

Calendar No. _____

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 16

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 25, 2021

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

_____ (legislative day, _____), _____

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble

[Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic]

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort.

~~Whereas, after the uprising against Saddam Hussein in March 1991, Hussein turned tanks and helicopter gunships on the defenseless citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan;~~

~~Whereas, overwhelmed by the superior firepower of the Hussein regime, and having already experienced the genocidal death of approximately 200,000 Iraqi Kurds, the wanton destruction of approximately 4,500 Iraqi Kurdish vil-~~

lages, and deadly chemical bombardment, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurdish men, women, and children fled to the northern and eastern borders of Iraq, fearing that the regime would use poison gas against them, as during the Anfal campaign and in Halabja only 3 years before;

Whereas, at one point in the early days of the 1991 refugee crisis, the daily death toll of fleeing Iraqi Kurds exceeded 1,000, with victims having no time to gather any possessions or winter protective gear and thus succumbing to exposure, malnutrition, and disease;

Whereas the United States, in response to the unfolding human catastrophe, led what became the largest humanitarian operation of its kind ever, Operation Provide Comfort, delivering humanitarian relief and enforcing a no-fly zone;

Whereas Operation Provide Comfort saved the lives of countless thousands of Iraqi Kurds from near certain death on the freezing and rugged border mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan;

Whereas, to this day, Iraqi Kurds credit United States-led Operation Provide Comfort, particularly the no-fly zone that protected the Iraqi Kurdish people until 2003, for helping support security and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan;

Whereas Iraqi Kurdistan has long served as a safe haven for people fleeing conflict and religious and political persecution; and

Whereas the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Kurdish Peshmerga remain steadfast partners of the United States in the fight against extremism and terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Whereas, in March 1991, Saddam Hussein responded to an uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan with a violent military campaign that included the use of chemical weapons against the citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan, most of whom were unarmed civilians;

Whereas Saddam Hussein's forces killed approximately 200,000 Iraqi Kurds, destroyed approximately 4,500 Iraqi Kurdish villages, and displaced hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurds who fled to the northern and eastern borders of Iraq, fearing that the regime would use chemical weapons against them, as it did during Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign, including the Halabja chemical weapon attack only 3 years before;

Whereas, at one point in the early days of the 1991 crisis, the daily death toll of fleeing Iraqi Kurds exceeded 1,000, with victims succumbing to exposure, malnutrition, and disease;

Whereas, the United States, in response to the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, led Operation Provide Comfort, delivering humanitarian relief and enforcing a no-fly zone, saving the lives of countless thousands of Iraqi Kurds from near certain death on the freezing and rugged border mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan;

Whereas Operation Provide Comfort provided security and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan; and

Whereas the Kurdistan regional government and the Kurdish Peshmerga remain steadfast partners of the United States in the fight against extremism and terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

1 (1) commemorates the 30th anniversary of Op-
2 eration Provide Comfort;

3 (2) recognizes and honors the heroic soldiers,
4 diplomats, political leaders, and coalition partners of
5 the United States who implemented Operation Pro-
6 vide Comfort;

7 (3) recognizes and honors the bravery of the
8 nearly 2,000,000 Iraqi Kurdish women, children,
9 and men who struggled to survive starvation and ex-
10 posure, welcomed the aid that came, and embraced
11 the opportunity for a new life;

12 (4) encourages Iraqi Kurdish leaders to con-
13 tinue to uphold the values of democracy, human
14 rights, and freedom that have made Iraqi Kurdistan
15 an oasis in a troubled region; and

16 (5) reaffirms—

17 (A) the strong partnership between the
18 United States and the Iraqi Kurds, which exists
19 in complementarity with the United States
20 strong partnership with the Government of
21 Iraq; and

22 (B) the enduring respect and support of
23 Congress for Iraqi Kurdish friends of the
24 United States who courageously stand with the

1 United States in shared opposition to extre-
2 mism and terrorism.

3 *That Congress—*

4 *(1) commemorates the 30th anniversary of Oper-*
5 *ation Provide Comfort;*

6 *(2) recognizes and honors the soldiers, diplomats,*
7 *political leaders, and coalition partners of the United*
8 *States who implemented Operation Provide Comfort;*

9 *(3) recognizes and honors the nearly 2,000,000*
10 *Iraqis, mostly Kurds, who were displaced by the Hus-*
11 *sein regime and who survived starvation and expo-*
12 *sure, and for whom Operation Provide Comfort of-*
13 *fered assistance, security, and a chance for a new life;*

14 *(4) encourages Iraqi Kurdish leaders to continue*
15 *to uphold the values of democracy, human rights, and*
16 *freedom; and*

17 *(5) reaffirms—*

18 *(A) the strong partnership between the*
19 *United States and the Iraqi Kurds, which exists*
20 *in complementarity with the United States*
21 *strong partnership with the Government of Iraq;*
22 *and*

23 *(B) the enduring respect and support of*
24 *Congress for Iraqi Kurds, who continue to stand*

1 *with the United States in shared opposition to*
2 *extremism and terrorism.*