

U.S. not only has the worst maternal mortality rate in the entire developed world, but that these rates are on the rise. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, we are worse than Iran.

Every year, between 700 and 900 maternal deaths occur in the United States, and I have seen tears brought to the eyes of many a colleague when they learn that more than 60 percent of these deaths could have been prevented, according to the CDC. It is difficult to imagine the grief felt by these families when a life is cut short and they learn that it could have been prevented.

As a mom, as an American, and as a lawmaker, we must do better. Combating maternal mortality must become a national priority, which is why I urge my colleagues to support this bill. The Preventing Maternal Deaths Act represents the biggest step taken by Congress to date on this issue. It would enable States to establish and strengthen maternal mortality review committees, which bring together experts in public health, in maternal health, and in infant health to investigate each and every pregnancy-related death to understand what went wrong and how to save future mothers' lives.

Currently, the available data is woefully inadequate, which hinders our ability to understand why moms are dying and why certain women are more at risk. Right now, African American women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes, and women living in rural areas are also facing higher risk. This bill will not only improve data collection, but it will empower States to participate in national information sharing, increase collaboration, and develop best practices.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to dedicate this bill to the mothers whom we have lost, moms like Kira Johnson who lost her life just hours after giving birth to a healthy baby boy.

I will never forget hearing from Kira's husband, Charles, who has been a tireless advocate on this issue. He is a single father of two boys and now lives by the motto: "Wake up, make mommy proud, repeat."

Stories like Kira's have struck at the hearts of many of us and have compelled us to action today. Today, we honor the lives of these moms and the loved ones who remember them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. I thank both Congresswoman DEGETTE and Congresswoman HERRERA BEUTLER for bringing this issue to our committee and also to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a positive vote today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia

(Mr. CARTER), who is a valuable member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act.

Unfortunately, we know all too well in Georgia the need to address maternal mortality rates in the Nation. My home State of Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country, and we learned about the challenges leading to this statistic on September 27 in the Energy and Commerce Committee when we were able to hear from my colleague and the sponsor of the bill, Congresswoman HERRERA BEUTLER.

As my colleague noted in the hearing, we are seeing an estimated number of between 700 and 900 maternal deaths per year, a number that is unacceptable in today's world. A 2015 World Health Organization report noted that nearly half of these deaths were preventable.

From 1987 to 2009, the number of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births nearly doubled. That is why this legislation is so important.

Whether it is updates to maternal mortality data collection or mental treatment options, or the reforms and changes for the maternal mortality review committees, this legislation is necessary to helping us curb this trend and reduce the number of maternal mortality deaths.

We can and we should do more, and I hope that this will be one of our many steps to help us save the lives of mothers across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I know that the ranking member already yielded back, so I thank Mr. BURGESS for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to hurry down here to speak in favor of this bill because I have been working on it for many years with my colleague and friend, JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER.

According to the CDC, maternal mortality rates rose by 26 percent in the U.S. between 2000 and 2014. These deaths are preventable, and they should not be happening in 2018. So to combat this alarming trend, 33 States have established maternal mortality review committees made up of healthcare professionals who review individual maternal deaths and then recommend policy decisions.

Our bill provides Federal support for these committees and supports efforts to standardize them. It has 190 cosponsors. It has received support from 90 national public health organizations.

It is really a great example of how the Energy and Commerce Committee works in a bipartisan way. So I thank everybody for being here and thank the chairman for his comity.

