

have declined despite the adoption of a new charter proposed by the ruling monarchy last year at the height of street protests," once again call that reputation into question.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY CENTER DELEGATION TO MOROCCAN-CONTROLLED WESTERN SAHARA AND SAHRAWI REFUGEE CAMPS IN ALGERIA—SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

On Friday, August 31, 2012 an international delegation of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (RFK Center) concluded a visit to evaluate the human rights situation in Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and the Sahrawi refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria. The RFK Center delegation met with victims of human rights violations, a broad range of representatives of civil society, representatives of the international community, and government officials. The delegation also noticed that the conflict stalemate has a serious impact on the rights of the Sahrawi population in both Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and refugee camps.

MOROCCAN-CONTROLLED WESTERN SAHARA

Though the Moroccan Constitution now incorporates advances that include the criminalization of torture, arbitrary detention, and forced disappearances, the delegation observed the need for increased implementation of these changes. In spite of these guarantees, these freedoms are often undermined by the King's authority as the "guarantor of the independence of the Nation and the territorial integrity." In conjunction with article 3 of the Moroccan Law of Associations, these provisions have led to the prohibition of associations of certain groups and individuals such as those Sahrawi advocating for the right to self-determination of Western Sahara.

Large Police and Military Presence in Capital City of El-Ayoun: Most Sahrawi interviewed expressed concern about the uniformed and plain-clothed police and military personnel posted on almost every corner. Sahrawi who were not pro-Moroccan reported that they were followed and verbally abused in the streets by police. The RFK Center delegation was under surveillance by security officers for the duration of their time in El-Ayoun.

Police and State Brutality: Characteristic of the situation, the RFK Center delegation witnessed firsthand a police attack on a peaceful demonstrator. One uniformed police officer and three State agents attacked the woman who subsequently needed medical attention. Moroccan government dismissed the delegation's report of the incident, and instead attempted to discredit it. Two of the State agents involved in the beating (Mohammed Al Hasouni and Mohamed Natchi) were described as human rights violators in reports by other victims interviewed. The delegation heard innumerable reports of non-violent protestors who were detained and tortured for participating in peaceful demonstrations. Other cases included: 1) police brutally beat a mentally disabled man who was involved in demonstrations in 2005, 2008, and 2012. 2) The emblematic case of Said Dambar, a 26 year-old man who was shot and killed by a Moroccan police officer after being beaten in 2010. His family still waits for an autopsy, a murder investigation, and to learn the whereabouts of this body.

Nearly absolute impunity for human rights violations: In spite of the numerous denunciations of cases of torture received by the delegation, the Prosecutor of First Instance in El-Ayoun informed the delegation that, over the past five years, only one state agent was successfully prosecuted for committing an act of torture.

Violation of the Sahrawi people's rights to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association:

The delegation met with representatives of a group of seven people criminally prosecuted under spurious charges for expressing their opinions. The group was arrested and charged with treason upon their arrival in Morocco after criticizing the Moroccan government from Algeria. The group was imprisoned and is now on provisional release, pending a final decision.

Pro-independence Sahrawi human rights groups are barred from registering and are deemed illegal to register as civil society organizations. Registration is essential for allowing the organizations to effectively advocate in their communities. Notably, The Collective of Saluawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA), Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH) El-Ayoun Chapter, and the Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State El-Ayoun, Western Sahara (ASVDH).

Assaults, threats, illegal searches, surveillance, and criminal prosecutions by high-level authorities designed to discredit and stigmatize the work of human rights defenders and attorneys who represent victims of human rights abuses (e.g., RFK Human Rights Award laureate Aminatou Haidar).

Concerns of retaliation against those who met with the RFK Center delegation.

SAHRAWI REFUGEE CAMPS—THE SAHARA DESERT

The RFK Center delegation did not observe any restriction on the freedom of movement or association.

Basic Needs—There are concerns regarding: food ration quality, quantity, and variation; exposure to extreme heat (which can reach 115 degrees); limited electricity; need for permanent housing; and limited sanitation.

