

govern under the current Burmese Constitution and the military's control of a large portion of Burma's economy.

We have a challenge on our hands in Burma, and we need to be engaged. But the civilian leadership must take responsibility and must speak out. Too often, the international community has done too little, waited too long, or been caught unprepared by events that should not have surprised us. We continue to forget the lessons of the past and fail to live up to the post-Holocaust pledge of "never again." Ignoring the genocide war crimes and crimes against humanity that continue to rage around the world sends a message to the global community that atrocity crimes are tolerable. We must respond robustly to the crisis unfolding in Burma because it is the right thing to do and because it is in our national interest to do so.

The United Nations is calling the military campaign "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" against Rohingya Muslims. From credible human rights organizations and newspapers, there are consistent accounts of widespread extrajudicial killings, arson, rape, and other atrocities. At least 288 villages have been decimated, according to Human Rights Watch, which has used satellite imagery as evidence of the devastation caused by the so-called "clearance operations."

These current attacks on the Rohingya follow decades of state-led persecution and dehumanization. Government efforts to deny Rohingya citizenship rights, to restrict their freedom of movement and the practice of their faith, and to deny their basic human rights have all been identified as precursors to a genocide.

The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights found that the attacks were executed in a well-organized, coordinated, and systematic manner by the Myanmar Security Forces, often supported by the armed Rakhine Buddhists. They have described the attacks as a "cynical ploy to forcibly transfer large numbers of people without possibility of return."

There were also appalling acts of sexual violence, which clearly amount to crimes against humanity and/or acts of genocide that must not be forgotten. Women and girls, some as young as 5, were raped by men in uniform in front of their families. U.N. and other health workers said that after this most recent August 2017 military crackdown, they treated dozens of Rohingya women and girls who escaped to Bangladesh for injuries consistent with violent sexual attacks.

One woman told Human Rights Watch that she and four other women were taken to a hut, slashed with knives, and sexually assaulted. The soldiers then set the hut on fire. She was the only one to escape alive. Another woman who was raped still has injuries from the machete attack and beatings that accompanied the rape and said she barely managed to escape from a burning house.

I also want to draw attention to the needs of the survivors, their families, and communities. There is an acute lack of healthcare available to the survivors, including reproductive health, psychosocial, and other critical services.

Seventy-five years ago, the world—and the United States—could have said they did not know what is happening. Today we do. Today we have no excuse. Instead, the international community must hold the perpetrators accountable. In addition, to date, no real progress has been made either holding perpetrators of serious violations accountable or in addressing the root causes underlying the situation in Burma. Therefore, there is an urgent need to act.

The strong statements by Ambassador Haley and last month by the Vice President must be followed up with action. The administration should lead efforts for action in the Security Council. The Security Council should insist that persons responsible for grave abuses be held accountable for their crimes. It also should press the Burmese authority to cooperate with the U.N. factfinding mission established by the United Nations Human Rights Council and grant unfettered access to its staff to Burma, including the Rakhine State.

We need to know what is happening on the ground. We need to know that in order to protect people and to get the evidence necessary to hold the perpetrators accountable. The Council should send a clear message that it stands ready to take additional steps to ensure justice, including through the International Criminal Court, and urge member states to pursue other mechanisms that might provide justice for recent abuses.

I should also add that Bangladesh deserves credit for keeping its borders open to the influx of refugees—600,000 have fled to Bangladesh, and they kept their borders open. Bangladesh has been one of the few bright spots in the current crisis and should continue to honor its promise to build shelters for new arrivals, accelerate humanitarian assistance, and provide the needed medical service for this traumatized group.

I also believe the United States needs to reevaluate our policy and approach to Burma. We need to have a policy in regard to Burma that we understand, that addresses these human rights violations, that reevaluates our approach for our relationship with the Burmese military, and that relooks at how to best use sanctions as a way to seek additional leverage with the Burmese Government and military.

