



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 16-1013

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Windholz and Rosenthal, Arndt, Becker J., Becker K., Brown, Buck, Buckner, Carver, Conti, Coram, Court, Danielson, DelGrosso, Dore, Esgar, Everett, Fields, Foote, Garnett, Ginal, Hamner, Humphrey, Joshi, Kagan, Klingenschmitt, Kraft-Tharp, Landgraf, Lawrence, Lebsock, Lee, Leonard, Lentine, Lundeen, McCann, Melton, Mitsch Bush, Moreno, Navarro, Neville P., Nordberg, Pabon, Pettersen, Primavera, Priola, Rankin, Ransom, Roupe, Ryden, Saine, Salazar, Sias, Singer, Thurlow, Tyler, Van Winkle, Vigil, Willett, Williams, Wilson, Winter, Wist, Young, Hullinghorst;
also **SENATOR(S)** Lundberg, Aguilar, Baumgardner, Carroll, Cooke, Crowder, Donovan, Garcia, Grantham, Guzman, Heath, Hill, Hodge, Holbert, Jahn, Johnston, Kefalas, Kerr, Lambert, Marble, Martinez Humenik, Merrifield, Neville T., Roberts, Scheffel, Sonnenberg, Tate, Todd, Woods, Cadman.

**CONCERNING ATROCITIES AGAINST CHRISTIANS
AND OTHER ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES.**

WHEREAS, Those who commit or support atrocities against Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities, including Yezidis, Turkmen, Sabean-Mandeans, Kaka'e, Shi'a, and Kurds, and who target them specifically for ethnic or religious reasons, intend to exterminate or to force the migration or submission of anyone who does not share their views concerning religion; and

WHEREAS, Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities have been an integral part of the cultural fabric of the Middle East for millennia; and

WHEREAS, Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities have been murdered; subjugated; forced to emigrate; and have suffered grievous bodily and psychological harm, including sexual enslavement and abuse, inflicted in a deliberate and calculated manner in violation of the laws of their respective nations, the laws of war, laws and treaties forbidding crimes against humanity, and the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed in Paris on December 9, 1948 (the Convention); and

WHEREAS, These atrocities are undertaken with the specific intent to bring about the eradication and displacement of their communities and the destruction of their cultural heritage in violation of local laws, the laws of war, laws and treaties that punish crimes against humanity, and the Convention; and

WHEREAS, Local, national, and international laws and treaties, as well as the Convention, condemn murder, massacre, forced migration, extrajudicial punishment, kidnapping, slavery, human trafficking, torture, rape, and persecution of individuals based upon their religion, and these crimes shall be punished, whether they are committed by constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials, or private individuals; and

WHEREAS, Article I of the Convention and international and local laws confirm that genocide and crimes against humanity, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, are crimes that governmental authorities are obligated to prevent and to punish; and

WHEREAS, Article II of the Convention declares that "genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group"; and

WHEREAS, Article III of the Convention affirms that "the following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; [and] (e) Complicity in genocide"; and

WHEREAS, A March 13, 2015, report of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights prepared at the request of the Government of Iraq stated "[e]thnic and religious groups targeted by ISIL include Yezidis, Christians, Turkmen, Sabean-Mandeans, Kaka'e, Kurds and Shi'a" and that "[i]t is reasonable to conclude that some of the incidents [in Iraq in 2014–2015] ... may constitute genocide"; and

WHEREAS, Attacks on Yezidis included the mass killing of men and boys and the enslavement and forcible transfer of women and children; and

WHEREAS, On July 10, 2015, Pope Francis, Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, declared that Middle Eastern Christians are facing genocide, a reality that must be "denounced", and that "[i]n this third world war, waged piecemeal, which we are now experiencing, a form of genocide is taking place, and it must end"; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventieth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

That we, the members of the General Assembly, find that:

(1) The atrocities committed against Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities who are targeted specifically for religious reasons constitute, and are hereby declared to be, crimes against humanity and genocide; and

(2) Each of the contracting parties to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed in Paris on December 9, 1948, and to other international agreements forbidding war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly the

governments of countries and their nationals who are in any way supporting these crimes, are reminded of their legal obligations under the Convention and those international agreements; and

(3) Every government and multinational body should call the atrocities being committed in the name of religion by their rightful names--"crimes against humanity", "war crimes", and "genocide"; and

(4) The United Nations and the United Nations Secretary-General should assert leadership by calling the atrocities being committed in these places by their rightful names--"war crimes", "crimes against humanity", and "genocide"; and

(5) The member states of the United Nations, with an urgent appeal to the Arab States that wish to uphold religious freedom, tolerance, and justice:

(A) Should join in this resolution;

(B) Should collaborate on measures to prevent further war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and

(C) Should collaborate on the establishment and operation of domestic, regional, and international tribunals to punish those responsible for the ongoing crimes; and

(6) The governments of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Lebanese Republic, and other countries, including Turkey, Greece, the United States of America, and the member states of the European Union, are commended for having sheltered and protected those fleeing the violence of ISIS (Daesh) and other extremists until they can safely return to their homes in Iraq and Syria; and

(7) All those who force the migration of religious communities from their ancestral homelands, where they have lived and practiced their faith in safety and stability for hundreds of years--including specifically the Nineveh Plain, a historic heartland of Christianity in Iraq, and Mount

Sinjar, the historic home of the Yezidis--should be tracked, sanctioned, arrested, prosecuted, and punished in accordance with the laws of the place where their crimes were committed and under applicable international criminal statutes and conventions.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to President Barack Obama; Vice President Joe Biden; Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, United States Senate; Harry Reid, Minority Leader, United States Senate; Paul Ryan, Speaker, United States House of Representatives; Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader, United States House of Representatives; Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives; Colorado's congressional delegation; the Syrian American Council; the African Community Center of Denver; Lutheran Family Services; the Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action; the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation; the St. Rafka Mission of Hope and Mercy; former Colorado State Senator Thomas J. Wiens; Peter Boyles; and Father Andre Y. Mahanna.

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