

**Suspend the Rules And Agree to the Resolution, H.Res. 711 with
Amendments**

**(The amendments consist of a new preamble, a substitute text, and
an amendment to the title)**

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 711

Calling on the United States Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamil internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in government-run camps by supporting the release of such IDPs, implementing and facilitating an independent oversight of the process of release and resettlement, and allowing foreign aid groups to provide relief and resources to such IDPs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 31, 2009

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamil internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in government-run camps by supporting the release of such IDPs, implementing and facilitating an independent oversight of the process of release and resettlement, and allowing

foreign aid groups to provide relief and resources to such IDPs.

Whereas May 2009 marked the conclusion of the 26-year struggle between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a State Department designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and the Government of Sri Lanka, and the Government of Sri Lanka committed itself to caring for and ensuring the speedy return of the civilians internally displaced as a result of the fighting;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka is seeking to identify former combatants who were part of the LTTE and as part of the vetting process the Government of Sri Lanka has set up make-shift camps that initially housed over 280,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled their homes as the war drew to an end;

Whereas of those 280,000 internally displaced persons at the end of the war, approximately 10,000 of those individuals are being separately held by the Government of Sri Lanka on suspicion of having supported the LTTE;

Whereas as part of the United Nations Human Rights Council 11th Special Session on Sri Lanka held on May 27, 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka made commitments to the world to improve the conditions for the civilians housed in the camps and stated that the “bulk” of the IDPs would be resettled within 180 days;

Whereas as of October 23, 2009, over 52,000 IDPs have been released from the closed camps in the Vanni, and of those 36,000 have been returned to their districts of origin and found accommodation in their own homes or, pending return to their homes, with host families and in vacant houses of friends or relatives; and over 16,000

IDPs of special categories, such as the elderly, pregnant women and their families, priests, students, or people of special needs, have been released to host families or institutions;

Whereas as of October 25, 2009, some 250,000 IDPs still remain in military-guarded camps in the four northern districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna, and Trincomalee;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has made some progress in easing camp congestion, registering IDPs, and expanding access by humanitarian organizations, but much remains to be done to improve humanitarian conditions, particularly before the onset of the monsoon season;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has announced that it intends in the next few weeks to facilitate the voluntary return of over 40,000 of the approximately 250,000 IDPs in the camps;

Whereas the United States is urging the safe and speedy return of IDPs, continued access for international humanitarian organizations, and the registration and provision of national identification cards to IDPs, to help promote freedom of movement; and

Whereas the United States also supports the rapid release and voluntary return of all IDPs as a critical element of national reconciliation in Sri Lanka: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) urges the Government of Sri Lanka, con-
3 sistent with its obligation to provide security for all
4 of its citizens, to expeditiously allow freedom of

1 movement for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to
2 leave their camps voluntarily and return in safety
3 and dignity to their homes or, where that is not pos-
4 sible, to live with host families or move to open tran-
5 sit sites;

6 (2) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to en-
7 sure that IDP camps are truly civilian in nature and
8 administered by civilian authorities, rather than
9 under military supervision, and give full access to
10 national and international humanitarian organiza-
11 tions and observers, including the International
12 Committee of the Red Cross, in order to monitor the
13 situation and to assist in the care of IDPs; and

14 (3) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to pro-
15 mote justice and political reconciliation for all par-
16 ties, and engage in dialogue with all parties, includ-
17 ing Tamils inside and outside Sri Lanka on new
18 mechanisms for devolving power, improving human
19 rights, and increasing accountability.

Amend the title so as to read: “Calling on the Gov-
ernment of Sri Lanka to address the human rights and
humanitarian needs of its internally displaced Tamil pop-
ulation currently living in government-run camps by
working with the United Nations and the international
community to implement a process of release and reset-
tlement of such internally displaced persons (IDPs), and

allowing foreign aid groups to provide relief and resources throughout the process.”.