shortages of healthcare workers, laboratories essential for testing and diagnosis, clinics and hospitals required for treatment, and medical supplies and protective gear, such as latex gloves and face masks required to prevent contamination of health facilities;

Whereas these weak and inadequate healthcare facilities, a lack of health staff trained in Ebola response, and misconceptions about the virus have resulted in numerous infections of health workers and patients unable to receive appropriate response and care;

Whereas effective countermeasures for stemming the spread of Ebola, such as isolation, meticulous infection control practices, case investigation, and contact tracing require more trained personnel and resources than are currently available in West Africa;

Whereas, although Ebola can be contained with good public health and burial practices, it continues to spread due to a lack of accurate public information, insufficient treatment facilities, limited local language capacities required for health education, and an unwillingness to allow those infected to be isolated from family members;

Whereas governments are collaborating closely with international donors and taking strong measures to contain the virus, including announcing states of emergency and establishing emergency response centers;

Whereas the limitations on transportation and travel and closing of businesses have had a devastating economic impact throughout the region and may cause social instability and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis if not properly managed and offset;

Whereas the international community has committed to support solutions to the current limitations on air traffic and establish a common operational platform to address acute problems associated with food security, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, primary and secondary health care, and education, as well as the longer-term recovery effort that will be needed in the face of the complex social consequences of this emergency;

Whereas the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda have sent experts familiar with such outbreaks to Liberia to assist with the outbreak response, and the Government of Ghana has agreed to serve as the international community's logistics and coordination center and is providing a vital corridor for supplies and personnel;

Whereas, after visiting affected communities in West Africa, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden said on September 2, 2014, "There is a window of opportunity to tamp this down, but that window is closing...we need action now to scale up the response...";

Whereas the United States Government has provided more than \$101,400,000 in support through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Health Organization, and the United States Armed Forces since February 2014;

Whereas the United States Government helped to fund the development of the Zmapp biopharmaceutical experimental drug that was given to 2 United States health workers afflicted with the virus and was recently donated to 3 Liberian doctors with encouraging effect and has prompted calls for further research and development of such vaccines;

Whereas, on August 5, 2014, the United States Government deployed a multi-agency Disaster Assistance Response Team composed of staff from Federal agencies, including the United States Agency for International Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Forest Service to coordinate the United States Government's response efforts;

Whereas the World Health Organization published on August 28, 2014, a roadmap for scaled-up response that aims to stop the virus in 6 to 9 months and calls for 750 international and 12,000 local health workers to contribute to the halt of the Ebola outbreak; and

Whereas, earlier this year, the United States Government joined with partner governments, the World Health Organization,

other multilateral organizations, and non-governmental actors to launch the Global Health Security Agenda, a 5-year commitment to prevent, detect, and effectively respond to infectious disease threats such as Ebola: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the severe immediate threat that Ebola poses to populations, governments, and economies in Africa;

(2) recognizes that the limited capacity of the initial outbreak countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia to combat the epidemic has been exhausted and the potential threat to regions beyond Africa if this, the largest of all Ebola outbreaks, is not contained;

(3) expresses support for those affected by this epidemic and affirms its sympathy for victims of Ebola and their families;

(4) supports the Governments of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their ongoing efforts to combat the Ebola virus in their countries and regionally;

(5) urges citizens of affected countries to respect preventative guidelines provided by their governments and medical professionals from Africa and around the world in order to stem the outbreak;

(6) supports the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, the Forest Service, and other United States Government agencies providing technical, logistical, and material support to address the Ebola crisis in West Africa;

(7) encourages deepened United States and international commitments to the global Ebola response;

(8) welcomes the delivery of assistance and increased engagement from donors such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, the World Bank, the European Union, and the Government of Canada;

(9) expresses support for the promotion of investments in global health in order to ensure that governments can better prevent and detect, contain, and eventually eliminate outbreaks of disease while also providing other essential health services;

(10) supports the World Health Organization's Ebola Response Roadmap and a common operational platform in response to the crisis;

(11) encourages the Governments of Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone to work together and with other nations and regional and subregional organizations to establish institutional emergency response systems to more effectively respond to this and future outbreaks of Ebola and other highly infectious diseases;

(12) welcomes proactive measures taken by governments in West Africa to formulate national plans of action in response to the crisis; and

(13) recognizes the work of thousands of African, United States, and international officials and volunteers on the ground in West Africa, particularly healthcare workers, who are working diligently and at great risk to help address this multidimensional crisis, and encourages other healthcare workers and logisticians to volunteer.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3790. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution S.J. Res. 19, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the