

HORIPSEMA "HELEN" MENESHIAN: A SURVIVOR'S STORY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to memorialize and record a courageous story of survival of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau documented at the time, it was a campaign of "race extermination."

The campaign to annihilate the Armenian people failed, as illustrated by the proud Armenian nation and prosperous diaspora. It is difficult if not impossible to find an Armenian family not touched by the genocide, and while there are some survivors still with us, it is imperative that we record their stories. Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

This is one of those stories (submitted by Shirley Collins):

My name is Shirley Kalashian-Collins. I was born in 1951 to Armenian parents. My mother was born in Aintab, Turkey, in 1920 in the midst of the genocide of Armenians. My mother and my grandparents narrowly made it out alive and found refuge in the U.S. My paternal grandmother also had a harrowing story. Due to the threat against the Armenians she was shipped to the U.S. at 15 years old to marry an Armenian, only to find out a few years later that her parents were killed and her younger sisters kidnapped. My mother tried hard to put all these stories down on paper so the world would know what happened to our families. After she passed away, I attempted to finish her project. After nearly 10 years and hundreds of hours of work, I put the story together.

Now I want to thank our Rep. Adam Schiff for his efforts to put these stories that are left untold in the Congressional Record. I know my mother, if she were alive, would be dancing up and down with joy. You can't imagine how exciting this is for me after all the years of work to make sure these stories are kept alive and heard so that history will be recorded accurately. Thank you Rep. Schiff. This is such a wonderful and amazing idea.

This is the story of my Grandmother, Horipsema "Helen" Meneshian, as told by my mother, Azadohi Kalashian:

My mother was a remarkable woman. She was born in Aintab in 1895. She was the only daughter of five children born to Soghmon and Khanoom Meneshian.

In 1914 she married Armen Guleserian. They had a big and fashionable wedding party that lasted for three days. Their first child was a beautiful and bright little girl who gave them much joy. This child was not quite two years old when the Turkish government sent orders to have the Turkish army go around and evacuate everyone in Aintab from their homes.

Only whatever could be placed on a donkey's back was allowed to be removed from the house. Then the Turkish soldiers sealed

all the doors, windows and locks of our house. We were all ordered to march in the direction of the Syrian Desert.

My mother's trousseau of finest lace, satin and silk was not meant to be enjoyed by her. One by one, each article was sold for the price of something to eat. Her gold coins, chains and rings also went the same way. Eventually, hunger became unbearable, and death took its grim toll. One by one, God called their first born, then their second born, then their third born to be by HIS side. They were never to feel hunger again!

Armen had been sent off to the military and Hripsema had been left alone in Damascus. She tried to reach her father but they would not let her travel because she was Armenian. So, she found someone to travel with to go to Hama where her relative, Kevork, was. In an interview with daughter, Azad, in 1979 she says:

Everybody got off when we were near Hama. I was the only one left. They gave me to a woman who had donkeys and this woman took me to Hama on a donkey. We had nothing. I had the child in my arms and the child's necessities tied on my back. We came by a cemetery and the woman said, "I will not go in here." She took me off of the donkey. She said, "I will be afraid to be in a cemetery. You do whatever you will."

I went in by myself, I found a shop. I asked the man in the shop, "There is the Baronyan family living here, do you know them?" He said, "Yes, they went to Aleppo." I said, "There is Kevork Guleserian here." He said, "Yes, they are here but their place is very far." Then they locked the door.

The child wanted some water, I gave him some water and I went and sat by the store. And it got dark, it was evening. Then I saw my father-in-law's grandson, he later said that he would never walk the way I was sitting at, he would always go the other way. I lifted my head and saw him. I was looking for them. He got very surprised and asked what happened and I told him everything. He took me, the child was in my arms, he took the load I was carrying and took me to their home.

He knocked on the door; they opened the door, a month, or a month and a half. Papa's brother's wife was there. She was Guleserian as well. In about a month the child who was in my arms died. I was devastated. Then papa came and asked, "Where is the boy?" I said, "May your soul live, you'll have another one." He was such a nice boy. They had asked to have him, "Give him to us, we'll raise him up" in Damascus. I would not. How can you give your own child?

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Mr. COFFMAN. Madam Speaker, today our national debt is \$13,472,761,083,757.88.

