

or 23 percent of the world total—are Colombian. This according to the U.N. brings Colombia to the undesirable first position of the greatest number of IDPs in the world. Yet the Colombian government reports only 1,877,328 IDPs for the period from January of 1995–June of 2005.

Due to the lack of sufficient political will on the part of the government to attend to the IDP population, the Colombian Constitutional Court has delivered two rulings with the purpose of protecting the rights of the internally displaced: Ruling C-370 of 2005, relating to Law 975 of 2005, through which the Constitutional Court defines the scope of the rights and guarantees due to victims of the internal armed conflict under the system of transitional justice.

The Constitutional Court also issued Decree 218 of 2006, following Ruling T-025 of 2004 which declared the state of things to be unconstitutional in Colombia and ordered the government to develop a public policy designed to guarantee the effective protection of the rights of the internally displaced.

This decree examines the completion of the orders established through decrees No. 176, 177 and 178 of 2005; its principal conclusion is that the situation of unconstitutionality has yet to be overcome, while the necessary measures are not being taken to do so.

Finally, the Civil Commission for the Evaluation of Completion of Ruling T-025 and the Public Policy of Forced Displacement was formed as a plural and diverse coalition of civil society dedicated to overcoming displacement, at the same time that new protests and proposals for strengthening organizations of the internally displaced are being formed by the affected population.

Decree 218 illustrates the structural problems with the lack of a public policy for forced displacement and opens the possibility for greater public debate to examine the report presented by the government on September 13, 2006, such as the use of rights-based progress indicators.

We would also like to applaud the 42 cosponsors of H. Res. 426 and in particular our Afrodescendant brother Donald Payne and humanitarian James McGovern for raising the visibility of the plight of the many internally displaced Afro-Colombians to the U.S. Congress. In the last decade, especially during the last 5 years, internal displacement has intensified in areas of the Pacific Coast, in the departments of Nariño, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Chocó in the collectively titled lands of Afro-Colombians. The particular characteristics of these displacements show them to be planned and deliberate, in order to cause communities to vacate their territories. This is corroborated by the study carried out by AFRODES and Global Rights in 2005, which illustrates that 61.73 percent of those people with collective titles to land in 50 municipalities with Afro-Colombian populations have been displaced from their territories. Most alarming is that there currently exists no public policy for attention to Afro-Colombian displaced populations, while the humanitarian crisis in their territories continues to worsen.

Finally, as an organization of internally displaced persons and in the name of many more who have lost their territories in Colombia, we appreciate and commend the efforts undertaken by the U.S. Congress and the international community to raise visibility of this humanitarian tragedy, specifically through H. Res. 426 in the U.S. House of Representatives. By working in partnership with the United States, the United Nations and many religious and non-governmental organizations, our communities can once again live with dignity and respect for their rights.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER FRANCIS HUND

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Father Francis Hund, who celebrates his 25th anniversary in the priesthood this Sunday, July 22nd.

Born July 31, 1956 in Paxico, KS, he was the oldest of Wilfred and Margaret Hund's eight children. He graduated from Paxico High School in 1974 and received a bachelor's degree from Benedictine College in Atchison, KS, in 1978, where he majored in music with a focus on organ. Although he had considered a vocation to the priesthood, he hadn't shared his thoughts with his parents; they thought he would be a music teacher until they read his career choice printed in his senior organ recital program!

He was selected to do his seminary studies in Rome at the North American College and was ordained to the priesthood at his home parish in Paxico in 1982. He served as associate pastor at four Shawnee Mission, KS, parishes: Queen of the Holy Rosary, Cure of Ars, St. Joseph; and Holy Trinity, before entering a graduate program in liturgical studies at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. Returning in 1990 he served three rural parishes at Burlington, Waverly and Westphalia, KS, and was campus minister at Washburn in Topeka.

In 1992, Fr. Francis was appointed pastor of St. Theresa's in Perry, KS, and also St. Aloysius in Meriden, KS in 1993. In addition to pastoring those two parishes, he was appointed Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Liturgy and Worship, a position he held for 9 years prior to his appointment as pastor to Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Shawnee, KS, in 2001. He currently serves this parish of 1,700 families as well as being chairman of the Johnson County Regional Priests and a member of the archdiocesan Priests Personnel Board.

