

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 62

Expressing concern over the escalating violence, the gross violations of human rights, and the ongoing attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 1999

Mr. PAYNE (for himself, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. HOUGHTON, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. LEE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HALL of Ohio, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. RADANOVICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing concern over the escalating violence, the gross violations of human rights, and the ongoing attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone.

Whereas the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military junta, which on May 27, 1997, overthrew the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone led by President Ahmed Kabbah, suspended the constitution, banned political activities and public meetings, and invited the rebel fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to join the junta;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF then mounted “Operation No Living Thing”, a campaign of killing, egregious human rights violations, and looting, that continued until President Kabbah was restored to power by the Economic Community of West African States Military Observation Group (ECOMOG) on March 10, 1998;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF have escalated their 8 year reign of terror against the citizens of Sierra Leone, which includes heinous acts such as forcibly amputating the limbs of defenseless civilians of all ages, raping women and children, and wantonly killing innocent citizens;

Whereas the Kamajor civil defense group has committed summary executions of captured rebels and persons suspected of aiding the rebels;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF continue to abduct children, forcibly provide them with military training, and place them on the front-line during rebel incursions;

Whereas countries in and outside of the region, including Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Libya, and mercenaries from Ukraine and other countries, are directly supporting the AFRC/RUF terrorist campaign against the legitimate government and citizens of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that last year more than 210,000 Sierra Leoneans fled the country to Guinea, bringing the number to 350,000, most of whom have left Sierra Leone to escape the AFRC/RUF campaign of terror and atrocities, as have an additional 90,000 Sierra Leoneans who have sought safe haven in Liberia;

Whereas the refugee camps in Guinea and Liberia may be at risk of being used as safe havens for rebels and staging areas for attacks against Sierra Leone;

Whereas the humanitarian crisis in Sierra Leone has reached epic proportions with people dying from a lack of food, medical treatment, and medicine, while humanitarian operations are impeded by the countrywide war and the resultant destruction of infrastructure;

Whereas the Nigerian-led intervention force, ECOMOG, has deployed some 15,000 troops in Sierra Leone in an attempt to end the cycle of violence and ensure the maintenance of its democratically elected government at the request of the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone and with the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);

Whereas the escalating violence and terror in Sierra Leone perpetrated by the rebel AFRC/RUF threatens stability in West Africa and has the immediate potential of spilling over into Guinea and Liberia; and

Whereas the ECOWAS Group of Seven recently met in Guinea in an attempt to bring about a cessation of hostilities and a negotiated settlement of the conflict: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls for an immediate cessation of hos-
3 tilities and respect for human rights by all combat-
4 ants in Sierra Leone;

5 (2) appeals to all parties to the conflict to en-
6 gage in dialogue without any preconditions to bring

1 about a long-term solution to this civil strife in Si-
2 erra Leone;

3 (3) supports the people of Sierra Leone in their
4 quest for a democratic and stable country and a rec-
5 onciled society;

6 (4) urges the President, the Secretary of State,
7 and the Assistant Secretary of State for African Af-
8 fairs to support the democratically elected govern-
9 ment of Sierra Leone and give high priority to help-
10 ing resolve the devastating conflict in that country,
11 which would be an important contribution to stabil-
12 ity in the West Africa region;

13 (5) abhors the gross violations of human rights
14 ongoing in Sierra Leone, including the dismember-
15 ment of citizens (including children) by the Armed
16 Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revo-
17 lutionary United Front (RUF) and demands that
18 they immediately stop such heinous acts;

19 (6) condemns the West African countries and
20 those outside the region that are aiding the AFRC/
21 RUF and demands they immediately withdraw their
22 combatants and cease providing military, financial,
23 political, and other types of assistance to the rebels
24 in Sierra Leone;

1 (7) applauds the Economic Community of West
2 African States Military Observation Group
3 (ECOMOG) for its support of the legitimate Govern-
4 ment of Sierra Leone and urges it to diversify its
5 forces with troops from additional Economic Com-
6 munity of West African States (ECOWAS) countries
7 and remain engaged in Sierra Leone until a com-
8 prehensive settlement of the conflict is achieved;

9 (8) calls upon the United States to provide in-
10 creased, appropriate logistical and political support
11 for ECOMOG; and

12 (9) calls upon the United States to provide in-
13 creased, appropriate logistical and political support
14 for Ghana and Mali, countries that participate in
15 ECOMOG.

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