

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 298

Condemning the terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses against the civilian population of Sierra Leone.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 9 (legislative day, OCTOBER 2), 1998

Mr. ABRAHAM submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

OCTOBER 21 (legislative day, OCTOBER 2), 1998

Committee discharged; considered, amended, and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Condemning the terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses against the civilian population of Sierra Leone.

Whereas the ousted Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military junta and the rebel fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have mounted a campaign of terror, vengeance, and human rights abuses on the civilian population of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF violence against civilians continues with more than 500 survivors of atrocities, including gunshot wounds, amputations or rape;

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that only 1 in 4 victims of mutilation actually makes it to medical help;

Whereas the use and recruitment of children as combatants in this conflict has been widespread, including forcible abduction of children by AFRC and RUF rebels;

Whereas UNICEF estimates the number of children forcibly abducted since March 1998 exceeds 3,000;

Whereas the consequences of this campaign have been the flight of more than 250,000 refugees to Guinea and Liberia in the last 6 months and the increase of over 250,000 displaced Sierra Leoneans in camps and towns in the north and east;

Whereas the Governments of Guinea and Liberia are having great difficulty caring for the huge number of refugees, now totaling 600,000 in Guinea and Liberia, and emergency appeals have been issued by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees for \$7,300,000 for emergency food, shelter, and sanitation, and medical, educational, psychological, and social services;

Whereas starvation and hunger-related deaths have begun in the north where more than 500 people have died since August 1, 1998, a situation that will only get worse in the next months;

Whereas the humanitarian community is unable, because of continuing security concerns, to deliver food and medicine to the vulnerable groups within the north and east of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the Economic Community of West African States and its peacekeeping arm, the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), are doing their best, but are still lacking in the logistic support needed to either bring this AFRC

and RUF rebel war to a conclusion or force a negotiated settlement;

Whereas arms and weapons continue to be supplied to the AFRC and RUF in direct violation of a United Nations arms embargo;

Whereas the United Nations Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Refugees International, following visits to Sierra Leone in May and June 1998, condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrible human rights violations done to civilians by the AFRC and RUF rebels; and

Whereas the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, following a May 1998 visit to Sierra Leone, called upon the United Nations to make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects for the rehabilitation of child combatants: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges the President and the Secretary of State to give high priority to solving the conflict in Sierra Leone and to bring stability to West Africa in general;

(2) condemns the use by all parties of children as combatants, in particular their forcible abduction by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary United Front, in the conflict in Sierra Leone;

(3) calls on rebel forces to permit the establishment of a secure humanitarian corridor to strategic areas in the north and east of Sierra Leone for the safe delivery

of food and medicines by the Government of Sierra Leone and humanitarian agencies already in the country mandated to deliver this aid;

(4) urges the President and the Secretary of State to continue to strictly enforce the United Nations arms embargo on the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and Revolutionary United Front, including the condemnation of other nations found to be not in compliance with the embargo;

(5) urges the President and the Secretary of State to continue to encourage the contribution of peacekeeping forces by member governments of the Economic Community of West African States to its peacekeeping arm, ECOMOG;

(6) urges the President and the Secretary of State to continue to support the appeal of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees for aid to Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea, Liberia, and elsewhere, as well as other United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organizations working in Sierra Leone to bring humanitarian relief and peace to the country, including support for the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone;

(7) urges the President and the Secretary of State to take a more comprehensive and focused approach to

its relief, recovery and development assistance program in Sierra Leone and to continue to support the Government of Sierra Leone in its Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDRP) for the country as peace becomes a reality;

(8) urges the President and the Secretary of State to work with the Government of Sierra Leone, with organizations of civil society and with ECOMOG in their efforts to promote and protect human rights, including respect for international humanitarian law;

(9) encourages and supports the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunu, to continue efforts to work in Sierra Leone to establish programs designed to rehabilitate child combatants; and

(10) urges all parties to make a concerted effort toward peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

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