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Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Just in addition to all the other people who have been thanked, I want to acknowledge the work of my personal staff, Mr. Ed Kim and Elizabeth Allen, who have worked so hard on this bill, as well as Dr. Kristen Shatynski on the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health staff, who really helped push this along and made sure that we got here today in a successful manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1318, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA TO RELEASE BURMESE JOURNALISTS WA LONE AND KYAW SOE OO

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1091) calling on the Government of Burma to release Burmese journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo sentenced to seven years imprisonment after investigating attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1091

Whereas in recent decades the Rohingya people have lost, through systematic discrimination by Burmese national, state, and local authorities, a range of civil and political rights, including citizenship, and face barriers today such that they have been rendered stateless;

Whereas the Burmese military and security forces have committed numerous crimes against civilians over many years in Burma's Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, and Karen States;

Whereas beginning August 25, 2017, the Burmese military and security forces, as well as civilian mobs, carried out widespread attacks, rapes, killings, and the burning of villages throughout Rakhine State resulting in approximately 730,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh and bringing the total Rohingya refugee population in Cox's Bazar to over 900,000;

Whereas on November 14, 2018, Vice President Mike Pence said, "This is a tragedy that has touched the hearts of millions of Americans. The violence and persecution by military and vigilantes that resulted in driving 700,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh is without excuse."

Whereas to date, though the refugee crisis is not of their making, the Government of Bangladesh has generously accommodated the rapid and massive influx of Rohingya refugees into Cox's Bazar;

Whereas the Government of Bangladesh continues to express concern about the lack of accountability for the perpetrators of these crimes and the need to find durable solutions;

Whereas in June 2018, it was announced that the United Nations and the Government of Burma had reached an agreement for the “voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable” return of Rohingya to Burma;

Whereas that agreement was contingent upon the provision of unimpeded access to northern Rakhine by United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in order to verify the necessary conditions on the ground for such voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns;

Whereas Burma’s civilian government, led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, has not yet taken the necessary steps to address the violence directed against the Rohingya and has failed to create the necessary conditions for returns, including by actively impeding access to northern Rakhine by UNHCR, UNDP, humanitarian organizations, and journalists;

Whereas on August 24, 2018, the United Nations International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar released a preliminary report stating that, “The Mission concluded . . . that there is sufficient information to warrant the investigation and prosecution of senior officials in the Tatmadaw chain of command, so that a competent court can determine their liability for genocide in relation to the situation in Rakhine State.”;

Whereas on August 25, 2018, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said “A year ago, following deadly militant attacks, security forces responded by launching abhorrent ethnic cleansing of ethnic Rohingya in Burma”, and continued “The U.S. will continue to hold those responsible accountable. The military must respect human rights for Burma’s democracy to succeed.”;

Whereas the Department of the Treasury announced sanctions on five Tatmadaw officers and two Tatmadaw units for human rights abuses in Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan States;

Whereas on September 24, 2018, the Department of State released a report entitled “Documentation of Atrocities in Northern Rakhine State” that stated the military “targeted civilians indiscriminately and often with extreme brutality” and that the violence in northern Rakhine State was “extreme, large-scale, widespread and seemingly geared toward both terrorizing the population and driving out the Rohingya residents” and that the “scope and scale of the military’s operations indicate that they were well-planned and coordinated”;

Whereas Reuters, a highly respected worldwide news organization, discovered evidence of mass murder in the village of Inn Din as part of its ongoing reporting on the Burmese military’s campaign against the Rohingya, and deployed journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo to fact-check and interview eyewitnesses to these and other events;

Whereas on December 12, 2017, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were arrested by Burmese security forces in a suburb of Yangon and remain in custody to date;

Whereas on April 20, 2018, a key witness for the prosecution, Police Captain Moe Yan Naing, testified that he was ordered by his superiors to “trap” Wa Lone;

Whereas on September 3, 2018, Yangon Northern District Judge Ye Lwin ruled that Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo breached the colonial-era Official Secrets Act during their investigation into the massacre in Inn Din and subsequently sentenced them each to 7 years in prison with hard labor, despite admissions by the police under oath in court

that the documents in question were planted with the journalists as a front for their arrest;

Whereas United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Burma’s Foreign Minister, Kyaw Tin, at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in August 2018 and called for the immediate release of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo;