The camps house over 100,000 people and have been in existence for 37 years in harsh physical and psychological situation that put at risk their well-being.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Moroccan government should:

Immediately stop the harassment, violence, persecution, and intimidation of pro-independence Sahrawi people;

Investigate, prosecute, and punish those involved in past and present human rights violations;

Immediately suspend government agents under investigation for human rights violations and establish an effective vetting program;

Ensure effective access to due process and judicial guarantee, without discrimination, and regardless of political positions;

Release prisoners falsely accused of committing a crime, while exercising their right to freedom of expression and association.

2. The U.S. government should support the inclusion of a permanent human rights monitoring and reporting mandate to the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

3. The international community should encourage further negotiations to guarantee the fulfillment of the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people as established in several UN resolutions and in the decision of the International Court of Justice.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF SUMMIT ROAD AT THE SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Summit Road at the Scotts Bluff National Monument. The road opened on September 19, 1937 after four years of work. Efforts to design and build the road continue to allow Nebraskans and Americans from across the country to enjoy one of the most spectacular views in our nation.

Today we celebrate not only the achievement of building the Summit Road, but also the beauty and historic significance of this National Monument.

Scotts Bluff served as an important landmark for Americans as they moved West during the Nineteenth Century. Pioneers often faced extreme hardship travelling to and settling new lands. They risked everything to give their families a better life, and laid the foundation for the Good Life Nebraskans cherish.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in celebrating the Scotts Bluff National Monument on this important anniversary.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office; the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,014,424,023,771.68. We've added \$5,387,546,974,858.60 dollars to our debt in 3.5 years. This is \$5.4 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RECOGNIZING THE GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL OF THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE AND THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Girl Scout Council of the Florida Panhandle and the Girl Scouts of the USA on the occasion of their 100th anniversary.

Over the last century, the Girl Scouts of the USA has been committed to service and empowering America's youth. Today, this organization continues to bestow in young girls the courage, confidence, and character necessary for success in life. They afford young girls the opportunity to grow and develop physically,

mentally, and spiritually. What began as only eighteen girls from Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, has grown over one hundred years later into a distinguished group with a membership of over 3.2 million girls and adults.

In my district alone, the Girl Scout Council of the Florida Panhandle comprises over two thousand girls and nearly one thousand adult volunteers from Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties. The members of the Panhandle's Girl Scout Council have demonstrated their commitment to bettering the community by participating in a myriad of events, such as the Christmas and Veterans Day Parades and Earth Hour. Through these events and fundraisers, they have touched the lives of many. Northwest Florida is proud of their achievements and grateful for their dedication.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize the Girl Scouts of the USA and especially the Girl Scout Council of the Florida Panhandle for their service to the Northwest Florida community. My wife, Vicki and I congratulate them and wish them all the best for continued success.

RECOGNIZING ARTHUR BYRON
"DEACON" BOWERS

HON. DAVID P. ROE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I submit these remarks to recognize Mr. Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers of Carter County, Tennessee, for receiving the James H. Collier Service Award. The James H. Collier Service Award is given to veterans who continue to serve their country and fellow veterans through their retirement and into their civilian lives. Deacon Bowers is a veteran of the Korean War and has provided a perfect example of how one man can better the lives of veterans in his community.

For 36 years, Deacon dedicated his efforts to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. From 1974–2004, he served as Regional Veterans Employment Representative. By the time of his retirement, Deacon had assisted thousands of military veterans. In retirement, he continues to build on his volunteer legacy by visiting veterans and their families in the hospital. Deacon also helped create both the Veterans War Memorial and the Walk of Honor in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Deacon for his selfless contributions to Cocke County's veterans and wish him the best as he continues to exemplify the Volunteer spirit.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF CHARLES W. CARPENTER

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Charles W. Carpenter, the president of

the Denton Chamber of Commerce for the past 30 years.

