

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 238

Recognizing the threat to international security and basic human dignity posed by the catastrophic decline of economic, humanitarian, and human rights conditions in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 12, 2009

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. McCOTTER, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. INGLIS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. WOLF) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the threat to international security and basic human dignity posed by the catastrophic decline of economic, humanitarian, and human rights conditions in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Whereas the undemocratic practices and failed economic policies of the regime of Robert Mugabe have contributed directly to the collapse of the Republic of Zimbabwe's economy, public health care, and education systems, and other basic social services;

Whereas water treatment and delivery have dramatically declined since the government nationalized the municipal water authorities in 2006, and many other basic social services, such as trash collection, have effectively ceased

in urban areas, posing significant health risks due to poor sanitation;

Whereas, with the unemployment rate at 94 percent and with food and fuel in short supply, Zimbabweans now contend with widespread malnutrition rates and outbreaks of infectious diseases;

Whereas according to the World Food Program, almost three quarters of the population, nearly 7,000,000 people, will require emergency food aid in the coming months;

Whereas, in a country that was once heralded as the breadbasket of Africa, a higher percentage of its citizens now rely on food aid than in any other country in the world;

Whereas despite the threat of mass starvation throughout the country, human rights groups consistently have documented the Mugabe regime's use of food as a weapon against the population, including the deliberate diversion of United States food assistance from those in need to feed political supporters;

Whereas, with limited access to food, health care, clean water and basic sanitation, life expectancy in Zimbabwe has fallen from 62 years in 1990 to just 34 years today;

Whereas as a result of the political and economic crisis, and subsequent flight of trained health professionals, public hospitals and clinics throughout the country have been forced to close their doors, leaving most Zimbabweans with little to no access to health care;

Whereas Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world;

Whereas HIV clinics in Zimbabwe increasingly have had limited-to-no access to test kits, blood sample kits, and drugs to treat opportunistic infections, and high mal-

nutrition rates have rendered many suffering from AIDS unable to take the necessary antiretroviral medications;

Whereas, as a direct result of the collapse of Zimbabwe's health and sanitation services, the country is in the middle of a nationwide cholera epidemic, with over 89,000 cases reported and over 4,000 dead;

Whereas, although the cholera outbreak reportedly began in August 2008, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Welfare did not declare a national emergency until December 2008;

Whereas the spreading of this disease was preventable and has since become a regional problem, with cases reported in all of Zimbabwe's neighboring countries; and

Whereas, in addition to cholera, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, Zimbabwe's crumbling health infrastructure is now also challenged by the emergence of several hundred human cases of anthrax, which were reportedly contracted as a result of starving Zimbabweans eating carrion, or dead and putrefying animals: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the threat to international secu-
3 rity and basic human dignity posed by the cata-
4 strophic decline of economic, humanitarian, and
5 human rights conditions in the Republic of
6 Zimbabwe;

7 (2) deplores the undemocratic practices and
8 failed policies of the regime of Robert Mugabe in
9 Zimbabwe, which have contributed directly to the

1 current crisis and brought untold suffering upon the
2 people of Zimbabwe;

3 (3) urges all responsible nations to join the
4 United States in providing urgently needed humani-
5 tarian relief to the Zimbabwean people, as necessary
6 and appropriate, with a particular emphasis on food,
7 clean water, and basic sanitation, in an effort to
8 ameliorate the ongoing humanitarian emergency and
9 confront the cholera epidemic which now poses a
10 transnational threat;

11 (4) demands that nongovernmental organiza-
12 tions engaged in humanitarian relief activities be
13 given sufficient space to operate; and

14 (5) demands that all political prisoners be re-
15 leased immediately and all spurious charges unjustly
16 leveled against them be dropped.

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