On January 6th, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$2,834,335,337,464.00 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEFENSE CONTRACTORS ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, since July, I have been working with 26 Oregon National Guard members who have filed a lawsuit against the defense contractor KBR for exposing them to the potent carcinogen, hexavalent chromium. These veterans have a compelling case for contractor negligence that resulted in their poisoning.

As the legal proceedings have unfolded, KBR has revealed the existence of a still-classified contract clause that could shift the cost of all damages and court fees onto the Department of Defense—and by extension the U.S. taxpayers.

Today I am introducing legislation, along with Representative SCHRADER, who has been a strong ally to these veterans, and Representative WALTER JONES, a leader on the House Armed Services Committee, to end the contracting practices that shield companies from their own reckless behavior and that remove incentives for contractors to operate responsibly.

This legislation will set important and long-overdue limits to indemnification agreements and will introduce much-needed congressional oversight of the defense contracting process.

Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY are introducing a version of this bill in the Senate, and I hope that our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers will act swiftly to enact this legislation before the end of the session.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANCIS J. CURTIS

HON. STEVE KAGEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, I rise here today to pay tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Francis J. Curtis as he relinquishes command of the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Lt. Col. Curtis assumed command of the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion in October 2007. He has served in key positions as a U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) officer, with a special focus on the conflict in Iraq. Under Lt. Col. Curtis's command, his battalion was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from late 2007 through late 2008. Prior to his deployment with the 432nd, he also served in Iraq from March 2003 through April 2004.

During his 24 years of exceptional service to this country in the United States Army Reserve, Lt. Col. Curtis has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal (3rd Award), Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (6th Award), Army Achievement Medal (3rd Award), Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (31st Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve

Medal w/M Device, Br. Hourglass, Roman Numeral 2, Army Service Ribbon, Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Superior Unit Award, Combat Action Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Lt. Col Curtis will turn over his command to Lt. Col. William A. Vaughn of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Greensboro, North Carolina on October 2, 2010 at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Madam Speaker, I honor Lieutenant Colonel Curtis for his service to our country and the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion and I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting a truly extraordinary member of our community.

U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE FUGITIVE SAFE SURRENDER PROGRAM

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share the recent success of the United States Marshals Service Fugitive Safe Surrender Program in my home of Northeast Ohio. From September 22 through 25, 2010, 7,431 fugitives surrendered and took advantage of the Fugitive Safe Surrender program held at Mt. Zion Church in Oakwood Village, Ohio. This set a new national record for fugitive surrenders in the program. Nearly 500 wanted felons, including individuals wanted on federal and out-of-state warrants all peacefully surrendered during the four-day program, representing over 12,000 outstanding warrants.

Law enforcement, judiciary at the municipal, state and federal level, Pastor Larry L. Macon Sr. of Mt. Zion, and over 40 partnering organizations joined together to offer those with outstanding warrants the ability to peacefully surrender within the safe environment of Mt. Zion Church. This program could not have succeeded without their extraordinary commitment of time and resources.

As you know, Fugitive Safe Surrender is administered by the Marshals Service in states with a particularly high volume of fugitive warrants, such as Ohio. The goal of Fugitive Safe Surrender is to reduce risks to police officers in pursuit of fugitives, neighborhoods where felons often hide, and possible injury to the fugitives themselves. Authorized by Congress in July 2006 and signed into law in 2007, it is believed to be the first program of its kind in the Nation. I am very proud that this program was created in 2005 by my friend, U.S. Marshal Peter Elliott in the Northern District of Ohio.

After Cleveland Police Officer Wayne Leon was shot and killed by a wanted fugitive, Marshal Elliott recognized the need for more safety in capturing felons and those persons wanted on outstanding warrants. Marshal Elliott found this creative approach to reduce violence between fugitives and law enforcement. The first year Marshal Elliott launched the program in Cleveland, 850 fugitives peacefully surrendered.

Building on this innovative program, Marshal Elliott later helped lead the program in 10 cities and was urged by mayors nationwide to imple-

ment the program in their communities. Since then, 30,000 wanted individuals have surrendered through the program in 18 cities across our nation in the past five years.

Fugitive Safe Surrender is a success. In addition to violent fugitives, thousands of individuals wanted for non-violent felony or misdemeanor crimes have also felt comfortable in voluntarily surrendering in faith-based or other neutral settings established by the program.