His family currently includes his mother, 2 brothers, 5 sisters, in-laws and 24 nieces and nephews. Madam Speaker, I know that all Members of the House of Representatives join with me in paying tribute to this dedicated servant of God upon the 25th anniversary of his entering the priesthood.

FREE THE ISRAELI SOLDIERS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 1-year anniversary of the kidnapping of Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, two soldiers in the Israeli Defense Force who were kidnapped by Hezbollah operatives on the border with Lebanon on July 12, 2006. Their kidnapping came only a few weeks after the abduction of Gilad Shalit, an IDF officer seized by Hamas militants on June 25, 2006, during a horrific attack near Kibbutz Kerem Shalom, on the border of the Gaza Strip.

These three brave young men are among eight Israeli soldiers kidnapped or missing in action over the last 25 years. Staff Sergeants Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehuda Katz have been missing since June 11, 1982, after a battle at Sultan Yakoub in Lebanon. Major Ron Arad was captured on October 16, 1986, when his aircraft was shot down inside Lebanon. Israeli soldier Guy Hever disappeared on August 17, 1997, from an army base in the southern Golan Heights.

Since my first day in the United States Congress, I have made advocating for the safe return of all Israeli soldiers a priority. During an official trip to Israel last July, I met with Benny Regev, brother of Eldad Regev, to express my deepest sympathy and concern and assure him of America's commitment to securing his brother's release. Today, I urge my colleagues to join me in renewing our commitment to secure the release of all Israeli prisoners of war and to hold those individuals, organizations, and governments involved in these abductions accountable for their violation of international law. In marking the anniversary of the kidnapping of these brave soldiers, we should also acknowledge the sacrifice of their families and of the Israeli people as they continue to defend their borders in the ongoing struggle for regional stability and peace.

As Israel's strongest ally and friend, the United States must continue to support Israel's right to self defense, and advocate for the safe return of all of Israeli soldiers missing in action and being held as prisoners of war.

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR WANDA McNEILL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I recognize Pastor Wanda McNeill for her 17 years of tireless work as Executive Director of Washington, DC's Southeast Ministry, which she helped create in 1990. Pastor McNeill, on the surface, was not an obvious candidate to take on such work in an inner city neighborhood, having been born and raised in Sioux City, Iowa. But Pastor McNeill has touched the lives of thousands in Washington, DC, and this city will be forever grateful for her dedication to those in need. We wish her well and Godspeed as she leaves our Nation's Capital to accept a call to lead a parish in Lake Preston, South Dakota.

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill is a spiritual leader who, through her faith in God, has answered His call by dedicating her life's work to serving those in need;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill was born on February 21, 1944 in Sioux City, Iowa, and was raised on a family farm along with her sister Stella by William and Louise Edwards;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill in her earlier life was a foster parent with her late husband Frank McNeill to 12 children;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill earned a Diploma in Nursing at Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Des Moines, Iowa in 1965 and has been a licensed Registered Nurse in Iowa, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill served the citizens of North Carolina as a Vista Volunteer

working with low-income families from 1966 to 1968, and then as a public health nurse until 1984, and during that time, founded the Yancey County Hospice Agency in Burnsville, North Carolina in 1982;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill earned a B.S. in professional arts, psychology emphasis, from St. Joseph's College, North Windham, Massachusetts in 1984, graduated from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1988, was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1989, and earned a doctorate of ministry from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2005;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill has held the positions of Assistant Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Pastor at the Lutheran Church of Reformation in Washington, DC, since 1990 and has served our Capitol Hill neighborhood faithfully for 17 years;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill co-founded a non-profit social justice ministry named Southeast Ministry in the Anacostia neighborhood of southeast Washington, DC, in 1990 in response to expressed community needs for educational, cultural, and employment programs that lead those in need to self-sufficiency;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill through Southeast Ministry has reached thousands of men and women with education and job-related information services, increased their basic education skills and assisted them in passing the GED, prepared them to secure jobs through a curriculum of African-American culture, history, parenting, health and vocational assessment and in placement in training, employment and education;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill's personal decorations include the Community Service Award from Anacostia-Congress Heights Partnership in 1991, Women of Achievement Award from the Zonta Club of Washington, DC, in 2000, and the Bob Woodson Award for special accomplishments from the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in 2005;

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives recognizes Pastor Wanda McNeill for her commitment to a life of service to the citizens of the United States, especially the poor and underprivileged who society has passed by, for her continued dedication to this life-long calling, and for touching the lives of thousands with her work in the poorest neighborhoods of the District of Columbia, our Nation's Capitol.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, because I was out of the country last week on an important diplomatic and constituent services mission, I was unable to vote on rollcall Nos. 607 through 629. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall Nos. 607–610, 613–615, 617–624, and 628–629. I would have voted "no" on rollcall Nos. 611–612, 616, and 625–627.