I am working with a number of my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, on legislation to seek to clarify U.S. policy and to address some of these issues.

As the President prepares for his upcoming trip to the ASEAN Summit in the region, Congress will be watching

closely to see if he makes Burma and human rights a top priority during this trip and to see what he and his administration choose to undertake in the coming days to address the tragedy unfolding in Rakhine State.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOMALIA TERRORIST ATTACK

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the recent terrorist attack in Somalia.

On October 14, a truck filled with explosives detonated in a crowded district in Mogadishu—Somalia's capital. The blast was especially devastating because the truck blew up next to a fuel tanker, causing a massive fireball and leveling structures, including the nearby Safari Hotel, which collapsed and trapped many people under its rubble. According to Somali authorities, the target of the attack may have been the city's international airport which also houses many Embassies.

This is the worst terrorist attack in Somalia's history. Three hundred fifty-eight people were killed, hundreds have been injured, and dozens are still missing.

As a Minnesota Senator, I represent the largest Somali-American population in the Nation. For Minnesota, this wasn't just a massive attack overseas. It affected every one of my estimated 74,000 Somali-American constituents.

Among those killed is Ahmed Eyyow. He was from Bloomington, MN. He had attended Normandale Community College and Metropolitan State University. He left behind his wife and three children.

Another Somali-American who was killed in the blast was Mohamoud Elmi. He had lived in Ohio and had moved back to Somalia about 2 years ago. He was a young man with a bright future, working at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management in Somalia.

There was Abukar Mohamed. He lived in Virginia before moving back to Somalia, where he worked in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He was killed along with his wife, Shadiye Hassan. They left behind seven children who are between the ages of 3 and 20.

Hundreds of others perished in that heinous attack. They all have their own stories. They left behind their wives, their husbands, their children, their friends, their parents.

Somalia is one of the most, if not the most, fragile nations on Earth. It has been an incredibly difficult country to

govern ever since the civil war tore the country apart in 1991. It suffers from the massive displacement of people, hundreds of thousands of refugees, lack of sufficient public services, and warring factions and clans. To make matters worse, a severe drought has ravaged Somalia, leaving 6 million people—half of the nation's population—facing food shortages. The combination of instability, lack of security, and shortage of goods and services has enabled terrorist groups like al-Shabaab—widely believed to be the culprit in this attack—to gain a foothold in Somalia.

We have to have a comprehensive strategy to help the people of Somalia. One component of that strategy is to help Somalis root out terrorism. The Government of Somalia has announced its intent to step up the fight against al-Shabaab. The United States has and will continue to aid those efforts, as will the African Union Mission in Somalia—a multinational peacekeeping force that is supported by the United States.

At the same time, we have to erode and eliminate the conditions that enable terrorist groups to thrive. That means redoubling our efforts to help stabilize fragile nations. That means supporting good governance, reducing extreme inequality, and helping marginalized, disenfranchised individuals who are preyed upon time and again by terrorist recruiters.

It is more important than ever that we fully fund our international programs that support these efforts, for humanitarian and security reasons. Unfortunately, the administration's 2018 budget proposal does the opposite. It includes a 30-percent cut to programs that seek to bring stability, rule of law, and humanitarian assistance to places that need it the most. The administration's budget is making the world, and us, less safe. And I want to urge the President to rethink his approach to foreign aid.

My colleagues, Senators JOHN McCAIN and TIM KAINE, put it this way in a recent op-ed they coauthored, saying:

Today, 80 percent of our assistance provides relief and promotes stability in conflict zones and states on the verge of collapse. There are U.S. Agency for International Development programs in many of the countries most plagued by terrorism, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mali, Yemen and Somalia. We're saving lives and creating partners to help address the instability that produces the threats our military risks life and limb to fight.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues and the American people to not forget about the terrible tragedy in Somalia. I urge everyone to keep Somali victims and other victims of terror acts throughout the world in their thoughts and prayers.

