

S.D.C.
Ben Cardin

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. _____

Affirming the nature and importance of the support of the United States
for Syria.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr.
MERKLEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following concurrent
resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Affirming the nature and importance of the support of the
United States for Syria.

Whereas in December 2024, following decades of pressure
and sacrifice by the Syrian people and from international
condemnation, the al Assad family's era of heinous war
crimes and authoritarian rule ended and Bashar Assad
fled to Moscow, where Putin granted him political asy-
lum;

Whereas, as a result of the opportunity his departure has
presented to the Syrian people, the United States reaf-
firms its support to all the Syrian people, and urges an
inclusive and peaceful transition by Syrians, for Syria.

Whereas national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples, including Alawites, Armenians, Druze, Yezidis, Kurds, Shabak, Turkmen, and historic Christian communities (including Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and Melkite peoples) among others, have been integral components of the long cultural lineage of Syria;

Whereas these same religious and ethnic minorities have made, and continue to make, invaluable and significant contributions to the social, economic, and political fabric of societies across the Middle East and the world, including the United States;

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (referred to in this preamble as “ISIS”) is responsible for carrying out a brutal campaign of violence against members of all faiths in Syria and Iraq;

Whereas ethnic and religious minorities were subjected to innumerable atrocities by ISIS, including forced religious conversion, kidnapping, slavery, human trafficking, unlawful forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, torture, sexual violence, and sex trafficking, among other crimes;

Whereas the Secretary of State declared on March 17, 2016, and on August 15, 2017, that ISIS is responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and other atrocities against religious and ethnic minority groups in Syria and Iraq, including Shia Muslims, Christians, and Yezidis, among other religious and ethnic groups;

Whereas the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–300) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to ensure that assistance for religious and ethnic minorities is directed towards those who—

(1) have the greatest need, including minorities who the Secretary of State declared were targeted for genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes; and

(2) have been identified as being at risk of persecution, forced migration, genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes;

Whereas members of these religious and ethnic minority communities continue to face daily insecurity, discrimination, hardship, and violence from state and non-state actors;

Whereas Syrian opposition forces have repeatedly signaled their intent to respect the rights and dignity of religious and ethnic minorities in Syria, but there have been incidents of members of such minorities fleeing their homes while there is documented violence and expulsions against Kurdish communities by elements of the Syrian National Army;

Whereas the restoration and stabilization of all regions of Syria will provide an opportunity for its longstanding diverse ethnic and religious communities to flourish;

Whereas the Syrian Democratic Forces (referred to in this preamble as the "SDF") has been a critical partner to United States and allied counter-ISIS and broader counterterrorism efforts in Syria, and the United States should continue to support and partner with the SDF;

Whereas the SDF has played a critical role in securing and maintaining ISIS detention facilities and ensuring that ISIS terrorists do not pose a renewed threat to the region or United States allies or partners;

Whereas the search continues for Austin Bennett Tice, an American journalist, who was kidnapped in Syria on August 14, 2012; and

Whereas the Syrian Democratic Council—

(1) serves as the civil administration for much of northeast Syria; and

(2) has provided critical public services and maintained civilian infrastructure in that region throughout the Syrian conflict: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) commits to protecting and upholding the
4 internationally recognized human rights of members
5 of all religious and ethnic minority communities in
6 Syria;

7 (2) calls for an inclusive and peaceful political
8 transition process in Syria that preserves and pro-
9 tects the rights and livelihoods of all Syria commu-
10 nities, including its religious and ethnic minority
11 communities;

12 (3) supports the preservation, documentation,
13 and restoration of—

14 (A) religious and cultural heritage sites in
15 Syria; and

16 (B) community buildings of religious and
17 ethnic minority communities in the region;

18 (4) calls upon all state and non-state actors—

19 (A) to cease any and all support for, or
20 commission of, all current violence in Syria; and

1 (B) to refrain from future violence and
2 acts of reprisal or repression against all Syr-
3 ians, including religious and ethnic minority
4 communities in Syria;

5 (5) encourages the Secretary of State and the
6 Administrator of the United States Agency for
7 International Development—

8 (A) to advocate for the protection of reli-
9 gious and ethnic minorities in Syria; and

10 (B) to engage in appropriate steps, includ-
11 ing targeted sanctions relief and development
12 programming to support humanitarian needs,
13 development, and reconstruction in Syria, in-
14 cluding in religious and ethnic minority commu-
15 nities; and

16 (6) reaffirms the commitment of the United
17 States to finding and securing the release of Austin
18 Tice.