Whereas on September 4, 2018, Vice President Mike Pence stated, “Wa Lone & Kyaw Soe Oo should be commended—not imprisoned—for their work exposing human rights violations [and] mass killings. Freedom of religion [and] freedom of the press are essential to a strong democracy.”;

Whereas Members of Congress, professional journalist organizations, human rights groups, and other distinguished leaders from around the world have called on the Burmese authorities to release Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo from their unjust imprisonment; and

Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed at Paris December 9, 1948 declares that “means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” and “The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.”; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the atrocities committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military and security forces since August 2017 constitute crimes against humanity and genocide;

(2) the Secretary of State should—

(A) determine, based on available evidence, whether the actions by the Burmese military in northern Rakhine State in 2017 constitute crimes against humanity, genocide, or other crimes under international law; and

(B) fully support efforts to collect, preserve, and make available evidence related to the commission of these crimes;

(3) all those responsible for these crimes against humanity and genocide should be tracked, sanctioned, arrested, prosecuted, and punished under applicable international criminal statutes and conventions;

(4) every Government and multinational body should call such atrocities by their rightful names of “crimes against humanity”, “war crimes”, and “genocide”;

(5) the Governments of Bangladesh, the United States, and China, as well as the UNHCR and other actors, should only support repatriations to Burma when the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns are achieved, including that of removing any impunity for Burma’s military, security forces, and vigilantes with respect to their actions contributing to the systemic deprivation of the human rights, such as physical safety, citizenship, freedom of movement, and livelihoods, of the Rohingya;

(6) the President should impose additional sanctions on senior members of the Burmese military and security forces who are responsible for genocide and human rights abuses, including Tatmadaw Commander-In-Chief Min Aung Hlaing;

(7) independent and professional journalism play a central role in strengthening democratic governance, upholding the rule

of law, mitigating conflict, and informing public opinion around the world; and

(8) the Burmese military and Government should—

(A) provide immediate, unimpeded access to northern Rakhine by UNHCR, UNDP, other humanitarian actors, and journalists, in order to verify that the necessary conditions exist for voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns by displaced Rohingya in a manner consistent with internationally recognized human rights and principles for refugee protection;

(B) change the laws and policies that have contributed to insecurity in the Rakhine State; and

(C) rescind any laws that obstruct the freedom of the press; and

(9) State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint should pardon and immediately release from prison Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, as well as all other journalists and political prisoners.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, with this resolution, the House will take the important step of naming the atrocities committed against the Rohingya people in Burma for what they are. The word for that is “genocide.”

The Rohingya people, predominantly of Burma’s Rakhine State, are often called the world’s most persecuted minority. The Rohingya are essentially stateless people, as the Burmese Government refuses to recognize them as citizens, despite the fact that the Rohingya people have lived in Burma for generations. Further, institutional restrictions on the Rohingya have impacted their rights to study, work, travel, access healthcare services, practice religion, and even to marry.

The most recent wave of persecution began in August 2017, when Burmese security forces and civilian mobs began a horrific wave of attacks. Mass murder, rape, and destruction of villages throughout Rakhine State has been well documented. We have talked to the survivors.

These atrocities have driven 700,000 Rohingya from their homes to Bangladesh, bringing the total Rohingya refugee population in that country to nearly 1 million. Bangladesh has been very generous in accepting all these refugees in the face of such dire circumstances.

A year and a half later, the evidence is overwhelming. As I said at our hearing on the subject this past September,

it is time that we take the next step in declaring that these crimes amount to genocide.

In September, the State Department released a report on the stomach-turning, systematic, and widespread acts of violence against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine State, but failed to label these atrocities genocide.

The State Department's investigation revealed countless heart-wrenching pieces of evidence, like the account of one woman who hid in bushes as she watched Burmese soldiers throw infants and toddlers into a river to drown and shot the mothers of these infants who tried to save them.

The United States has a moral obligation to call these crimes genocide. Failing to do so gives the perpetrators cover and hinders efforts to bring those accountable to justice. With this resolution, the House fulfills its part of that duty.