The world needs to know that the United States will continue to support Somalia and other nations that are fighting those who are wreaking havoc on their nations. But we have to re-

member that we will all be more successful when we combine military efforts with diplomatic and humanitarian ones. While we cannot bring back those who perished, if we focus on rooting out the conditions that give rise to terrorism, we can have a shot at averting the next one.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to reauthorize Federal funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. Children's health insurance is not a partisan issue in this country, and it never has been.

In 1997, the bill to create the Children's Health Insurance Program passed with bipartisan support. It was introduced by the late Senator Ted Kennedy, a Democrat from Massachusetts, and our colleague, Senator ORRIN HATCH, Republican from Utah. This program has been a resounding success. Tens of millions of kids from all over the country have received access to preventive care, doctors' visits, prescriptions, dental and vision coverage as a result of this act of Congress.

Children's healthcare is not a partisan issue in Nevada—the great State that I represent—either. Over the past 20 years, more than 60,000 of Nevada's kids have benefited from our State CHIP program, Nevada Check Up. Together with the gains we have made due to the ACA's Medicaid expansion, our rate of uninsured children has fallen by half, making our program one of the biggest successes in the country.

Today, 9 million children from low-income families nationwide, including 27,000 from Nevada, get their health insurance through CHIP. If Congress continues to do nothing, those 9 million children will not be able to go to a doctor for their annual checkup; 9 million children will not be able to afford their prescriptions. The parents of those 9 million children will have to wait until their child's headache or infection or sore throat becomes an emergency before taking them to the hospital.

In 2008, the last time funding for CHIP was on the chopping block, Senator Ted Kennedy said that the test of a great nation is in the way it treats its children. We are a great nation. We know how to take care of our kids. Americans understand that children's healthcare is the kind of thing that should be beyond the reach of partisan politics.

Governors from both parties, medical professionals, care providers, and advo-

cates from across this Nation have already called on Congress to do its job and move as quickly as possible to reauthorize this funding. Nevada's Republican Governor, Brian Sandoval, is one of those voices. Republicans and Democrats alike know that kids can't go to school, they can't go to soccer practice, they can't learn their times tables or their fractions, they can't do things that healthy, happy kids like to do if they do not feel well.

But don't ask me why funding for CHIP is important. Listen to the voices of parents who lie awake at night, worried that the cough they are hearing down the hall in their child's room will not go away on its own. It is scary enough to have a sick child. No parent should have to live with the additional fear that they will not be able to afford the care their child needs. No parent should have to choose between treating a cough that has been getting worse and worse for weeks and paying next month's rent. People across the country are working every single day just to make ends meet. CHIP is their lifeline.

Just ask Lisa, a self-employed mom. Her children are able to see the whiteboard in math class because CHIP allowed her family to afford glasses.

Ask Glenna, whose daughter broke her arm on the monkey bars when she was 4. Without CHIP, Glenna would have had to take out loans to pay off that medical bill.

Hear from Vanessa about the excellent healthcare her daughter received after she contracted meningitis at age 12, which was paid for with health insurance Vanessa purchased through CHIP. Vanessa says that CHIP is the reason her daughter is alive today.

These are just three of the countless stories I have heard from people who just don't know what they would do if private health insurance were the only option available to their family.

Illness, injury, these things happen. All of us get sick sometimes, but going bankrupt trying to pay for your son or daughter's medical treatment, that is not normal. That should not be something we accept as part of our everyday lives.

Every time I go home to Nevada, I hear the same things over and over from people I meet. They say to me: My medical bills are out of control. Please do something to help.

We should be working night and day around the clock to fix our healthcare system and relieve the burden of healthcare costs on working people.

Allowing funding for CHIP to expire, allowing State governments to go bankrupt, allowing rural hospitals and our community medical centers to shut their doors and go out of business, this is not what the American people sent us here to do. We are the representatives of this great Nation, and it is time to act like it and stop playing politics with children's health.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.