

104TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 142

Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 1996

Mr. BEREUTER (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HOUGHTON, and Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania,  
including the continued practice of chattel slavery.

Whereas the Government of Mauritania has perpetrated a prolonged campaign of human rights abuses and discrimination against its indigenous black population;

Whereas the Department of State and numerous human rights organizations have documented such abuses;

Whereas chattel slavery, with an estimated tens of thousands of black Mauritians considered property of their masters and performing unpaid labor, persists despite its legal abolition in 1980;

Whereas individuals attempting to escape from their owners in Mauritania may be subjected to severe punishment and torture;

Whereas the right to a fair trial in Mauritania continues to be restricted due to executive branch pressure on the judiciary;

Whereas policies designed to favor a particular culture and language have marginalized black Mauritians in the areas of education and employment particularly;

Whereas Mauritians are deprived of their constitutional right to a democratically elected government;

Whereas Mauritanian authorities have still refused to investigate or punish individuals responsible for the massacre of over 500 military and civilian black Mauritians in 1990 and 1991; and

Whereas significant numbers of black Mauritians remain refugees stripped of their citizenship and property, including approximately 70,000 black Mauritians who were expelled or fled Mauritania during 1989 and 1990: Now, therefore, be it

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

3            (1) calls upon the Government of Mauritania to  
4        honor its obligations under the Universal Declara-  
5        tion of Human Rights and the Convention on the  
6        Abolition of Slavery, prosecute slave owners to the  
7        fullest extent of the country's anti-slavery law, and  
8        educate individuals being held as slaves on their  
9        legal rights;

1           (2) strongly urges the Government of Mauri-  
2           tania to abolish discriminatory practices and foster  
3           an environment that will integrate black  
4           Mauritanians into the economic and social main-  
5           stream;

6           (3) urges in the strongest terms that the Gov-  
7           ernment of Mauritania fully investigate and pros-  
8           ecute those officials responsible for the extrajudicial  
9           killings and mass expulsions of black Mauritanians  
10          during the late 1980s and early 1990s;

11          (4) calls upon the Government of Mauritania to  
12          allow all refugees to return to Mauritania and to re-  
13          store their full rights;

14          (5) welcomes Mauritania's recent willingness to  
15          allow visits by international human rights organiza-  
16          tions; and

17          (6) further welcomes the growth of an inde-  
18          pendent press in Mauritania.

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