



H.RES. 1194 – Reaffirming the support of the House of Representatives for the legitimate, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1194 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) on May 14, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs where the Committee agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules.

H.Res. 1194 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on May 20, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1194 resolves that the House of Representatives honors:

- Reaffirms its strong support for the legitimate, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;
- Expresses its profound sympathy to the people of Lebanon, who have again been thrust unjustly, and against their will, into a conflict initiated by Hizballah;
- Offers its condolences to all those in Lebanon who have suffered displacement, injury, or death in their family, or among their loved ones, as a consequence of Hizballah's unjustifiable insurrection against the Government of Lebanon;
- Condemns--
 - Hizballah's illegitimate assault on the sovereign Government of Lebanon, which has led to the worst sectarian warfare in that country since the civil war from 1975 to 1990;
 - Hizballah for its unprovoked attacks against Lebanese leaders, citizens, and against Lebanese public and private institutions and for its illegal occupation of territory under the sovereignty of the Government of Lebanon; and
 - Syria and Iran for illegally transferring arms and providing other forms of military support to Hizballah, in clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, 1701, and 1747;
- Demands that Hizballah immediately cease its attacks and withdraw from all areas in Beirut and elsewhere in Lebanon that it has occupied since May 7, 2008, as a first step towards its total disarmament; and
- Urges—
 - The United States Government and the international community to immediately take all appropriate actions to support and strengthen the legitimate Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;



- The United Nations Security Council to—
 - Condemn Syria and Iran for their blatant violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701;
 - Condemn Iran for its violation of Chapter-VII-based United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747; and
 - As part of sanctions on Iran for violating Chapter-VII-based United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747, prohibit all air traffic between Iran and Lebanon and between Iran and Syria;
- Every country controlling possible transit routes from Iran to Lebanon to impose the strictest possible controls on the movement of Iranian vehicles, airplanes, and goods to ensure that Iran is not exploiting its land and airspace for the purpose of illegally transferring arms to Hizballah and other terrorist groups; and
- The European Union, in light of recent and earlier Hizballah actions, to designate Hizballah as a terrorist group and to treat it accordingly.

BACKGROUND

Political instability and violence continues to escalate in Lebanon. The country has been without a President since November 2007 because the Parliament is too divided to appoint a new one. The terrorist group Hizballah, which is part of the Development and Resistance Bloc that holds 15 out of 128 seats in the National Assembly, has refused to cooperate with the current government until its demands are met.

On May 7, 2008, Hizballah instigated riots, blocked roads, seized buildings, and organized marauding groups of gunmen who took control of part of Beirut, including some government institutions. During the uprising Hizballah attacked the homes of Future Party Leader Saad Hariri and Progressive Socialist Party Leader Walid Jumblatt. At least 80 people are reported dead as a result of the violence.

Condoleezza Rice condemned the May 7 attacks, arguing that "Hezbollah and its allies are killing and injuring fellow citizens, undermining the legitimate authority of the Lebanese government and the institutions of the Lebanese state." Secretary Rice also expressed "Our support for the legitimate Lebanese government, its democratic institutions, and its security services is unwavering. This support is a reflection of our unshakeable commitment to the Lebanese people and their hope for democratic change, economic prosperity, and confessional harmony."

STAFF CONTACT

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