

Date: May 1, 2009

To: Representative Mizuno, Chair
Representative Brower, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Human Services

From: Pamela K. Omidyar
1585 Kapiolani Blvd. Suite 1750
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Re: Support of HCR304

I write this morning to urge your support for House Concurrent Resolution 304, legislation condemning the human-rights atrocities and violence against children in Northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and urging Congress to lead the international community in efforts to protect the children of these countries.

As both a citizen of Hawaii interested in helping to ensure a better future for at risk children across our state and a philanthropist engaged in efforts to end mass atrocities globally, I'm deeply troubled by the violence and suffering of children in Northern Uganda and the DRC. With thousands kids abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army and forced to serve as child-soldiers—and thousands more raped and enslaved—the crisis in this region of Africa represents one of the greatest global challenges to the values we hold deeply here in our own community.

By supporting HRC304, we have the opportunity to affirm the belief that we are never fully human until ending the suffering of some becomes the pursuit of us all. This resolution represents an important step towards influencing the foreign policy of the United States Government, as well as that of the international community, to intervene on behalf of these children.

Respectfully yours,



Pamela K. Omidyar



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET

HAWAII VICE-PROVINCE

5311 APO DRIVE HONOLULU, HAWAII 96821

May 1, 2009

Late

TO: COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
Senator J. Kalani English, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

FROM: Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

SUBJECT: HCR 304 Hearing, Monday May 4, 2009, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: HCR 304 condemns the human rights atrocities and violence against children in Northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and urges Congress to lead the international community in efforts to protect the children of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

POSITION:

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet strongly support the passage of this Concurrent Resolution. We who cannot imagine the poverty, terror and hopelessness the people of Northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have lived with for these last 23 years cannot turn our backs now. House Concurrent Resolution 304 is important because it sends a strong message to our U.S. Congressional delegation that in Hawaii there are many people who care deeply about the plight of these people.

After 23 years of civil war, the international community must come to the aide of the people of this war torn region. We have stood by while over 30,000 abducted children have been forced to serve as child soldiers, thousands have been murdered and nearly two million people have been forced to live in displacement camps.

In mid-May members of the U.S. Congress will introduce the Northern Uganda Stabilization and Reconstruction Act. This legislation is the best hope for peace in the region. It will commit the United States to be a leader for peace, bringing the full force of its diplomatic resources to end this civil war. It will also commit funds for reconstruction. Now is the time for us to commit.

Sisters of St. Joseph who serve the people of Northern Uganda tell us of the total destruction and breakdown of society. A generation of students has gone uneducated. Farmers have abandoned their fields and forgotten many of their farming skills. And, many traditional cultural values have been lost.

Yet there is hope among the people. Gradually they are being allowed to leave the displacement camps. As they return to their farms, they engage in the backbreaking work of clearing fields that have not grown crops for decades. Children are returning to their bullet pocked schools with inadequate text books and minimal supplies. Yet there is hope. The people are relying on their religious and traditional cultural practices to find healing. They form community again and there is hope. Passage of HCR 304 is a small step that we can take to keep that hope alive.

Late

TO: COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
Senator J. Kalani English, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

FROM: Pax Christi Hawaii

SUBJECT: HCR 304 Hearing, Monday May 4, 2009, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: HCR 304 condemns the human rights atrocities and violence against children in Northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and urges Congress to lead the international community in efforts to protect the children of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

POSITION:

Pax Christi Hawaii strongly supports the passage of this Concurrent Resolution. As a group we are committed to building structures of peace. The 23 year war in Uganda has devastated the social, political and economic structures of Uganda. We believe the United States in collaboration with the United Nations must play a role in bringing Joseph Kony and the leadership of the Lord's Resistance Army to justice.

In mid-May members of the U.S. Congress will introduce the Northern Uganda Stabilization and Reconstruction Act. This legislation is the best hope for peace in the region. It will commit the United States to be a leader for peace, bringing the full force of its diplomatic resources to end this civil war. It will also commit funds for reconstruction.