The measure also accomplishes a number of other important goals. It provides a thorough accounting of the crisis, calls out the complicit Burmese Government, urges the Secretary of State to join us in formally declaring genocide, and promotes multilateral agreement on that declaration.

Importantly, the resolution also calls for the immediate pardon and release of two journalists who were framed and jailed by Burmese authorities for shining a light on some of the atrocities by government forces.

Congress has a proud legacy of declaring genocide when warranted, just as we did over 2 years ago when the House voted unanimously to declare ISIS' atrocities against religious minorities in Iraq and in Syria genocide. It is time to take this sober step again.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure and fulfilling our responsibility to reinforce the universal values we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

First of all, I want to thank Mr. CHABOT for authoring this resolution. I also want to thank Representative JOE CROWLEY for his extraordinary dedication to all the people of Burma, including the Rohingya people. I thank Chairman ROYCE for bringing this resolution forward and for his leadership on this crucial issue throughout the years.

This resolution calls on the Government of Burma to release Burmese Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who have been sentenced to 7 years following their investigation into the attacks on Rohingya civilians by the Burmese military and security forces. There is overwhelming evidence that these journalists were entrapped by the Burmese Government, who targeted them because of their reporting of the military's horrific crimes.

Their jail sentence is a part of a broader issue. Despite elections in 2015

that brought a pro-democracy civilian government to power, the Burmese Government still operates on antiquated laws that lead to locking up prisoners of conscience, even when their only crimes are reporting information that is unflattering or inconvenient for the government or for the military.

This resolution rightly calls on the civilian government in Burma to repeal the laws that have been used to crack down on civil society and free expression and to pardon prisoners of conscience who have been imprisoned under these unjust laws.

We must take a moment and reflect on the context of these arrests.

The journalists were investigating what we now know were the crimes against humanity and genocide of the Rohingya people. They should not be sitting in a prison cell. They should be celebrated for faithfully carrying out their obligation to report the truth.

This resolution does something else that is very important. It states that, in the opinion of the House, the atrocities inflicted on the Rohingya people by the Burmese military constitute genocide.

It is important that we call it by name. It is a critical step towards justice for the victims. So we need to use the word "genocide."

I am glad that this resolution urges the Trump administration to call this atrocity what it is and pursue accountability for this heinous violence.

With this resolution, Congress continues to assert our leadership and show that we stand with the Rohingya people. We will not be silent as the Burmese Government allows or tacitly encourages attacks on the press and on civil society. We will call out injustice when we see it.

So I support this measure, and I urge all Members to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairwoman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my friend STEVE CHABOT's resolution, H. Res. 1091, which calls for the release of two Burmese journalists who were unjustly imprisoned for what crime? Courageously reporting on the genocide against the people known as the Rohingya.

In September, I joined Jan Schakowsky and STEVE CHABOT in sending a letter to Secretary of State Pompeo expressing our grave concern for the 7-year sentence given to these brave journalists. Unfortunately, the stories of these men are just two of the many, many sad examples of the erosion of press freedom and other basic rights in Burma.

At a time when these brave men should be rewarded for helping make the evidence available to the U.N. commission investigating these crimes,

they get jail time. This resolution sends a strong message that the world is paying attention.

In 2012, I was worried that it was too soon for the Obama administration to ease sanctions on Burma. Unfortunately, it has proven to be too soon. In the aftermath of the massacre of the Rohingya, we must hold all individuals responsible for these crimes against humanity accountable. I call on the Burmese Government to release these journalists and reform the law so that freedom of the press is not obstructed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, once again, our chairman, ED ROYCE, and ELIOT ENGEL for their continued commitment to bringing forth bipartisan and important bills to the floor.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. CHABOT's resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), who retires this year and leaves an extraordinary legacy in this Chamber.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution calling for the release of the two journalists imprisoned after investigating attacks against the Rohingya ethnic minority in Burma, also known as Myanmar.

