

Public Law 98-447
98th Congress

Joint Resolution

Regarding the implementation of the policy of the United States Government in opposition to the practice of torture by any foreign government.

Oct. 4, 1984
[H.J. Res. 605]

Whereas international human rights organizations have investigated and reported on the use of torture in many countries throughout the world;

Whereas the Department of State in its annual country reports on human rights practices has reported that torture is all too frequent in many countries of the world;

Whereas torture knows no ideological boundaries and is practiced in countries in every region of the world;

Whereas torture is absolutely prohibited by international legal standards;

Whereas in those countries where torture is practiced systematically, it is possible to identify laws, institutions, and other forms of political organization that contribute to the practice and allow its continuation;

Whereas legal, medical, religious, and other groups seeking to combat torture emphasize that access to detainees, the civil and criminal prosecution of torturers, and the rehabilitation of victims of torture are critical steps in reducing the practice and effects of torture;

Whereas the United States Government has supported the work of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in developing the draft Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which is intended to reduce the practice of torture and lead to its eventual abolition, and the United States Government is supportive of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture; and

Whereas the good will of the peoples of the world toward the United States can be increased when the United States distances itself from the practice of torture by governments friendly to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress reaffirms that it is the continuing policy of the United States Government to oppose the practice of torture by foreign governments through public and private diplomacy and, when necessary and appropriate, through the enactment and vigorous implementation of laws intended to reinforce United States policies with respect to torture. The United States Government opposes acts of torture wherever they occur, without regard to ideological or regional considerations, and will make every effort to work cooperatively with other governments and with nongovernmental organizations to combat the practice of torture worldwide.

SEC. 2. (a) The President is requested—

Human rights.
Law
enforcement.
22 USC 2656
note.

22 USC 2656
note.

(1) to instruct the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations to continue to raise the issue of torture practiced by governments; and

(2) to continue to involve the United States Government in the formulation of international standards and effective implementing mechanisms, particularly the draft Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

(b) In order to implement the policy expressed in the first section of this resolution, the Secretary of State is requested to issue formal instructions to each United States chief of mission regarding United States policy with respect to torture, including—

(1) instructions—

(A) to examine allegations of the practice of torture, particularly allegations concerning the existence of secret detention, extended incommunicado detention, and restrictions on access by family members, lawyers, and independent medical personnel to detainees; and

(B) to forward such information as may be gathered, including information regarding any efforts made by the host government to reduce and eliminate the practice of torture, to the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs for analysis in preparing the Department's annual country reports on human rights practices;

(2) in the case of a chief of mission assigned to a country where torture is regularly practiced, instructions to report on a periodic basis as circumstances require to the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs regarding efforts made by the respective United States diplomatic mission to implement United States policy with respect to combating torture;

(3) instructions to meet with indigenous human rights monitoring groups knowledgeable about the practice of torture for the purpose of gathering information about such practice; and

(4) instructions to express concern in individual cases of torture brought to the attention of a United States diplomatic mission including, whenever feasible, sending United States observers to trials when there is reason to believe that torture has been used against the accused.

(c) The Secretary of Commerce should continue to enforce vigorously the current restrictions on the export of crime control equipment pursuant to the Export Administration Act of 1979.

Exports.

50 USC app.
2401 note.

(d) The heads of the appropriate departments of the United States Government that furnish military and law enforcement training to foreign personnel, particularly personnel from countries where the practice of torture has been a documented concern, shall include in such training, when relevant, instruction regarding international human rights standards and the policy of the United States with respect to torture.

Approved October 4, 1984.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 605 (S.J. Res. 320):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 130 (1984):

Sept. 11, considered and passed House.

Sept. 21, considered and passed Senate.