We are working closely with Resolve Uganda, a national organization committed to bringing peace and reconstruction to the region. They have built a national coalition and have gained enough interest and support to make passage of the Northern Uganda Stabilization and Reconstruction Act a reality. Through our meeting with members of our Congressional delegation we believe there is interest.

Passing HCR 304 will be one more encouragement for our Congressional delegation to support this legislation. It shows the commitment that the people of Hawaii have to the United States role in building a safer, more just and peaceful world.

Thank you for considering this information.

Late

May 01, 2009

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Senator J. Kalani English, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

FROM:

SUBJECT: HCR 304 Hearing, Monday May 4, 2009, 9:15 a.m.
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The reason for my correspondence with both of you in writing today is to ask you to pass our resolution, HCR 304, in the TIA -Transportation, International and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee on which you serve. Hawai'i has the unique opportunity to lead the nation in officially condemning the human rights atrocities being perpetrated against children in Northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We cannot afford to deny this resolution the same focus and attention we give to local issues, because Africa is on the other side of the world; for this is the same attitude that all too often leads the rest of the world to undermine the many social issues our island home of Hawai'i faces. Together, we must demonstrate that even states as 'remote' as Hawai'i still have the power to lead the international community in bringing about worldwide peace.

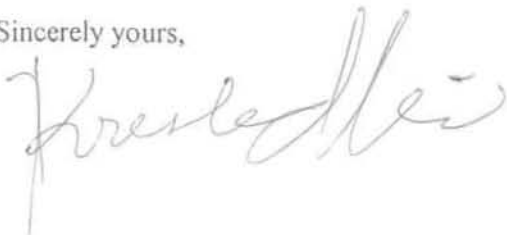
The purpose of HCR 304 "CONDEMNING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN NORTHERN UGANDA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND URGING CONGRESS TO LEAD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN EFFORTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN OF UGANDA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND BRING JOSEPH KONY AND THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY TO JUSTICE" is to voice Hawaii's opposition to the humanitarian crisis presently occurring in Uganda, the Democratic Republic Congo, Sudan and other countries by urging Congress to lead the international community in efforts to protect the children of these nations.

The citizens of Northern Uganda have faced atrocities for more than twenty-three years due to the armed conflict between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army, an armed rebel paramilitary group trying to topple the Ugandan government. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, has described the guerilla war in northern Uganda as "the world's greatest neglected humanitarian crisis."

Of the 300,000 child soldiers in the world today, 30,000 of these are in Uganda and they make up 90% of the Lord's Resistance Army. Statistics show that 77% of child abductees have seen someone murdered, 39% have been forced to kill someone with their own hands, and 35% of female soldiers have been sexually abused. Most other children have also been beaten brutally and forced to burn down towns and houses and abduct other children.

Currently an estimated 1.7 million people still remain internally displaced in northern Uganda as a result of the conflict between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army. The conditions in these displacement camps are deplorable: each week 1,000 people die while living in these IDP camps. A growing number of people are being displaced, murdered and abused in the Democratic Republic of Congo as the Lord's Resistance Army terrorizes the area. The effects of the war are seen most prevalently in the lives of the children of these nations. These children face issues of malnutrition, lack of food and water supplies, and other physiological as well as psychological problems from living and fighting in such a long-lasting conflict.

Sincerely yours,



Address:

1419 Domini S 704
Honolulu, HI 96822

E-mail:

Ktmerc@gmail.com

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Address:

2280 Kuniho Ave
Apt. 11683
Honolulu, HI
96815

E-mail:

TSteiner@campus.
hawaii.edu

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Sincerely yours,

Alex Kaliades

Address:

3006 Pualei Circle
Ap# 301
Honolulu, HI
910815

E-mail:

AKaliades@campus.hpu.edu