

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. CON. RES. 131

Calling on the Government of Saudi Arabia to cease supporting religious ideologies that promote hatred, intolerance, violence, and other abuses of internationally recognized human rights and urging the Government of the United States to promote religious freedom in Saudi Arabia.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 22, 2004

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Calling on the Government of Saudi Arabia to cease supporting religious ideologies that promote hatred, intolerance, violence, and other abuses of internationally recognized human rights and urging the Government of the United States to promote religious freedom in Saudi Arabia.

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003 concluded that human rights conditions remain poor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2003 concluded that religious freedom does not exist in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas in a report on Saudi Arabia published in May 2003, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has found that religious freedom does not exist in Saudi Arabia and has concluded that the Government of Saudi Arabia forcefully limits the public practice or expression of religion to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia severely restricts non-Wahhabi places of worship and denies non-Wahhabi clerics entry into the country;

Whereas security forces of the Government of Saudi Arabia continue to abuse and torture detainees and prisoners, including individuals held on account of their religious beliefs or practices;

Whereas religious law is interpreted and enforced in Saudi Arabia in a manner that affects every aspect of the lives of women in Saudi Arabia and results in serious violations of the human rights of such women;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia severely limits the freedom of movement of women and discriminates against women in education, employment, access to healthcare, marriage, and inheritance, among other things;

Whereas the religious police in Saudi Arabia, known as the “Mutawaa”, arbitrarily raid private homes and exercise broadly defined, vague powers, including the ability to use physical force and detain individuals without due process;

Whereas the Mutawaa intimidate, harass, abuse, and detain citizens and foreigners of both sexes;

Whereas, although the Government of Saudi Arabia has publicly affirmed that all residents of Saudi Arabia have the liberty to worship in private, for several years, and as recently as the fall of 2003, Shi'a clerics have been arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for expressing their religious views and some foreign workers have been arrested, detained, tortured, and deported for worshipping in private;

Whereas offensive and discriminatory language has been found in school textbooks sponsored by Saudi Arabia, sermons in mosques, and articles and commentary in the media about Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims;

Whereas in March 2004, the Government of Saudi Arabia detained and imprisoned several democratic reformers for criticizing the strict religious environment and the slow pace of reform in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia, which enjoys access to the United States media, refuses to allow the transmission of Radio Sawa, which promotes values of democracy, tolerance, and respect for human rights, in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia funds mosques, university chairs, Islamic study centers, and religious schools known as madrassas, all over the world, in at least 30 countries;

Whereas there have been several reports that some members of extremist and militant groups that promote intolerance, and in some cases violence, in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central and South Asia, and Africa have been trained as clerics in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas there have been a growing number of reports that funding originating in Saudi Arabia, including, in some cases, from individuals and organizations associated with the Government of Saudi Arabia and the royal family, has been used to finance religious schools and other activities that allegedly support religious intolerance, and, in some cases, violence, associated with certain Islamic militant and extremist organizations in several parts of the world;

Whereas in response to an April 2004 request of the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, the Comptroller General of the United States is undertaking a study to determine what the Government of the United States is doing to identify, monitor, and counter the influence of funding and support from Saudi Arabia for individuals, organizations, and institutions that advocate violence, intolerance, or religious extremism outside of Saudi Arabia; and

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has made public statements pledging political, economic, and educational reforms and the improved treatment of foreign residents, but it does not appear that such pledges are being carried out in Saudi Arabia: Now, therefore, be it

- 1        *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
- 2        *concurring), That Congress—*
- 3                (1) calls on the Government of the Kingdom of
- 4        Saudi Arabia—

(A) to stop providing funding for religious activities that promote hatred, violence, and human rights violations;

(B) to stop providing diplomatic status to Islamic clerics and educators teaching outside of Saudi Arabia who are not legally entitled to such status;

(C) to close any Islamic affairs section of an embassy of Saudi Arabia that has been responsible for propagating intolerance;

(D) to uphold the international commitments made by Saudi Arabia by respecting and protecting the human rights of citizens and foreigners of both sexes in Saudi Arabia;

(E) to ratify and fully comply with international human rights instruments and cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms, and, in particular, to sign, ratify, and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights done at New York December 16, 1966;

(F) to immediately implement promised judicial, political, economic, and educational reforms;

1 (G) to cease messages of hatred, intolerance,  
2  
3 Wahhabi Muslims and non-Muslim religious  
4 groups in the educational curricula and text-  
5 books, mosques, and media controlled by the  
6 Government of Saudi Arabia;

7 (H) to permit the establishment of inde-  
8 pendent, nongovernmental organizations to ad-  
9 vance human rights and to promote tolerance in  
10 Saudi Arabia, and to take action to create an  
11 independent human rights commission for the  
12 same purposes;

13 (I) to safeguard the freedom of non-Mus-  
14 lims, and of those Muslims who do not follow  
15 the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, to worship  
16 in private in Saudi Arabia;

17 (J) to permit non-Wahhabi places of wor-  
18 ship, such as churches, to function openly in  
19 special compounds or zones for foreigners or in  
20 unadorned buildings designated for this pur-  
21 pose; and

22 (K) to permit the broadcasting of Radio  
23 Sawa throughout Saudi Arabia; and

24 (2) urges the President—

7 (B) to designate Saudi Arabia a country of  
8 particular concern under section 402(b)(1)(A)  
9 of the International Religious Freedom Act of  
10 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1)(A)) for the system-  
11 atic, ongoing, and egregious violations of reli-  
12 gious freedom occurring in Saudi Arabia;

13 (C) to encourage the Government of Saudi  
14 Arabia to expeditiously implement the publicly  
15 stated plans for judicial, political, economic,  
16 and educational reform in Saudi Arabia;

17 (D) to encourage the Government of Saudi  
18 Arabia to cease any funding of efforts to propa-  
19 gate outside of Saudi Arabia any religious ide-  
20 ology that explicitly promotes hate, intolerance,  
21 and other human rights violations, including vi-  
22 olence;

23 (E) to request that the Government of  
24 Saudi Arabia provide an accounting of what  
25 kinds of support from Saudi Arabia go to reli-

1 gious schools, mosques, centers of learning, and  
2 other religious organizations globally, including  
3 in the United States, and the names of such in-  
4 stitutions;

5 (F) to develop and expand specific initia-  
6 tives and programs in Saudi Arabia to advance  
7 human rights, including religious freedom, the  
8 rights of women, and the rule of law, including,  
9 the Greater Middle East Initiative, and the De-  
10 partment of State's Middle East Partnership  
11 Initiative, Middle East Democracy Fund, and  
12 Human Rights and Democracy Fund, inter-  
13 national broadcasting, including overcoming ob-  
14 stacles to broadcasting Radio Sawa throughout  
15 Saudi Arabia, and other public diplomacy pro-  
16 grams; and

17 (G) to provide an unclassified report to  
18 Congress on the efforts of the Government of  
19 the United States to raise concerns regarding  
20 human rights, including religious freedom, with  
21 the Government of Saudi Arabia, and the re-  
22 sults of such efforts and the results of any ini-  
23 tiative or program described in subparagraph  
24 (F).

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