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## Captive Nations Week, 1988

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

During Captive Nations Week, we honor the courage, faith, and aspirations of the millions of people the world over who suffer under Soviet domination. They desire, seek, and deserve, as the common heritage of humanity, the liberty, justice, self-determination, and independence we Americans and all free peoples cherish. The citizens of the captive nations daily hear the mighty call of freedom and answer it boldly, sending an echo around the globe to remind totalitarians and all mankind that their voices cannot be quelled—because they are the voices of the human spirit.

Across the continents and seas, the cry for freedom rings out and the struggle for its blessings continues, in the republics of the Soviet Union, in the Baltic States and throughout Eastern Europe, in Cuba and Nicaragua, in Ethiopia and Angola, and in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It also continues in Afghanistan, despite initial Soviet withdrawal, because the Najibullah regime imposes its will upon the Afghan people. We in America, who have held high the torch of liberty for 2 centuries and more, pause during Captive Nations Week to express our solidarity with those who strive at great personal risk and sacrifice to win justice for their nations. We commemorate as well the many freedom fighters and individuals such as Polish Father Jerzy Popieluszko and Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus who have given their lives in the imperishable cause of liberty. We cannot and will not shirk our duty and responsibility to insist on the speediest end to subjugation, persecution, and discrimination in the captive nations. We repeat our call for all governments to respect and honor the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Accords.

Last year's Captive Nations Week Proclamation mentioned four people in the Soviet Union imprisoned for their struggle for national rights. Now, 1 year later, two of them, both Helsinki human rights monitors, remain in internal exile—Viktoras Petkus, a Lithuanian, and Lev Lukyanenko, a Ukrainian. Another, Helsinki monitor Mart Niklus, an Estonian, is still in a labor camp. The last, Gunars Astra, Latvia's highly respected national rights activist, was released in poor health earlier this year after 19 years in Soviet labor camps. He died several months ago at 56 years of age.

America is keenly aware of, and will continue to encourage, the great tide of democratic ideas that now sweeps the globe. We cannot forget decades of tragedy, the tens of millions of lives lost, or the enormity of the suffering inflicted on the innocent. We applaud the courage and faith that have sustained countless people and kept alive the dream of freedom against unthinkable odds. Despite starvation, torture, and murder, the indomitable human spirit will outlast all oppression. We continue to stand ready to cooperate in meeting the just aspirations of the oppressed and needy of the world. We will remain forever steadfast in our commitment to speak out for those who cannot, to seek justice for those to whom it is denied, and to assist freedom-seeking peoples everywhere.

The Congress, by joint resolution approved July 17, 1959 (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as "Captive Nations Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning July 17, 1988, as Captive Nations Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, and I urge them to reaffirm their devotion to the aspirations of all peoples for justice, self-determination, and liberty.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

*Ronald Reagan*