As I said in the resolution I introduced in early September calling for their release: "The Burmese police captain involved in their arrest reportedly admitted during the trial that his superior ordered him to entrap the journalists."

The atrocities committed against the Rohingya—mass killings; rape perpetrated on a massive scale; whole villages burned to the ground, with people being burned alive in their homes; and over 700,000 fleeing the violence to neighboring Bangladesh—have been so extreme that the United Nations issued a report earlier this year calling for Burma's military leaders to be investigated and prosecuted on the charges of genocide. There can be no doubt about the culpability of Burma's military in the oppression and violence inflicted on the Rohingya.

I had the privilege of meeting Aung San Suu Kyi a few years ago as part of a delegation led by NANCY PELOSI, joining in admiration for her perseverance and triumph over oppression. There has been a hesitation by some to criticize Suu Kyi, worrying that it could make it more likely the military would take over the civilian government she leads. But her words and actions in the face of what, in reality, has been genocide have been deeply disturbing, contrary to her past example as a beacon of freedom.

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In 2017, the late John McCain and RICHARD DURBIN introduced in the Senate and I introduced in the House a resolution that encouraged "Aung San Suu Kyi to live up to her inspiring

words upon receiving the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize with respect to ethnic reconciliation in Burma, and in particular to address the historic and brutal repression of the Rohingya in Rakhine State."

Unfortunately, that resolution was not acted upon.

When Aung San Suu Kyi later said: "We believe that, for the sake of long-term stability and security, we have to be fair to all sides," it was a disturbing message of minimization.

Suu Kyi later said: "In a way we can say that we understand our country better than any other country does, and I'm sure you will say the same of yours, that you understand your country better than anybody else."

As Bishop Desmond Tutu said in a letter to Suu Kyi: "My dear sister: If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep."

This resolution speaks out against the genocide and crimes against humanity that occurred in Rakhine State. All of humanity must speak out clearly and decisively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge unanimous support for this resolution.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is the author of this measure.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership on this issue, H. Res. 1091, which I introduced to commit the House to a determination that the Burmese military's atrocities against the Rohingya minority in Rakhine State were genocide and to call for the release of the two Reuters journalists who have been unjustly imprisoned by the Burmese government for their investigation into these atrocities.

On August 25 last year, the Burmese military began a barbaric campaign against the Rohingya people in Rakhine State. This premeditated operation resulted in 700,000 Rohingya fleeing from Burma into Bangladesh. In September, Congressman CROWLEY and I wrote to then-Secretary Tillerson to raise our serious concerns about the violence.

Since then, sufficient evidence has been brought to light to fill in many gruesome details of what exactly happened. Much of this evidence is contained in two reports released in September.

First, the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar released its final report that argued that the Burmese military had genocidal intent against the Rohingya.

Second, the State Department released a report summarizing a survey of Rohingya survivors in Bangladesh that it had commissioned. The State Department's report is particularly disturbing. It calls the violence extreme, large-scale, widespread, and states that "the scope and scale of the

military's operations indicate they were well planned and coordinated."

Of the 1,000 Rohingya interviewed, about 80 percent witnessed killings and the destruction of villages. In total, 400 villages were burned to the ground. About half of those surveyed witnessed a rape.

I could go on, but the gruesomeness of the eyewitness accounts I would rather not repeat in a civilized setting.

Senior administration officials and numerous Members of Congress have all condemned these atrocities in harsh, unmistakable terms. In light of this evidence, I am asking my colleagues today to join me in making a legal determination by labeling these crimes what they were: genocide and crimes against humanity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I also urge the administration and the Senate to make determinations similar to the one in this resolution so that we send a clear, unequivocal message to the Burmese Government and to the world that these barbaric and vicious atrocities will not be tolerated.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the House Freedom of the Press Caucus, I also want to draw attention to the second half of the resolution, which condemns the Burmese Government's decision to jail two Reuters journalists for trying to uncover the facts about the massacre in Rakhine State.

