

Senate Resolution 16

By: Senator Unterman of the 45th

A RESOLUTION

1 Reaffirming the shared commitment of the United States and the United Kingdom to end
2 sexual violence globally and supporting the goals and ideals of the Global Summit to End
3 Sexual Violence in Conflict; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the United States and the United Kingdom have a special relationship based on
5 a rich history of friendship and shared values, including a commitment to furthering free
6 speech, democracy, and the rule of law; and

7 WHEREAS, the United States and the United Kingdom recognize that rape and other forms
8 of sexual violence are too often used as tools of war in armed conflicts around the world; and

9 WHEREAS, according to the United Nations, conflict-related sexual violence refers to "rape,
10 sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization and any other form
11 of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, or children with
12 a direct or indirect (temporal, geographical, or causal) link to a conflict"; and

13 WHEREAS, such violence inflicts unimaginable suffering on individuals, families, and
14 communities and perpetuates conflict and instability, often for generations; and

15 WHEREAS, the use of sexual violence in armed conflict represents a grave violation of an
16 individual's human rights; and

17 WHEREAS, these crimes disproportionately affect women and girls, but men and boys are
18 also victims; and

19 WHEREAS, incidents of sexual violence remain one of the most underreported crimes due
20 to social and cultural stigma associated with the crime and the risk of reprisal; and

21 WHEREAS, according to the Report of the United Nations Secretary General on
22 Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, published on March 13, 2014, there were 22 conflict
23 affected countries in which crimes of sexual violence were committed in 2013, including
24 Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Syria; and

25 WHEREAS, in Afghanistan, there was an increase of 25 percent in violence against women
26 within the last year; and

27 WHEREAS, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the national government recorded more
28 than 15,000 incidents of sexual violence in 2013 alone; and

29 WHEREAS, in Syria, the United Nations provided support to more than 38,000 victims of
30 sexual violence despite concerns that fears of reprisal, social stigmas, and the lack of safe
31 response services have severely limited reporting sexual violence; and

32 WHEREAS, United Nations Resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1960 affirm that sexual violence,
33 when committed systematically and used as a tool of war, is a fundamental threat to the
34 maintenance of international peace and security; and

35 WHEREAS, on April 11, 2013, G-8 member states adopted the Declaration on Preventing
36 Sexual Violence in Conflict, which states that "rape and other forms of serious sexual
37 violence in armed conflict are war crimes"; and

38 WHEREAS, more than 140 countries have endorsed the United Nations' Declaration of
39 Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which pledges to "do more to raise
40 awareness of these crimes, to challenge the impunity that exists and to hold perpetrators to
41 account, to provide better support to victims, and to support both national and international
42 efforts to build the capacity to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict"; and

43 WHEREAS, the focus on ending and preventing sexual violence is a flagship initiative of the
44 United Kingdom's G-8 Presidency and has been endorsed by the United States and all other
45 members of the G-8; and

46 WHEREAS, on February 25, 2014, United States Secretary of State John Kerry and British
47 Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague held a discussion
48 at the United States Department of State on ending and preventing sexual violence in conflict
49 situations; and

50 WHEREAS, Secretary Kerry and Secretary Hague co-authored an op-ed which stated,
51 "Preventing sexual violence isn't just a great moral cause of our generation. It is a national
52 security imperative. Sexual violence destroys lives. It fuels conflict, forces people to flee
53 their homes and is often perpetrated alongside other human rights abuses, including forced
54 marriage, sexual slavery and human trafficking. It undermines reconciliation and traps
55 survivors in conflict, poverty and insecurity"; and

56 WHEREAS, the United Kingdom will host a Global Summit in London in June, 2014,
57 bringing together governments, civil society, media, and members of the public to build
58 broad support toward ending the use of rape and sexual violence in conflict; and

59 WHEREAS, the United States, the United Kingdom, and international partners have a shared
60 commitment to sharing knowledge and mobilizing resources to prevent sexual violence in
61 conflict, provide support for victims of this heinous crime, and shatter the culture of impunity
62 where perpetrators too often go unpunished.

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
64 condemn the use of sexual violence as a tool of war in armed conflict; reaffirm their
65 commitment to preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence, including caring
66 for survivors and bringing to justice those responsible for these heinous crimes; reiterate their
67 view that ensuring women's and girls' full human rights and fundamental freedoms and
68 women's active, full, and equal political, social, and economic participation, including in all
69 conflict prevention and resolution as well as in wider development activities, is critical to
70 ending sexual violence in conflict; support the goals and ideals of the Global Summit to End
71 Sexual Violence in Conflict; and call on the United States and the United Kingdom to
72 continue their leadership on addressing the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence and
73 implementing strategies that focus on women, peace, and security.