

commission of inquiry to investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law by Russian forces.

We must confront the suffering of the Chechen people. As many of my colleagues know, the recent Russian assault on the Chechen capital of Grozny was one more campaign in a continuing series of Russian military offensives in Chechnya. In September, I expressed my concerns to Yeltsin and Putin about the humanitarian tragedy that was, for the second time, unfolding in Chechnya. It is hard to imagine that after the use of force in Chechnya from 1994 to 1996, which left over 80,000 civilians dead, the Russian leadership could again see the use of force as enhancing the prospects for a durable settlement to this conflict. But the Russian leadership has again chosen use of force, and the current tragedy before us has now reached unimaginable heights, as evidenced by the piece today in the Washington Post.

Russian forces have used indiscriminate and disproportionate force in their bombings of civilian targets. This has resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilian and displaced countless other. Russian authorities maintain a virtual ban on access to Chechen civilians by media and international humanitarian agencies resulting in our having to rely on the personal testimony of refugees fleeing the fighting to determine the nature and extent of the crisis and best means to provide humanitarian relief.

These testimonies are horrific: incidents of widespread looting, summary executions, detentions, denial of civilians safe passage from the fighting, torture, and rape.

Many civilians report being detained at the Chechen border as they tried to flee the fighting. They tell of brothers and fathers who had simply been denied safe passage out. It is fundamentally unacceptable to deny any civilian the right to flee the fighting—to trap them in this dangerous war. And where do these trapped civilians go? Into detention camps. No one needs to be reminded of the systematic torture that took place in detention camps set up to detain Chechens in the 1994-96 Chechen war. That event stains the memory of the Chechen people and it is happening again.

One twenty-one-year-old tells of the horror in the camps:

About fifteen or twenty soldiers were standing in two lines with rubber sticks. . . . When I was running through the corridor, each soldier beat me with the sticks. They made us undress and started checking our clothes. They took away the clothes they liked. . . . For a week, I had to sit in the jail almost naked.

In addition to this torture, young men report that in order to be released from the camps their family members must pay outrageous bribes to camp officers and upon release, must sign papers saying they suffered no harm in captivity.

Then there are the numerous reports of rape. In one Chechen town a six-

month pregnant 23-year-old woman was raped and murdered. Her mother-in-law was executed in this same incident. And Mr. President, many incidences of rape and sexual abuse go unreported. For many women in towns and villages all over Chechnya the shame is simply too great—they won't come forward to report these horrible crimes. Chechnya's culture and national traditions make it difficult to document case of rape and sexual abuse—unmarried women who are raped are unlikely to be able to get married, and married women who are raped are likely to be divorced by their husbands. The effects of these rapes on Chechen society will be profound and long lasting. I remind the Russian leadership that rape is war crime.

Two weeks ago I sent a letter to acting President Putin expressing my deep concern over the deteriorating situation in Chechnya and the Russian government's response to the humanitarian tragedy there. I urge the Russian government to move quickly to resolve this situation in a manner consistent with Russia's obligations to the international community and urge the Russian leadership to begin now to investigate and prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses in Chechnya—it promised to do this after the last Chechen war but failed to do so.

I urge my colleagues to communicate their own concerns to the Administration and the Russian government in whatever manner you think best. We cannot remain silent. We must fully condemn the use of indiscriminate force against the civilians in Chechnya and denial of humanitarian relief to Chechen civilians. We must remind the Russian leadership that the world is watching.

This congress and this administration must express to the Russian government that it should devote every effort to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Chechnya, allow into Chechnya an international monitoring force to monitor and report on the situations there.

That is what this resolution I have submitted to the Senate, on which I hope we will have a vote, calls for. We must call for allowing international humanitarian agencies immediate, full, and unimpeded access to Chechen civilians in order to provide humanitarian relief.

This resolution, on which I hope we will have an up-or-down vote or it will be unanimously accepted by the Senate, calls for several things. It calls for the Russian Federation to devote every effort to a peaceful resolution, to allow into Chechnya an international monitoring mission to monitor and report on the situation, and to allow international humanitarian agencies immediate and full access to Chechen civilians. The people of Chechnya deserve no less.

I have no illusions. I do not think adopting a resolution automatically

turns the situation around, but I do believe the Senate should not be silent, that we must support this resolution, and we must send this message. We must stand up for human rights.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MEASURES PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 2081 AND H.R. 6

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for their second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the first bill. The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2081) entitled Religious Liberty Protection Act of 2000.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I object to further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the rule, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

The clerk will read the title of the second bill.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the marriage penalty by providing for adjustments to the standard deduction, 15-percent rate bracket, and earned income credit and to repeal the reduction of the refundable tax credits.

Mr. WARNER. I object to further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the rule, the bill will now be placed on the calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER, Mr. HUTCHINSON, and Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 2087 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

MIGRANT WORKERS

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, every time we have a recess and there is an occasion to go home, invariably we all learn something of significance that helps us in our service in the Senate. I thought I would take to the floor of the Senate today and speak about something I learned, something I experienced which I wanted to highlight. Right now, it is an issue that is sort of a low light in this body.

Earlier in this Congress, Senator BOB GRAHAM of Florida and I introduced a bill to fix our H-2A guest worker program that affects agriculture. Preceding that, Senators GRAHAM and WYDEN and I met with the Secretary of Labor and pleaded for the administration to come forward with some sort of fix to relieve the pressure on the farm labor system. There are enough workers, but you have to settle for an illegal system to conclude that there are enough workers. The Secretary assured