

108th Congress: 2003-2004

Iraq/Afghanistan

- Public Law 108-106 (H.R. 3289)
- H.Con.Res. 32 - Central Asia/ Human Rights

China

- H.Con.Res. 304 - Oppression by Chinese Government of the Falun Gong
- H.Res.530 - U.N. Resolution on Human Rights Abuses in China

Europe

- H.R. 4230 - Global Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2004
- S.2292 - Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004
- S.Con.Res.110 - OSCE/Anti-Semitism
- H.Res.616 - Anti-Semitism in the European Union

France

- H.Res.528 - Ban on Religious Articles and Symbols

Iraq

- H.Con.Res.342 - Commending Iraqi Women
- H.Res.545 - Transitional Administrative Law

Laos

- H.Res.402 - Religious Liberty in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

North Korea

- H.Res.109 - North Korea/ UNCHR resolution

Russia

- H.R. 1224 - Russia/Normal Trade Relations

Saudi Arabia

- H.Con.Res. 244 - Saudi Arabia/Religious Freedom
- H.Con.Res. 242 - Saudi Arabia/Education Curriculum
- S.Con.Res. 14 - Saudi Arabia/ Curriculum

Vietnam

- H.R. 1019 - Vietnam Freedom of Information Act of 2003
- H.R. 1587 - Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2003
To promote freedom and democracy in Vietnam
- H.Res.427 - Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam
- H.Con.Res. 378 - Father Ly Release
- S.Res.311 - Father Ly Release

Miscellaneous

- H.Res. 423 - Designating Oct. 27, 2003 as "International Religious Freedom Day"
- S.Res.251 - Designating Oct. 27, 2003 as "International Religious Freedom Day"

Iraq/Afghanistan

Iraq and Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations

Includes a proviso which reads: "Provided further, That the Coalition Provisional Authority shall work, in conjunction with relevant Iraqi officials, to ensure that a new Iraqi constitution preserves full rights to religious freedom." The law also requires monthly reports until 2006 to include, among other information, progress on the efforts by Iraqi officials to preserve religious freedom and tolerance of all faiths.

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ106.108.pdf

Central Asia

H.Con.Res. 32 - Central Asia/ Human Rights

Expressing the Sense of Congress with respect with human rights in Central Asia.

Urges

that the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense should follow the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom by designating Turkmenistan a 'Country of Particular Concern' under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and by making clear that Uzbekistan risks designation if conditions in that country do not improve.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00032:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00032)

China

H.Con.Res. 304 - Oppression by Chinese Government of the Falun Gong

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding oppression by the Government of the People's Republic of China of Falun Gong in the United States and in China.

Resolution calls upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to end harassment, detention, imprisonment and other abuses of individuals exercising legitimate right of freedom of religion and to demonstrate a willingness to abide by international standards of freedom of belief. The resolution calls upon the President, in accordance with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to take various actions to dissuade the Chinese Government from stifling religious freedom, including formal protest to the Chinese Foreign Ministry in response to the repeated violations by the Chinese Government of basic human rights protected in international covenants to which the People's Republic of China is a signatory.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00304:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00304)

H.Res.530 - U.N. Resolution on Human Rights Abuses in China

Urging the appropriate representative of the United States to the 60th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to introduce a resolution calling upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its human rights violations in China.

The resolution calls upon the U.S. to offer a resolution at the 60th session of the U.N. Human Rights Conference to urge China end its human rights abuses. The resolution calls upon the Chinese government to stop persecution of all religious practitioners, safeguard fundamental human rights, release religious and other prisoners and to allow the USCIRF and others to visit China without restrictions. The resolution makes mention of the forced cancellations of two USCIRF trips to China due to unacceptable conditions placed on the Commission by the Chinese."

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00530:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00530)

Europe

H.R. 4230 - Global Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2004

To authorize the establishment within the Department of State of an Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, to require inclusion in annual Department of State reports of information concerning acts of anti-Semitism around the world, and for other purposes.

Includes

a recommendation consistent with the USCIRF's recommendations on anti-Semitism: ...the United States should continue to support efforts to combat anti-Semitism worldwide through bilateral relationships and interaction with international organizations such as OSCE...

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.04230:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.04230)

S.2292 - Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004

To require a report on acts of anti-Semitism around the world.

Consistent

with the USCIRF's recommendations on anti-Semitism: Calls upon the U.S. to continue to strongly support efforts to combat anti-Semitism worldwide through bilateral relationships and interaction with international organizations such as the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe].

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.02292:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.02292)

S.Con.Res.110 - OSCE/Anti-Semitism

Expressing the sense of Congress in support of the ongoing work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in combating anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, intolerance, and related violence.

Consistent with USCIRF recommendations on collecting and analyzing data on anti-Semitism: ...urges participating states [of the OSCE] to forward information/data to ODIHR for analysis...