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of their arrest, so it is especially timely that we are considering this resolution and calling for their release.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), a senior member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, for reasons well explained by the preceding speakers, I am pleased to join in supporting this resolution and to commend Mr. CHABOT for introducing it. I was pleased to introduce it along with him and along with the chair, the ranking member, and several other Members of this House.

This resolution deals with Burma, whose government chooses to call itself Myanmar, but we officially take the position that the country retains its name of Burma. This resolution calls out the Burmese military for their acts of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya and highlights the cases of two journalists who were imprisoned for simply trying to shed light on these historic stories.

One of my priorities as ranking member of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee has been to focus attention on the 700,000 Rohingya who have been forced to flee Burma and relocate to

Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries.

They have not fled because they wanted to leave home. They have not fled because Bangladesh is someplace where it is easy to make a living. They have fled to refugee camps because they have no choice, for the Rohingya communities have faced widespread attacks, rapes, killings, and burning of villages, all orchestrated by the Burmese military.

Not only that, but the Burmese State takes the position that the Rohingya are not citizens of their country because they can't prove that their great-grandparents were born in the country.

So, if someone is born in Burma, their parents were born in Burma, they could even prove their grandparents were born in Burma, they are denied a Burmese passport.

Now, this resolution uses the term "genocide," not a word we should throw around, but in this case it is clearly a test that has been met.

In reports by the Public International Law & Policy Group and by our own Holocaust museum, the evidence is there that the United Nations' definition of genocide has been met.

The United Nations' Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines "genocide" as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. That is exactly what the Burmese military is doing, and denying citizenship is just part of that effort.

This resolution sends an important message to the Burmese military, and it also focuses on two Reuters journalists who exposed the mass murder in the village of Indin. Those two journalists are Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who were interviewing eyewitnesses to this crime. This is part of the Burmese genocide of the Rohingya.

But instead of applauding their bravery, the Burmese Government arrested them and accused them of violating the Official Secrets Act. Of course, we understand that a government that is committing genocide wants to declare that genocide to be a state secret.

And so, for that as their only crime, these two journalists have been sentenced to 7 years of hard labor in prison.

There is only one just outcome here. State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint must pardon these journalists. They must acknowledge that the Burmese military is committing atrocities against the Rohingya. They must provide the Rohingya papers of citizenship.

We need to pass this resolution, hopefully unanimously, to say that genocide must be stopped and the two journalists must be released.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. YOH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1091. This resolution

calls the atrocities committed against the Rohingya what they are—genocide—and asks the government of Burma to release two innocent journalists who were framed for helping to bring these crimes to light.

I want to thank my predecessor, as chair of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Congressman CHABOT, and Ranking Member ENGEL for introducing this resolution.

Since August 2017, 700,000 Rohingya have fled their homes in Rakhine to neighboring Bangladesh to escape the horrible violence perpetrated by the Burmese military. In total, almost a million Rohingya refugees have been driven out of their homes in northern Rakhine and are sheltering in Bangladesh.

They, the Rohingya, didn't just decide to pick up all their belongings one day and leave. They are fearing for their lives, and so they left.

The United Nations released a report just months ago asserting that the Burmese military systematically targeted civilians in a manner consistent with genocidal intent. This fact-finding mission and other international NGOs have documented the violence, including torture; rape; killing unarmed civilians, including women and children; and burning down the Rohingya villages.

Make no mistake; this is genocide.

In a recent committee hearing on Burma, I spoke about the importance of journalists documenting these atrocities. However, we are seeing journalists inside Burma being punished and jailed for doing the basic requirements of their job.

This resolution rightly calls for the release of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, the two Reuters journalists who were framed wrongfully and sentenced by the Burmese government to over 7 years in jail after investigating the very violence we are calling a genocide here today.