AHMADINEJAD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2010

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, some things do not need to be elaborated on. Rudy Giuliani, a great American, recently spoke at a rally in New York City where 20,000 people showed up to protest the dictator Ahmadinejad and his corrupt regime. Ahmadinejad was in town to spew more of his hateful ideology. This time, he interlaced his anti-Semitic rhetoric with conspiracy theories on 9/11. This man does not speak for the Iranian people, who only want freedom to live their lives without the shackles of a regime bent on preserving its power at all costs. The courageous opposition group MEK, who organized the rally, is fighting for this very freedom. The State Department has got them wrong—they are not a terrorist organization and should not be listed as one. Mayor Giuliani agreed with me and I'd like to submit his comments for the record.

God bless you and thank you very much for being here. I come here today for a very simple reason, to stand with you in support of the basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and also the basic rights guaranteed by the preamble to the United Nations Charter. We need to remind the United Nations of what it stands for. According to the preamble of the United Nations, it exists to reaffirm faith in fundamental rights in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

The people of Iran are as entitled as all of us to make a claim on the nations of the United Nations to reaffirm these goals for them; and that is what you are here to do.

For too long the world has acquiesced in a regime in Iran that through mass murder, violence and intimidation has denied basic rights of your brothers and sisters and friends and relatives and has been a consistent supporter of terrorism and of terrorist organizations beyond its borders.

All of you are here today to cry out for the world to stand with you and your brothers and sisters who are oppressed by the brutal regime in Iran.

They desire freedom! I desire freedom! We all desire freedom! No one can deny you your desire for freedom! I believe that desire is placed in your heart and soul by the Creator! It comes from above. Not from here, not from below, but from above. It is a basic human desire that the people of Iran are entitled to and it is a basic human desire that all good people should support.

And if this institution that stands behind us, the United Nations, wants to reclaim its lofty goal of protecting human rights; which is a goal that has alluded it for many many years, then it must stand with you against the regime in Iran, against the brutalization that goes on in Iran, and against the supporting of terrorism.

And it is time here in America to right a wrong that has been done to you and your cause out of a misguided notion that the violent and tyrannical regime of Iran could be mollified. It is about time that we change the listing of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran as a terrorist organization.

I've studied terrorism for much longer that I'd like to admit. For over 35 years. I have investigated terrorism, and I've seen firsthand, in my city, the devastation that terrorism can bring about.

This is not a terrorist organization. This is an organization dedicated to achieving freedom and dignity for its people.

It is time for the rest of our Congress to join 823 members—Democrats and Republicans—who have supported House Resolution 1431 which calls for the lifting of this unjust, unfair and inaccurate designation. It has been lifted by the British government; it has been lifted by the European Union; it should be lifted by the United States Congress and President Obama should support it as a defender of freedom.

Just as this great country of America is described as the last best hope for humanity, you and your cause are truly the best hope for Iran.

Your quest is as legitimate as solidarity was for Poland.

And it took lovers of freedom and leaders of historical consequence like Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Pope John Paul, to stand with Solidarity no matter the consequences.

Your goals are our goals, they are the goals of a decent people; you want to guarantee equal rights for men and women; you want to see freedom of religion and speech and press; freedom of assembly in Iran, you want Iran that does not threaten the existence of other nations; and you want an Iran that is under no circumstances a nuclear power.

It is your members and associates who have consistently drawn open the secret curtain that Iran tries to draw on its plans to develop nuclear weapons.

It is your members who have risked their lives and lost their lives revealing the plans and steps of Ahmadinejad and the regime to acquire nuclear weapons.

Without your brave investigations and revelations, America and the world would still be laboring under the inaccurate information that was contained in the National Intelligence Estimate of 2007 that said Iran had appeared to abandon its plans to build nuclear weapons. Your members, your associates, revealed that to be incorrect, inaccurate, and dangerously wrong.

If the history of the 20th century has taught us anything, it is that we must confront tyrants, oppressors, bullies and terrorists as early as possible.

Acquiescence only leads to increasing loss of human life and human liberty.

For too long the world has stood still as the people of Iran, particularly those of you desiring freedom, have been oppressed, imprisoned and slaughtered by a regime that has no right to exist.

It's time to make common cause with you in your noble quest.

It is a risk that is worth taking.

It is a cause that is worth the risk.

If the forebears of this country didn't take the risk for freedom, then this great nation would not exist.

Your people, the people of Iran, are willing to fight for freedom; you are willing to speak out against horrible atrocities to human dignity. And when they do, this country, America, should strongly stand with them, and speak out for them.

No more silence! Where is our Ronald Reagan when we need him? Ronald Reagan