

104TH CONGRESS
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H. CON. RES. 136

Expressing the sense of the Congress concerning resolution of the conflict between the Government of Turkey and Kurdish militants.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 25, 1996

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. HOYER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress concerning resolution of the conflict between the Government of Turkey and Kurdish militants.

Whereas armed conflict has existed in southeastern Turkey since 1984, and the entire region has been placed under a state of emergency since 1987;

Whereas the human toll of this conflict has been great, with the loss of more than 20,000 lives, the displacement of more than 3,000,000 civilians, and the destruction of more than 2,650 Kurdish villages;

Whereas free expression in Turkey is restricted by laws which criminalize nonviolent expression, resulting in the incarceration of journalists, writers, academics, human rights activists, and others as political prisoners;

Whereas in the past 2 years, 13 Kurdish members of Turkey's parliament have been removed from office, jailed, or exiled for expressing political opinions or having alleged contacts with the illegal Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK);

Whereas Kurdish citizens of Turkey have been denied certain basic political and civil rights such as the right to full and free participation in political life, the right to be educated in their mother language, and the right to freely write and publish materials in the Kurdish language;

Whereas the conflict between Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish armed forces has spilled over Turkey's borders and threatens the stability of the region;

Whereas the escalating conflict poses grave threats to economic stability and the existing political order and prevents realization of full-fledged democracy;

Whereas international and local humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, have been denied access to southeastern Turkey;

Whereas terrorism poses a grave threat to human rights and violates international law;

Whereas Turkey's leaders have made commitments to building a democratic society and have made significant progress in realizing this goal;

Whereas the Government of Turkey has acceded to upholding international human rights agreements, including the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, and the Helsinki Final Act;

Whereas Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Co-

operation in Europe, is an important strategic and economic partner of the United States;

Whereas long-term strategic and economic interests of the United States are jeopardized by the continuing conflict in Turkey;

Whereas after 11 years, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrilla leaders have offered to lay down their weapons;

Whereas a military solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey is not possible, and only a nonviolent political solution can bring peace, stability, full democracy, and prosperity to Turkey; and

Whereas such a solution must be sought and implemented within the framework of the territorial unity of the Republic of Turkey: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) the Government of Turkey should immediately
4 release all political prisoners and lift restrictions
5 on free expression and thereby enable all Turkish
6 citizens, including those of Kurdish origin, to
7 enjoy the political and cultural rights of peoples in
8 all democratic countries;

9 (2) the President should take every opportunity
10 to encourage the Government of Turkey to initiate
11 steps to end the armed confrontation in that country;
12 try;

13 (3) the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) should
14 declare a cease-fire and restate support for resolu-

1 tion of the conflict through democratic means and
2 within the framework of the territorial unity of the
3 Republic of Turkey;

4 (4) the Government of Turkey should declare a
5 cease-fire and reaffirm a foundation upon which its
6 Republic is based: “Peace at home. Peace in the
7 world”;

8 (5) upon cessation of hostilities, the Inter-
9 national Committee of the Red Cross and other ap-
10 propriate humanitarian and monitoring organiza-
11 tions should be given access to southeastern Turkey;

12 (6) the Government of Turkey should take
13 steps to further reduce the potential for future con-
14 frontation, including—

15 (A) allowing all political parties committed
16 to nonviolence to participate in Turkish political
17 life;

18 (B) repealing the state of emergency in
19 southeastern Turkey;

20 (C) dismantling the paramilitary “village
21 guard” system;

22 (D) lifting all constraints on the dissemi-
23 nation in the Kurdish language of television
24 and radio broadcasts, print, music, and other
25 media;

1 (E) allowing schools to offer instruction in
2 the Kurdish language; and

3 (F) establishing consultative mechanisms
4 to defuse sources of conflict and propose strate-
5 gies to resolve current crisis in southeastern
6 Turkey; and

7 (7) the President should support providing
8 technical assistance to carry out paragraphs (1)
9 through (6).

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