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LEGISLATIVE WATCH

Legislative Watch reports on pending U.S. legislation relevant to human rights and humanitarian law. This list is not meant to be comprehensive.

Global AIDS Prevention Act of 2000, S. 2026

Major Sponsor: Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on February 2, 2000, then to the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs on February 24, 2000.

Substance: This bill amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. It declares the expectation of Congress that the U.S. Agency for International Development make HIV/AIDS prevention and care a priority. As part of its effort, the agency should devote resources to primary prevention and education, voluntary testing and counseling, medications to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, and care for those already infected. The bill also authorizes appropriations for carrying out this mandate, beginning with \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2001 and increasing \$50,000,000 on a yearly basis until fiscal year 2005. Each year, at least half of these funds must be made available to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sierra Leone Peace Support Act of 2000, H.R. 3879

Major Sponsor: Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-TX)

Status: Referred to the House Committee on International Relations and to the House Judiciary Committee on March 9, 2000. Referred to the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims on March 21, 2000.

Substance: This bill urges the President to vigorously promote efforts to end further degradation of conditions in the Republic of Sierra Leone, to dramatically increase United States' assistance to demobilization, demilitarization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts and humanitarian initiatives, to assist in the collection of documentation about human rights abuses by all parties, and to engage in diplomatic initiatives aimed at consolidating the peace and protecting human rights. This bill authorizes \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2001 to be appropriated to the President under Part II, Chapter 4 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2221 et seq.) for assistance to the Sierra Leone DDR Trust Fund of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This bill also authorizes the President to provide assistance for the establishment and support of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will seek accountability for human rights abuses in the Republic of Sierra Leone. Ex-combatants of the civil war cannot receive stipends authorized under this bill and assistance may be provided only to political parties

whose leaders and members cooperate with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Furthermore, the President shall submit to the House a report providing information concerning illicit sales of Sierra Leonean gold and diamonds through Liberia.

Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act of 1999, H.R. 1095

Major Sponsor: Rep. James A. Leach (R-IA)

Status: Referred to House Committee on International Relations and House Committee on Banking and Financial Services on March 11, 1999. The latter committee then referred the bill to the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy on March 31, 1999. On November 3, 1999, the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services passed the act by a bipartisan majority of 23 to 16.

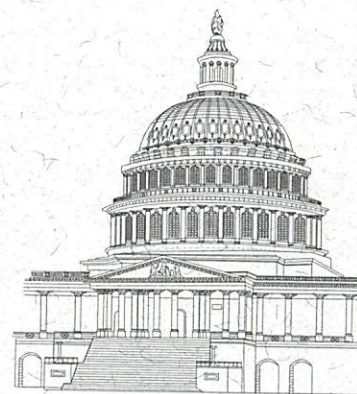
Substance: This bill amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 by directing the President, subject to appropriation authorization, to cancel or reduce all debt that heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) owed to the United States as a result of loans made, guarantees issued, or credits extended prior to January 1, 1996. The bill provides cancellation or reduction only for those HIPC that have not spent excessive government funds on military expenditures; have not repeatedly supported international terrorism; and have not engaged in gross human rights violations. In addition, the eligible countries must have cooperated on international narcotics control matters and have established specific institutions and mechanisms for addressing poverty. This bill would not reduce any amounts that would otherwise be provided by the United States for development aid or other debt relief. Moreover, the bill calls for the President to accelerate multilateral debt relief by commencing diplomatic efforts encouraging other creditors to make modifications to the HPIC Initiative, which is designed to provide debt relief for HPICs.

The Protection of Women in Prisons Act of 1999, H.R. 3920

Major Sponsor: Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA)

Status: Referred to House Committee on the Judiciary on March 14, 2000, and then to the House Subcommittee on Crime on March 21, 2000.

Substance: This bill will require facilities that receive federal funding to improve their ability to address the health needs of female inmates. This bill will prohibit the routine



use of restraints on pregnant women and women in labor, limit the role of male staff, and require mechanisms to enhance awareness of inmates' rights. Finally, it will provide special protections to female inmates who report violations of their rights. ☉

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