

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, resulting humanitarian and development challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. KING, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, resulting humanitarian and development challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis.

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 2139, adopted on February 22, 2014, expresses grave alarm at the significant and rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria, in particular the dire situation of hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped in besieged areas, most of whom are besieged by the Syrian armed forces and some by opposition groups, as well as the dire situation of over 3,000,000 people in hard-to-reach areas,

and deplores the difficulties in providing, and the failure to provide, access for the humanitarian assistance to all civilians in need inside Syria;

Whereas widespread and systematic attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure, in violation of international humanitarian law, continue in Syria, and parties to the conflict are blocking humanitarian aid delivery, including food and medical care from many civilian areas;

Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 70 percent of Syria's health professionals, up to 80,000 people, have fled the country, cases of typhoid, tuberculosis, polio and other diseases are rampant and increasing, and medical personnel inside Syria are deliberately targeted by parties to the conflict;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has registered more than 2,500,000 Syrian refugees, nearly 80 percent of whom are women and children, and by the end of this year, the United Nations estimates the number of refugees will increase to 4,000,000;

Whereas nearly 500,000 refugees from the Syrian conflict are children under the age of five, and more than 11,000 children have been killed and thousands more have suffered severe injuries, including burns, shrapnel wounds, the severing of limbs, and spinal cord injuries;

Whereas over 5,000,000 children affected by the conflict desperately need food, clean water, shelter, medical care and psychosocial support;

Whereas, since 2011, nearly 3,000,000 Syrian children have been forced to quit their education as fighting has de-

stroyed classrooms, left children too terrified to go to school, and forced families to flee the country;

Whereas the refugee crisis threatens the stability of the Middle East, putting immense burdens on Syria's neighbors, most notably Lebanon and Jordan, as well as Turkey and Iraq; and

Whereas the United States Government has played a leading role in addressing the Syria crisis, providing \$1,700,000,000 in humanitarian assistance to those suffering inside Syria, as well as to refugees and host communities in the neighboring countries: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) strongly condemns the unlawful use of vio-
3 lence against civilians by all parties to the conflict
4 in Syria, particularly the ongoing violence and wide-
5 spread human rights violations perpetrated against
6 the people of Syria by the Government of Syria;

7 (2) urges all parties to the conflict to imme-
8 diately halt indiscriminate attacks on civilians and
9 civilian infrastructure;

10 (3) affirms the neutrality of medical profes-
11 sionals providing humanitarian assistance and health
12 care on a non-political basis, and condemns attacks
13 against such personnel or interference in the provi-
14 sion of medical care;

15 (4) urges all parties in Syria to allow for and
16 facilitate immediate, unfettered access to humani-

1 tarian aid throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, re-
2 specting the safety, security, independence, and im-
3 partiality of humanitarian workers and ensuring
4 freedom of movement to deliver aid;

5 (5) supports the immediate and full implemen-
6 tation of United Nations Security Council Resolution
7 2139 (2014), which calls for unimpeded access of
8 humanitarian assistance to all Syrians to addresses
9 the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation
10 in Syria, in particular the dire situation of hundreds
11 of thousands of civilians trapped in besieged areas,
12 most of whom are besieged by the Syrian armed
13 forces and some by opposition groups, as well as the
14 dire situation of over 3,000,000 people in hard-to-
15 reach areas;

16 (6) calls on the international community to as-
17 sist the people of Syria, especially internally dis-
18 placed persons and refugees, in meeting basic needs,
19 including access to food, health care, shelter, and
20 clean drinking water;

21 (7) calls on the international community to sup-
22 port civilians and innocent victims of the conflict in
23 Syria, particularly women and children who are dis-
24 placed and vulnerable to physical and psychological
25 exploitation;

1 (8) calls on the international community to im-
2 plement steps that prevent gender-based violence,
3 and assure the protection of women and girls
4 against sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and
5 rape;

6 (9) calls on the international community to con-
7 tinue to support neighboring countries and host
8 communities who are generously supporting refugees
9 fleeing the conflict in Syria;

10 (10) calls on the international community to in-
11 crease investment for education in host communities
12 to expand learning opportunities for refugee children
13 and to support programs that help children gain ac-
14 cess to quality education, protect them from violence
15 and abuse, and provide counseling and psychosocial
16 support;

17 (11) calls on countries that are hosting refugees
18 in the region to support refugee self-reliance and
19 dignity by expanding employment opportunities for
20 refugees;

21 (12) calls on international donors and aid agen-
22 cies to integrate humanitarian relief and longer term
23 development programs through a comprehensive re-
24 gional strategy to address the protracted crisis in
25 Syria; and

1 (13) calls on the President to develop and sub-
2 mit to the appropriate committees of Congress with-
3 in 90 days from adoption of this resolution a strat-
4 egy for United States engagement in addressing the
5 Syrian humanitarian crisis, to include assistance and
6 development, and protecting human rights inside
7 Syria and in the region.