CONGRATULATING THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 294, which commends the Kingdom of Lesotho for the enactment of a law to improve the status of married women and ensure the access of married women to property rights. Lesotho has made incredible progress towards gender equality, and I hope this Congress will recognize these steps forward.

This landlocked country of about 12,000 square miles has achieved a significant milestone towards gender equality by legally eliminating any deprivation of property rights for women. It gives me great pride to recognize not only the Kingdom of Lesotho, but also the idea that gender equality can be achieved in developing countries. Through the diligent efforts of many women's rights organizations, as well as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the women of Lesotho now can turn to their court to protect their rights.

I am especially proud that this resolution includes continued support for International Women's Day, which we celebrate annually on March 8. Earlier this year the House passed House Resolution 149, legislation I introduced that supports the goals of International Women's Day. International Women's Day recognizes and honors the women around the world who have fought and continue to struggle for equality in the face of adversity. What is happening in Lesotho is a manifestation of the actions of those persistent women.

I want to again congratulate the Kingdom of Lesotho for enacting this crucial legislation and proving again that gender discrimination is simply unacceptable. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of Lesotho.

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN R. DEMBSKI

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, words can hardly express our admiration and gratitude as we note the tragic passing of an awe-inspiring civil servant. On Sunday, July 15, 2007 the community of Ridgfield Park, the County of Bergen, and the State of New Jersey lost a great hero upon the passing of Stephen R. Dembski, 41, after battling a major fire in neighboring Bogota. I join Steve's family, friends, and the entire community in mourning the loss of such a dedicated public servant.

A devoted husband and father to his wife Nancy and two children Kyle and Raymond, Steve was a pillar of our community. Steve came from a long line of firefighters, starting off as a junior firefighter when he was 16, becoming a full-fledged firefighter at the Ridgfield Park Hook and Ladder Company 2 at age 18, and later serving as chief for 2 years. His more than two decades of public

service and his commitment to his duties as a firefighter reveal his extraordinary dedication to the safety and security of his family, friends, and community.

Firefighters like Steve are willing to give their lives to protect the safety of American citizens and willfully advance to the front lines of danger to provide assistance to those around them. Each time firefighters courageously rush into burning buildings and willingly lay their lives on the line for their fellow citizens, their unshakeable devotion to others leads us to place our lives and priorities in perspective and also helps reaffirm in the hearts of all Americans what is really important in life. Firefighters like Steve are essential to our communities and help to ensure the safety and security of our great nation. Each firefighter is a testament to the indomitable and caring spirit that drives our nation and makes America the incredible country it is today. This nation owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Steve Dembski for his service to our community. May God bless the Dembski family.

HONORING DALE D. PETERSON UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, my colleague, Mrs. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER, and I rise in honor of Dale D. Peterson who is retiring after more than 40 years of service to his country, our community, and the educational system of Contra Costa County.

After earning a degree from Contra Costa College, Dale Peterson began his long career of public service by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, serving from 1965 to 1969. Having completed this service to his country, Dale achieved his journeyman status after completing a 4-year electrical apprenticeship.

From 1973 to 1993, Dale worked as general electric contractor, a foreman, and a superintendent. His service during these years involved the responsibilities of managing commercial, residential and industrial electrical construction jobs in Contra Costa County. During this time Dale also served as the Assistant Business Manager of the IBEW Local 302 and on several committees of that same labor union.

For over 20 years, Dale Peterson has continued to share his time and talent with our community by serving on a number of Boards and Councils. His work as a Trustee of the Contra Costa Building Trade Council and as a member of the Contra Costa Central Labor Council reflect Dale Peterson's continued dedication to his fellow tradesmen and the labor movement in this county. Dale's work as a Contra Costa County Library Commissioner and as a member of the Board of Directors for both the East County Business Education Alliance and the Delta Advocacy Foundation demonstrates his enduring commitment to education and educational reform.

In 1991, Dale Peterson became a Parent Education Facilitator at the Family Stress Center where he served for 8 years. In 2000 he