

H.Res. 726 – Calling on the President of the United States and the international community to take immediate steps to respond to and prevent acts of rape and sexual violence against women and girls in Darfur, Sudan, eastern Chad and the Central African Republic

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 726 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) on October 10, 2007. The Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules for the bill, as amended, by unanimous consent on October 23, 2007.

H.Res. 726 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House of Representatives on October 29, 2007.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 726 calls upon the President of the United States to develop within the United States Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) a Women and Girls of Darfur Initiative to improve assistance to victims and potential victims of rape and sexual violence in Darfur, Sudan, eastern Chad and the Central African Republic by:

- Offering specialized grants to non-governmental organizations, operating within Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugee camps in Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic that can provide all necessary comprehensive and quality health care services and medical supplies, psychological and social counseling, and legal advice to Darfuri victims of rape and sexual violence;
- Providing treatment for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including antiretroviral drugs to prevent HIV infections, and specialized care for rape victims already infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases;
- Meeting the psychological, social and educational needs of victimized women, girls, children born as a result of rape, their family and the community in order to limit the stigmatization associated with rape; and,
- Providing financial, technical and other forms of assistance to support women's peace initiatives.

The bill calls upon the Secretary General of the United Nations, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the African Union, the European Union, the Arab League and other nations to immediately take steps to:

- Ensure that a fully funded and fully equipped United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is deployed to Darfur, Sudan;
- Mandate that UNAMID employ all necessary measures to protect women and girls from acts of rape and sexual violence both outside and within Darfuri refugee and IDP camps;
- Provide sufficient resources and training to UNAMID troops and police to ensure a capability to properly respond to acts of rape and sexual violence;
- Provide for firewood patrols and other safeguarding measures to protect women and girls leaving refugee and IDP camps; and,
- Include an adequate number of female troops and police in UNAMID to properly manage incidents of rape and sexual violence.

H.Res. 726 calls on the United Nations Security Council to immediately:

- Find the Government of Sudan in noncompliance with Security Council Resolution 1325;
- Call on the Government of Sudan to provide full legal protections to victims of rape and sexual violence and to bring to justice individuals responsible for such crimes; and,
- Adopt under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter a Security Council Resolution calling on the Government of Sudan to respect all related Security Council Resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 1593, enforce the arrest warrants for Ahmad Muhammad Harun and Ali Muhammad Al Abd-Al-Raham, and further recognize the systematic rape of women and girls in Darfur as crimes against humanity and war crimes.

BACKGROUND

On January 25, 2005, the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, in a report to the United Nations Secretary General, reported numerous cases of mass rape throughout Darfur including an incident in which a large number of Janjaweed attacked a boarding school, and raped as many as 110 girls.

On March 8, 2005, Doctors Without Borders reported that between October 2004 and the first half of February 2005, doctors from the organization treated almost 500 rape victims in numerous locations in South and West Darfur. On March 9, 2007, members of the

United Nations High-Level Mission on the situation of human rights in Darfur reported that 'rape and sexual assault have been widespread and systematic, terrorizing women and breaking down families and communities' and that 'women are also attacked in and around refugee camps in eastern Chad.'

On April 27, 2007, the International Criminal Court, acting under the authority provided in Security Council Resolution 1593, issued arrest warrants for Sudan's Humanitarian Affairs Minister Ahmad Muhammad Harun and Janjaweed Colonel Ali Muhammad Al Abd-Al-Raham seeking their arrest for 51 counts including 6 counts involving rape.

On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Security Council Resolution 1325, calling on all parties to an armed conflict to take, 'special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse.' The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which entered into force on July 1, 2002, states that rape and 'any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' may constitute both 'crimes against humanity' and 'war crimes.'

On August 20, 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported on attacks, abductions and systematic rapes of women by the Sudanese armed forces and associated militias occurring in Darfur, as well as the resulting pregnancies, 'grave health risks,' and 'psychological trauma,' and declared that these acts may constitute war crimes.

On July 31, 2007, the United Nations Security Council adopted Security Council Resolution 1769 authorizing the deployment of a United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force (UNAMID) to Darfur and expressing strong concern about 'on-going attacks on the civilian population and humanitarian workers and continued and widespread sexual violence' while 'emphasizing the need to bring to justice the perpetrators of such crimes.'

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) did not have a cost estimate available at the time of publication.

STAFF CONTACT

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