

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 598

Condemning actions by the Government of Syria that have hindered the investigation of the assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri conducted by the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC), expressing support for extending the UNIIC's investigative mandate, and stating concern about similar assassination attempts apparently aimed at destabilizing Lebanon's security and undermining Lebanon's sovereignty.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2005

Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. LANTOS, and Mr. ACKERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning actions by the Government of Syria that have hindered the investigation of the assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri conducted by the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC), expressing support for extending the UNIIC's investigative mandate, and stating concern about similar assassination attempts apparently aimed at destabilizing Lebanon's security and undermining Lebanon's sovereignty.

Whereas on September 2, 2004, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 was adopted by the Security

Council as a reaction to Syria's increased influence over Lebanese politics, reaffirming strict respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, and stipulating the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon and the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias;

Whereas on February 14, 2005, former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri and 22 others were killed in a terrorist bombing orchestrated by unidentified assailants;

Whereas on April 7, 2005, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1595, under which the Security Council decided to "establish an international independent investigation Commission [the UNIIIC] based in Lebanon to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of this terrorist act, including to help identify its perpetrators, sponsors, organizers and accomplices";

Whereas on October 19, 2005, the first report of the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC), headed by former German prosecutor Detlev Mehlis, found "there is converging evidence pointing at both Lebanese and Syrian involvement in this terrorist act";

Whereas the October 19, 2005, report also asserted that "[g]iven the infiltration of Lebanese institutions and society by the Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services working in tandem, it would be difficult to envisage a scenario whereby such a complex assassination plot could have been carried out without their knowledge";

Whereas on October 31, 2005, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1636, which expressed ex-

treme concern that “Syrian authorities have cooperated in form but not in substance” with the UNIIIC, that “several Syrian officials tried to mislead the investigation by giving false or inaccurate statements” and that “Syria’s continued lack of cooperation with the inquiry would constitute a serious violation of its obligations”;

Whereas on December 12, 2005, the second report of the UNIIIC noted that “steady progress” has been made in the Lebanese portion of the investigation that “remains to be matched” in the Syrian portion of the investigation and recommended an extension of the UNIIIC’s investigative mandate by a “minimum period of six months” since substantive lines of enquiry are far from being completed and “given the slow pace with which the Syrian authorities are beginning to discharge their commitments to the [Security] Council”;

Whereas Syria’s actions to hinder the UNIIIC’s investigative efforts include credible reports of the arrest and threatening of close relatives of at least one crucial witness, delay caused by procedural maneuvering, and the report of two witnesses that all Syrian intelligence documents concerning Lebanon have been burned;

Whereas since the assassination of Rafik Hariri, intimidation of the press in Lebanon has increased and a series of attacks and explosions in Lebanon have occurred, targeting political leaders and journalists who have advocated Lebanese sovereignty, including Samir Qassir, May Chidiac, and most recently on December 12, 2005, the assassination of Gebran Tuéni, a Member of the Lebanese Parliament and the general manager of the Lebanese daily an-Nahar, which has been a vital editorial voice opposing Syrian political control and influence in Lebanon; and

Whereas Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice on December 12, 2005, expressed outrage at the assassination of Gebran Tuéni and stated: “Syrian interference in Lebanon continues, and it must end completely. The United States will work with its partners on the Security Council and in the region to see that Security Council Resolutions 1595 and 1636 are fully implemented.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns the Government of Syria for hin-
3 dering and failing to cooperate fully in a timely and
4 substantive manner with the investigation of the as-
5 sassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon
6 Rafik Hariri conducted by the United Nations Inter-
7 national Independent Investigation Commission
8 (UNIIC);

9 (2) expresses support for extending the inves-
10 tigative mandate of the UNIIC for at a minimum
11 an additional six-month period as recommended by
12 the UNIIC in order to fully ascertain the responsi-
13 bility for the assassination of former Prime Minister
14 of Lebanon Rafik Hariri;

15 (3) states its concern that insecurity in Leb-
16 anon could have a destabilizing effect on the region
17 and harm the ability of the people of Lebanon to
18 strengthen democracy and economic prosperity in
19 their country;

1 (4) expresses its gratitude to—

2 (A) chief investigator Detlev Mehlis and
3 the UNIIIC for their continuing efforts to un-
4 cover evidence related to the assassination of
5 Rafik Hariri; and

6 (B) those who have freely assisted the
7 UNIIIC in its investigation;

8 (5) demands that Syria commit itself to expedi-
9 tiously fulfill all obligations to cooperate with the
10 UNIIIC and to meet all obligations of United Na-
11 tions Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1595, and
12 1636;

13 (6) encourages the United States Permanent
14 Representative to the United Nations to use the
15 voice, vote, and influence of the United States in the
16 United Nations Security Council to advocate for the
17 application of punitive measures against Syria that
18 target its leadership—including the enactment of
19 punitive sanctions against Syria under Chapter VII
20 of the Charter of the United Nations—if Syria fur-
21 ther fails to cooperate fully with the ongoing
22 UNIIIC investigation and continues to violate Secu-
23 rity Council Resolutions 1559, 1595, and 1636; and

24 (7) urges the Government of the United States
25 to support the extension of the jurisdiction of the

- 1 UNIIIC to cover assassinations and assassination
- 2 attempts in Lebanon since February 14, 2005.

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