

103^D CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 254

Expressing the sense of the Congress concerning the trafficking of Burmese women and girls into Thailand for the purposes of forced prostitution.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 13, 1994

Ms. SLAUGHTER (for herself, Mrs. MEEK, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mrs. SCHROEDER, Mrs. THURMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress concerning the trafficking of Burmese women and girls into Thailand for the purposes of forced prostitution.

Whereas credible reports indicate that thousands of Burmese women and girls are being trafficked into Thailand with false promises of good paying jobs in restaurants or factories, and then forced to work in brothels under slavery-like conditions that include sexual and physical violence, debt bondage, exposure to HIV, passport deprivation, and illegal confinement;

Whereas credible reports also indicate that members of the Thai police force are often actively involved in, and profit from, the trafficking of Burmese women and girls for the purposes of forced prostitution;

Whereas the United States Government conducts training programs for the Thai police and United States arms and equipment are sold to the Thai police;

Whereas the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women requires all States Parties “to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women”;

Whereas Article 1 of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery calls for the complete abolition or abandonment of debt bondage;

Whereas forced labor, defined under the 1930 Forced Labor Convention as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself [sic] voluntarily,” is internationally prohibited;

Whereas the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others finds the traffic in persons for the purposes of prostitution “incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person,” and calls on States Parties to punish any person who procures for the purposes of prostitution, keeps, manages or knowingly finances a brothel, or rents premises for the prostitution of others;

Whereas Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs John Shattuck has testified that the United States “urgently needs to encourage countries in which trafficking of women and children goes on with impunity to enact new laws, and to enforce existing laws. A particular target of this stepped-up law enforcement

should be government officials who participate in or condone trafficking, as well as brothel owners and traffickers”; and

Whereas Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated before the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights that “[g]uaranteeing human rights is a moral imperative with respect to both women and men”: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) trafficking in persons violates the fun-
4 damental principle of human dignity, and forced
5 prostitution involving physical coercion or debt bond-
6 age constitutes a form of forced labor and a slavery-
7 like practice;

8 (2) the United States State Department should
9 continue to press the Thai Government to strictly
10 enforce all laws that can lead to the prosecution of
11 those involved in trafficking and forced prostitution,
12 including procurers, traffickers, pimps, brothel own-
13 ers, and members of the Thai police who may be
14 complicit;

15 (3) the State Department should ensure that
16 Thai police participants in United States Govern-
17 ment-sponsored police training programs are system-
18 atically vetted to exclude those who are implicated in
19 trafficking and forced prostitution;

1 (4) the executive branch should take steps to
2 assure that weapons and equipment provided or sold
3 to the Thai police do not become available to mem-
4 bers of those forces who might be involved in traf-
5 ficking, forced prostitution, or abuse of women and
6 girls who are apprehended;

7 (5) the State Department should urge the Thai
8 Government to protect the rights and safety of Bur-
9 mese women and girls in Thailand who are freed
10 from brothels or who are arrested as illegal immi-
11 grants because their status as trafficking victims is
12 unclear;

13 (6) the United States Trade Representative
14 should extend the evaluation of a petition on Thai-
15 land's labor rights situation that was filed last year
16 by the AFL-CIO in order to include a review of
17 Thai official involvement in trafficking and forced
18 prostitution;

19 (7) the State Department should appoint a sen-
20 ior advisor on women's human rights to the Under-
21 secretary for Global Affairs who would serve as an
22 internal advocate to ensure that United States for-
23 eign policy addresses women's human rights viola-
24 tions, including trafficking and forced prostitution;

1 (8) the United States Agency for International
2 Development should target a portion of its assist-
3 ance to Thailand for AIDS prevention and control to
4 the foreign population in Thailand, particularly Bur-
5 mese women and girls in the Thai sex industry; and

6 (9) the State Department should report to Con-
7 gress, within 6 months of the date of this resolution,
8 on actions that it has taken to advocate that the
9 Thai Government implement the above steps.

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