Mr. Carpenter graduated from Baylor University in 1975, with a Bachelor's of Arts in communications. His personal and professional background in communications and his exceptional administrative skills have benefited him as he continues in his dedicated service in leading the Chamber and its staff.

He has been recognized for his contributions and continuous leadership to the city of Denton through numerous awards. He was the 2011 recipient of the Boy Scouts Distinguished Citizens Award and was commemorated in front of 20 past chairs of the chamber board for his positive influence through the chamber to the Denton community. In June 2010, he received the Marvin Hurley Lifetime Achievement Award by the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives Association.

Continually, Mr. Carpenter demonstrates his true passion to influence constructive change in the community of Denton. He is a founding member and supporter of the Denton Chamber 101 Club, which funds the Shop Denton Chamber First program. He is also an alumni member of Leadership Denton, as well as an appointed member of the board of directors of the Denton Economic Development Partnership.

Mr. Carpenter and the other members of the Denton Chamber of Commerce have made it a priority to connect local businesses with one another in order to help the business community of Denton flourish. Also, it is the only chamber in the DFW Metroplex and surrounding area that houses a full-service Small Business Development Center. Under his direction, the Denton Chamber remains a consistent and trustworthy organization for local business. For over 35 years, it has continued to be one of only 250 chambers in the nation to have accomplished and sustained accreditation through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

It is my pleasure to recognize the president of Denton Chamber of Commerce, Charles Carpenter, and his 30 years of service to the community. I am privileged to represent the City of Denton in the U.S. House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER AS HYDROCEPHALUS AWARENESS MONTH

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as National Hydrocephalus Awareness Month. For too long, little attention has been paid to hydrocephalus.

This condition can occur at any age and affects an estimated one million Americans.

In fact, one out of every 500 babies in the United States is born with hydrocephalus, making the condition the leading cause of brain surgery in children. Additionally, an increasing number of our veterans are developing post-traumatic hydrocephalus as a result of brain injuries suffered on the battlefield.

Currently, there is no single known cause of hydrocephalus or ways to prevent or cure the condition.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke is currently conducting research related to hydrocephalus prevention and treatment. However, more must be done at the community level to educate the American people about this surprisingly prevalent disorder.

Recognizing the month of September as National Hydrocephalus Awareness Month will bring this disease to the public's attention and, I believe, will encourage the discussions necessary to address more effectively the devastating effects of this disease and provide support to families who live with it every day. Today I commend the hard work of the Michael and Kim Illions of Woodbridge, New Jersey for their advocacy on behalf of their son, Cole.

I am certain that with federal support for additional research we can develop a better treatment, and eventually a cure, for those suffering from hydrocephalus and help them live healthier, fuller lives.

NATIONAL PULMONARY FIBROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, today, nearly 200,000 Americans suffer from Pulmonary Fibrosis, and an estimated 40,000 lose their battle to this disease each year. One death every 13 minutes.

Sadly, more than two-thirds of those living with Pulmonary Fibrosis will die within five years. And to top it all off there is no known cause and no known cure for this debilitating disease.

Next week is "World Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Week" and an opportunity to raise awareness for H.R. 2505 the "Pulmonary Fibrosis Research Enhancement Act." This legislation which I authored will establish a much needed national patient registry, encourage future research at the National Institute of Health, and create a national action plan to help us better understand this deadly disease.

This is an important first step forward in the fight to find a cure for pulmonary fibrosis and deliver hope to thousands of Americans living with this disease. I urge my colleagues to join me and co-sponsor H.R. 2505.

RECOGNIZING THE RAWSON FAMILY AS THE 2012 OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA OUTSTANDING FARM FAMILY

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the Rawson family for being selected as the Okaloosa County, Florida Outstanding Farm Family for 2012.

Ten years ago, the Rawson family was in search of acreage for hunting. This search subsequently evolved into a successful family run tree farm with a fruit orchard and over one hundred and fifty new oak trees planted each