How many more times do we and the world allow this to happen again? We either stand together as civilized nations, call this what it is—genocide—or we look the other way again as nations of the world did in World War II in Nazi Germany, or during the Darfur genocide.

We either are serious about this or not.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my fellow colleagues as an original cosponsor on this resolution and urge the rest of the House to join in support. When we say never again, we must mean never again. The House is today taking an important first step and speaking clearly on these atrocities.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, again, thank my colleagues and Chairman ROYCE for their hard work on this measure, as always. This is an important resolution. It gives a name to the atrocities that occurred in Rakhine State, calling them genocide, and urges the Trump

administration to take appropriate action to hold the Burmese military accountable for these crimes.

I agree with what everybody has mentioned. The resolution also calls for the release of two journalists wrongly imprisoned in Burma; and by passing this resolution today, we not only speak on behalf of these two journalists, but call for an open, civil, transparent, and increasingly democratic society in Burma.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in supporting this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for actually, again, speaking with one voice on this issue, especially the author, Representative CHABOT, but also Representatives ENGEL, SCHIFF, YOHO, SHERMAN, COMSTOCK, and CROWLEY for joining as original cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, this past September our committee convened another hearing to examine the desperate living conditions of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and again we heard the story of survivors, all describing the same methodical, unthinkable acts of terror perpetrated by the Burmese military and by the security forces. Witnesses had no doubt that, based on all the evidence, genocide had occurred.

It is time Congress, the administration, and the rest of the world called these atrocities by their rightful name, and that is genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1091, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1445

RECOGNIZING THE UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA ALLIANCE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1149) recognizing that the United States-Republic of Korea alliance serves as a linchpin of regional stability and bilateral security, and exemplifies the broad and deep military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties shared between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1149

Whereas the United States Armed Forces and South Korean troops fought together to defend the Korean peninsula from Communist aggression before the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953, and the United States of America and the Republic of Korea have continued this camaraderie since signing the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea that same year;

Whereas the Republic of Korea is a model for alliance burden-sharing, currently hosting 28,500 American active-duty military personnel, funding fifty percent of the total non-personnel costs of the U.S. troop presence on the Korean peninsula, fielding the world's seventh-largest military, and spending over 2.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense;

Whereas the Republic of Korea is among the closest allies of the United States, having contributed troops in support of United States operations during the Vietnam war, Gulf war, and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, while also supporting numerous United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world;

Whereas United States forces on the Korean Peninsula are critical not only to the security of the Republic of Korea but also to protect against adversaries that threaten regional stability and the United States homeland;

Whereas the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command is the most integrated and effective combined military command in the world and, taken together with the United Nations Command, has formed a structure that has provided effective defense and deterrence on the Korean Peninsula for decades;

Whereas North Korea has the world's fourth-largest military, in addition to potentially as many as 60 nuclear weapons and between 2,500 and 5,000 metric tons of chemical weapons;

Whereas the United States supports the Republic of Korea's efforts at peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula and recognizes the critical importance of close policy coordination between Washington and Seoul;

Whereas in February 2017, a United Nations investigatory body confirmed that North Korea attempted to sell key materials for constructing miniaturized nuclear warheads, and found that ballistic missile cooperation between Iran and North Korea was "significant and meaningful";

Whereas the United States and South Korea share a commitment to democracy, human rights, and free market principles, as laid out in the 2009 U.S.-ROK Joint Vision Statement as the foundation for a 21st century "strategic alliance" based on shared values;

Whereas the Republic of Korea actively contributes to peacekeeping, cybersecurity, non-proliferation, overseas development assistance, climate change mitigation, counterterrorism, and post-conflict stabilization;

Whereas the Republic of Korea suffered economic retaliation from China for installing the United States Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ballistic missile defense system, a measure necessitated by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile belligerence;

Whereas Korea is the world's eleventh-largest economy and the sixth-largest goods trading partner of the United States, and