

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 223

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the ongoing conflict in Syria and the urgent need for the Syrian Opposition Coalition and local coordinating committees in Syria to assume the responsibilities of governance including the establishment of institutions of transitional justice, and to guarantee the rights of all Syria's people, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2013

Mr. MORAN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the ongoing conflict in Syria and the urgent need for the Syrian Opposition Coalition and local coordinating committees in Syria to assume the responsibilities of governance including the establishment of institutions of transitional justice, and to guarantee the rights of all Syria's people, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation.

Whereas the civil war in Syria, which exploded when the dictatorial regime of Bashar al Assad violently suppressed peaceful demonstrations by Syria's citizens, has killed more than 70,000 Syrians, created as many as 4,000,000 internally displaced, and driven some 1,200,000 to seek

refuge in neighboring countries, mobilizing an international response encompassing pledges of assistance totaling over \$1,000,000,000;

Whereas the 40-year history of undemocratic, repressive leadership under the regime of Bashar al Assad and his father Hafez al Assad has eroded civil society, debilitated the capacity for self government, and undermined confidence in the rule of law in Syria;

Whereas the Syrian opposition, though lacking comprehensive and coordinated assistance from the international community, and suffering constant attacks by the Assad regime, has succeeded in establishing effective self-government in significant sections of the country and is developing a capacity to exercise responsible authority and deliver essential services;

Whereas the United States Government recognizes the Syrian Opposition Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and is assisting the Council and its affiliated local coordinating bodies to establish structures of governance, including mechanisms for the provision of security and justice;

Whereas the Syrian population is about 70 percent Sunni and also includes large minorities of Alawites and Christians (including Greek Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, and Eastern Rite Catholics), as well as smaller numbers of Shia (including Ismailis), Druze, Ezidi, Mandaean, and Jewish communities with longstanding ancient and indigenous ties to the area;

Whereas according to the February 5, 2013, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the

Syrian Arab Republic, the conflict is becoming increasingly sectarian;

Whereas the Syrian Government has sought to exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions by employing paramilitary forces, known as shabiha, to terrorize communities suspected of sympathizing with the opposition, and has thus sown the seeds of unbridled sectarian conflict;

Whereas elements of the opposition have reportedly engaged in isolated instances of attacks on religious shrines in areas of mixed ethnicity, which if they become more widespread jeopardize a transition to a post-conflict, democratic, and pluralistic Syria; and

Whereas members of the international community, notably Iran, Russia, and China, have undermined international consensus for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, stymied efforts to halt the Syrian Government's atrocities, maintained military support for Bashar al Assad's onslaught against civilians, or blocked action at the United Nations Security Council: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on the Syrian Opposition Coalition to
3 publicly outline a detailed vision of inclusion for all
4 of Syria's people, including a guarantee of full citi-
5 zenship and equality under the law;

6 (2) calls on the Obama Administration, in close
7 cooperation with international and regional partners,
8 to continue to support the Syrian Opposition Coali-
9 tion as it develops mechanisms of transitional justice
10 guaranteeing the rights of all citizens under the law,

1 and to support the Syrian Opposition Coalition as it
2 forms an inclusive and democratic provisional gov-
3 ernment; and

4 (3) urges all parties in the conflict to respect
5 international humanitarian law, protect minorities,
6 preserve minority cultural and religious sites, and
7 hold accountable those who violate these norms.

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