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.con.res.00110:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.con.res.00110)

H.Res.616 - Anti-Semitism in the European Union

Condemning the recent increase in acts of anti-Semitism in member countries of the European Union, and for other purposes.

Consistent with USCIRF recommendations on addressing anti-Semitism, the resolution urges the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to: ...establish within the OSCE a framework to monitor anti-Semitic activities...

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00616:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00616)

France

H.Res.528 - Ban on Religious Articles and Symbols

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that France should modify or abandon its ban on religious articles and symbols in state schools and respect the freedom of all to practice their religious faith without state interference.

Joins the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in recommending that the U.S. urge the Government of France to reassess this initiative in light of its international obligations to ensure that every person in France is guaranteed the freedom to manifest his or her religion or belief in public.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00528:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00528)

Iraq

H.Con.Res.342 - Commending Iraqi Women

Commending Iraqi women for their participation in Iraqi government and civil society, encouraging the inclusion of Iraqi women in the political and economic life of Iraq, and advocating the protection of Iraqi women's human rights in the Iraqi Constitution.

Urges the protection of the human rights of all Iraqis, particularly women, in the Iraqi Constitution.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00342:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00342)

H.Res.545 - Transitional Administrative Law

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a specific statement should be included in the Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law guaranteeing the people of Iraq the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and for other purposes.

Expresses the need for the Transitional Administration Law (TAL) to include a specific statement guaranteeing the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion for every Iraqi; that the TAL include the principles of democracy, rule of law, pluralism; and that the TAL include an explicit commitment that Iraq will respect and ensure the rights guaranteed by international treaties to which Iraq is a party.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00545:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00545)

Laos

H.Res.402 - Religious Liberty in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the urgent need for freedom, democratic reform, and international monitoring of elections, human rights, and religious liberty in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Cites

USCIRF's 2003 Laos report recommending Laos be designated a "country of particular concern". Among other recommendations, H Res 402 urges the government of Lao, the United Nations, the European Union, and the Association of South East Asian Nations to: "a) work to provide unrestricted access to Laos, including special closed military zones and closed provinces, to USCIRF and others; b) work to gain release to prisoners of conscience, and those jailed for their religious beliefs or ethnicity; and c) work to implement the recommendations of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom with respect to promoting religious freedom in Laos."

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00402:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00402)

North Korea

H.Res.109 - North Korea/ UNCHR resolution

Urging passage of a resolution addressing human rights abuses in North Korea at the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), and calling on the government of North Korea to respect and protect the human rights of its citizens.

Cites

the USCIRF's finding, "The North Korean state severely represses public

and private religious activities;" credits the USCIRF for highlighting that "North Korean officials have arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and sometimes executed citizens who were found to have ties with overseas Christian evangelical groups operating across the border in China, as well as those who have engaged in such unauthorized activities as public religious expression and persuasion;" finds that a group of Christians in a North Korean prison camp were tortured to death for not repudiating their faith in 1990 and that North Koreans seeking asylum face imprisonment, torture and sometimes death after being forcibly returned to North Korea by the Chinese government; urges the Secretary of State to introduce, and promote the passage of a resolution addressing human rights abuses in North Korea at the 59th Session of the UNCHR in Geneva.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00109:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00109)

Russia

H.R. 1224 - Russia/Normal Trade Relations

To authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment to the products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

Among other things, finds that Russia is developing a system of governance in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act, addressing issues related to its national and religious minorities (although problems still exist regarding the registration of religious groups, visa, and immigration requirements, and other laws that interfere with the activities of minority religious groups), has passed laws to protect religious minorities against discrimination and/or violence, including anti-Semitism, and continues to restitute religious property confiscated from religious minorities during the Soviet era; terminates the application of Jackson-Vanik to Russia by extending normal trade relations to Russian products; states that the United States should urge the Russian Federation to, among other things, ensure that its laws conform to OSCE standards, provide for free emigration of its citizens, safeguard religious liberty specifically ensuring that the registration of religious groups, visa and immigration requirements, and other laws do not interfere with the activities of minority religious groups, enhance and enforce Russian laws that exist to protect religious freedom, and expand the restitution of religious and communal properties; and states that the USCIRF Annual Report shall include an assessment of whether Russia is meeting OSCE standards.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01224:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01224)

Saudi Arabia

H.Con.Res. 244 - Saudi Arabia/Religious Freedom

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the Government of Saudi Arabia's lack of protection of internationally recognized human rights and the absence of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia.

