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(Original Signature of Member)

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. _____

Condemning the persecution of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. McCAUL of Texas (for himself and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Condemning the persecution of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority.

Whereas the foreign policy of the United States has been to create free and democratic institutions within the Palestinian territories;

Whereas democracy and freedom require strong independent institutions, a respect for the rule of law, and tolerance and protection for minorities and their rights;

Whereas the issue of human rights violations within the territories by the Palestinian Authority are treated by the



international community as secondary to and ignored for the sake of the peace process;

Whereas violent rhetoric intended to radicalize Palestinian Muslims against Israel, the United States, and the West has increased incitement toward Palestinian Christian communities;

Whereas the Palestinian Authority Constitution adopts the principles of Islamic law resulting in a judicial system that puts Christians at a disadvantage;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are forced to follow Islamic law in public or face arrest by Palestinian Authority police;

Whereas the basic human rights of Christians living under Palestinian Authority rule have been repeatedly violated since the Palestinian Authority took control over major population centers in the West Bank and Gaza;

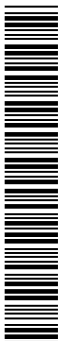
Whereas in 1994 Bethlehem was the most populous Christian town in Israel and the entire region;

Whereas Yasser Arafat gerrymandered the municipal boundaries of Bethlehem to include additional Muslim neighborhoods in order to influence the outcome of local elections through the creation of a Muslim majority;

Whereas Arafat and his supporters effectively cleansed the bureaucracy of Christians;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are denied jobs in state-run organizations because of their religious beliefs;

Whereas Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Authority security officers demand that Christian-owned shops pay an extortion fee or close down operations;



Whereas Palestinian Christians are attacked verbally and physically for discouraging their children from participating in suicide bombings;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are accused of being Israeli and American collaborators and are interrogated and imprisoned without reason;

Whereas Palestinian Christians whose human rights are violated by Muslims cannot go the Palestinian police out of fear that they will be accused, threatened, or detained;

Whereas Christians constitute less than one-fifth of Bethlehem's population;

Whereas, since the Palestinian Authority took control over the Palestinian people, increased violence that is targeted at Palestinian Christians has led to mass emigration from Palestinian territories;

Whereas many Christians leave out of fear of greater persecution under a future Palestinian state;

Whereas internationally-recognized holy sites and cemeteries are vandalized and desecrated by the Palestinian Authority, Muslim extremists, and criminals without consequence;

Whereas Palestinian police do not respond to harassment complaints made by Palestinian Christians;

Whereas the knowledge that violence toward Christians will not likely be punished has led to a significant increase in pervasive sexual harassment and rape;

Whereas, according to international law, rape is defined as a crime against humanity when the victim is targeted for adherence to a particular religion;



Whereas the United States Department of State has consistently failed to analyze in detail the treatment of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and its annual Report on International Religious Freedom;

Whereas the fear of persecution and the lack of reported harassment cases distorts the human rights record of the Palestinian Authority, thereby misinforming Congress and the American public;

Whereas this information should have been available to Members of Congress to consider when deciding the appropriate relationship toward the Palestinian Authority, including the appropriate level of assistance to be provided for the Palestinian Authority; and

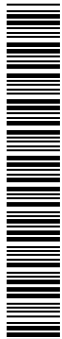
Whereas the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 calls on the President to place sanctions on governments that perpetrate or allow violations of religious freedoms against their citizens;

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) it is the sense of the House of Representa-
3 tives that—

4 (A) it should be the policy of the United
5 States to promote truly free and democratic
6 Palestinian institutions with a respect for the
7 rule of law and tolerance and protection for all
8 minorities and their rights; and

9 (B) in order to receive assistance from the
10 United States, the institutional protection of re-



1 religious minorities should be a prerequisite for
2 any Palestinian government; and

3 (2) the House of Representatives—

4 (A) urges the President and Secretary of
5 State to address the condition of minorities
6 under Palestinian Authority rule in order to
7 save from destruction the oldest Christian com-
8 munity in the world;

9 (B) urges the Department of State in its
10 annual Country Reports on Human Rights
11 Practices and Report on International Religious
12 Freedom to investigate and report on the extent
13 of human rights violations by the Palestinian
14 Authority; and

15 (C) encourages democracies and world
16 leaders to prioritize the human rights condition
17 of Christian communities and other religious
18 minorities in the Palestinian territories and
19 other locations throughout the world where
20 such communities and minorities are threat-
21 ened.

