

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 348

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to violations in Pakistan of the freedom of individuals to profess and practice religion or belief.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2002

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. PITTS, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, and Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to violations in Pakistan of the freedom of individuals to profess and practice religion or belief.

Whereas under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”;

Whereas under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, “No one shall be subject to co-

ercion which would impair his freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice”;

Whereas freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief is inextricably linked to the exercise of other rights, including the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the right to freedom of association with others, and the right to freedom of expression, and the recognition that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law, including in employment;

Whereas the Department of State’s annual reports on religious freedom and human rights have documented numerous instances of legal and government discrimination in Pakistan based on religion or belief;

Whereas Pakistani Christians face tremendous persecution under that country’s Blasphemy Law, which is applied arbitrarily upon the accusation of insult to the Prophet Mohammed or the Holy Koran and can carry the death penalty;

Whereas minority Muslim groups in Pakistan also face oppression, as some have been declared “not Muslims” in the eyes of the law and their practice of elements of Islam is therefore considered blasphemous;

Whereas under current Martial Ordinance XX of 1984, everyday life of an Ahmadi Muslim has been turned into a crime, and quotidian religious observances, such as the traditional Muslim greeting “peace be upon you” and the call to prayer are criminal acts punishable with imprisonment when practiced by members of the Ahmadiyya community;

Whereas Church of Pakistan Bishop Alexander John Malik has described the Blasphemy Law as a “license to harass, enslave and eliminate minorities and legalize religious persecution”;

Whereas while the blasphemy laws remain in place, Pakistan’s religious minorities are defenseless against opportunism and malice; and

Whereas General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan explained that his “view is of a tolerant Islam, Islam in the true sense, and not an Islam which is manipulated for political gains . . . Islam is a ‘deen’, a way of life . . . I am a believer in taking Islam in its real, progressive form—a much broader futuristic view rather than a dogmatic and retrogressive one”: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) calls on General Pervez Musharraf of Paki-  
3       stan to repeal the Blasphemy Law, which has be-  
4       come an instrument of repression;

5               (2) urges General Musharraf to repeal Martial  
6       Ordinance XX which is in conflict with international  
7       law and the basic human right of freedom of reli-  
8       gion;

9               (3) appeals to General Musharraf to release  
10       prisoners jailed under Ordinance XX and the Blas-  
11       phemy Law;

12              (4) asks General Musharraf to repeal the 8th  
13       Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan declar-  
14       ing Ahmadis “not Muslims” under the law;

1           (5) encourages General Musharraf to eliminate  
2           the requirement to declare one's religion when apply-  
3           ing for a passport or swear to exclusive statements  
4           regarding religion, admission to an educational insti-  
5           tution, obtaining the national identity card, or em-  
6           ployment; and

7           (6) calls upon the President and the Secretary  
8           of State to—

9                   (A) raise violations of the freedom of  
10                  thought, conscience, religion, or belief, at every  
11                  appropriate level with representatives of the  
12                  Government of Pakistan, including during dis-  
13                  cussions regarding terrorism and nuclear pro-  
14                  liferation; and

15                   (B) include experts on religious liberty on  
16                  United States delegations to Pakistan and to  
17                  appropriate regional and international meetings.

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