The resolution calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to safeguard the freedom of non-Muslims, and of those Muslims who do not follow the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, to worship in private; and to permit non-Wahhabi places of worship, such as churches, to function openly in special compounds or zones for foreigners or in unadorned buildings designated for this purpose. Consistent with USCIRF's recommendations, urges the U.S. government to designate Saudi Arabia a 'country of particular concern' under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for its systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom; to develop and expand specific initiatives and programs in Saudi Arabia to advance human rights, including religious freedom, the rights of women, and the rule of law; and to report publicly to Congress on its efforts to raise concerns regarding human rights, including religious freedom, with the Government of Saudi Arabia, including the results of those efforts. Also states that the USCIRF concurs 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.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00244:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00244)

H.Con.Res. 242 - Saudi Arabia/Education Curriculum

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Congress calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to ensure that its review of its education curriculum is thorough, objective, and public; urges the Government of Saudi Arabia to reform its education curriculum in a manner that promotes tolerance, develops civil society, and encourages functionality in the global economy; and urges the Department of State and other appropriate Federal agencies to work closely with the

Government of Saudi Arabia on any efforts to address the issues related to education curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00242:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00242)

S.Con.Res. 14 - Saudi Arabia/ Curriculum

Expressing the Sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Finds

that the only curriculum permitted by the Saudi government is written, monitored, and taught by followers of Wahhabism and includes rote memorization of religious texts, and encourages extremist, anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views; resolves that Congress should support the Government of Saudi Arabia's review of its educational curriculum; requests that the United States address the issue at the 2003 session of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and monitor the progress of educational reform in Saudi Arabia.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.con.res.00014:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.con.res.00014)

Vietnam

H.R. 1019 - Vietnam Freedom of Information Act of 2003

To promote the freedom of information in Vietnam.

Finds

Vietnam has failed to meet its obligations under the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, continues to restrict the media, and is taking measures to prevent its citizens from accessing the Internet and obtaining political, religious, and economic information; states that the policy of the United States is to overcome jamming of RFA by the Government of Vietnam, and authorizes for Vietnam \$10 million for FY 2004 for 'broadcast capital improvements', \$4 million for each FY 2004 and 2005 for 'international broadcasting

operations', and over \$3 million for FY 2004 and 2005 to counter jamming of the Internet by the government of Vietnam.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01019:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01019)

H.R. 1587 - Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2003

To promote freedom and democracy in Vietnam

Among

other things, finds that the situation of human rights in Vietnam has remained poor since the United States' ratification of the BTA with Vietnam in 2001; finds that the government of Vietnam cracked down in 2002 on human rights activists, Buddhists, Protestants, and the Montagnards, must approve all religious activity, and systematically jams RFA broadcasts; finds that the USCIRF recommended in 2001 that Vietnam be designated a CPC; prohibits increases in all non-humanitarian U.S. assistance unless progress has been made by the Vietnamese government toward releasing political and religious prisoners, respecting religious freedom without government interference, returning the property of churches, opening access to the U.S. refugee program, and respecting the human rights of ethnic minorities, among other things; directs the President to instruct U.S. directors at the World Bank and IMF to oppose loans and assistance to Vietnam unless the government of Vietnam has made progress toward protecting religious freedom; promotes cultural exchanges between the United States and Vietnam; authorizes \$2 million for each FY 2004 and 2005 for NGOs and international organizations promoting human rights in Vietnam and \$10.2 million for FYs 2004 and 2005 for the Broadcasting Board of Governors to overcome RFA jamming; requires the Secretary of State to consult with the USCIRF before reporting to Congress six months after enactment and annually thereafter on Vietnam's progress toward meeting requirements of the Act.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01587:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.01587)

H.Res.427 - Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the courageous leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the urgent need for religious freedom and related human rights in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The resolution specifically references USCIRF's report of Vietnam and USCIRF's recommendation that Vietnam be designated a "country of particular concern." States that the House of Representatives "is committed to promoting religious freedom in Vietnam, and, in furtherance of this goal, urges the implementation of the recommendations of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom...."

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00427:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00427)

H.Con.Res. 378 - Father Ly Release

Calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, and for other purposes.

References Father

Ly's invitation to testify before the USCIRF but that he was denied permission by Vietnamese government to do so. He submitted written testimony on religious freedom conditions and shortly thereafter was placed under administrative detention. Calls for the immediate release of Father Ly, condemns violations of religious freedoms among other fundamental rights, and expresses the sense of Congress that the U.S. should continue to urge the Government of Vietnam to comply with internationally recognized standards for basic freedoms and human rights.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00378:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.con.res.00378)

S.Res.311 - Father Ly Release

A resolution calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly, and for other purposes.

See comments on H.Con.Res. 378

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.res.00311:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.res.00311)

Miscellaneous

H.Res. 423 - Designating Oct. 27, 2003 as "International Religious Freedom Day"

Recognizing the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and urging a renewed commitment to eliminating violations of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and protecting fundamental human rights.

Resolution

describes the importance of religious freedom as an absolute human right to all. Specifically references the creation of USCIRF under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00423:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.res.00423)

S.Res.251 - Designating Oct. 27, 2003 as "International Religious Freedom Day"

A resolution designating October 27, 2003, as "International Religious Freedom Day".

Resolution

describes the importance of religious freedom as an absolute human right to all. Specifically references the creation of USCIRF under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.res.00251:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.res.00251)