

More than 154 Sindhi people have been reported missing just since August 2017. Among the hundreds abducted and killed include Dr. Anwar Laghari, a physician and human rights leader who is a hero to the Sindhi people. Like Dr. Laghari the Sindhis are stalwarts in their opposition to violent Islamist militants, which is why they have been targeted by ISI.

Pakistan has made its choice to drop its alliance with the United States and form a new partnership with China and radical Islam. Blatant betrayals like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project and sheltering Osama Bin Laden indicate that Pakistan has long ago morphed away from being our friend and is now our enemy.

And, Pakistan is at war with its own people, not only the Sindhis, but the Baluch and many of the Pashtun tribes are also targeted for harsh human rights abuses. America needs to face reality—stand with these persecuted peoples—and treat Pakistan like the corrupt narco-trafficking gangster regime allied with radical Islam that it is.

ATROCITIES CONTINUE IN SYRIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIANFORTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, there is really a tragic situation that has been unfolding for a long time in Syria, and I think it is important that we have a brief discussion today about what is at stake and what is happening.

To start that discussion, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the honorable chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and a champion for the people of Free Syria.

□ 1300

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the time that has been set aside here, and I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I have got to say at the outset, one of the great tragedies of the half a million deaths in Syria is that I think it was quite avoidable.

If we think back to 7 years ago and how it started, it began with people marching in the streets of Damascus saying, "peaceful, peaceful." Their goal was to try to get some element of human rights in a country in which people were being abducted and disappeared in these chambers where they were tortured and killed.

We know a lot more now than we did at the time because of a brave military photographer by the name of Caesar, and Caesar brought those pictures out to the West, 55,000 of them.

The way in which the regime conducted itself drove the population in Syria to react. And now, after 7 years of war, brutal war, the atrocities continue in Syria; and in many ways, after listening this morning to Caesar and seeing his photographs again, they are worse than they were.

I say that because, as we speak, despite a ceasefire agreed to by Russia,

the Assad regime, backed by Russian war planes and backed by the Iranian militia from neighboring Iran on the ground, is engaged in a brutal assault on southern Syria. They are engaged there, and more than 45,000 civilians have fled as Russian and regime forces have intensified their shelling and their air raids again on civilian populations.

So yesterday alone, three hospitals were bombed. The United Nations has said that more Syrians were displaced in the first few months of this year than at any period in the last 7 years of war—the first few months of this year. This is happening as we speak.

This is one of the children affected by this brutal campaign. The numbers are staggering. As I shared with you, there are over half a million Syrians that have been killed. Think for a minute about the families of those who are on the move trying to escape. Fourteen million Syrians have been displaced; tens of thousands remain in the regime's dungeons.

That, for me, is the most horrifying aspect of this. It is because the regime will not, despite international pressure, change what it does within those dungeons, the same torture that was exposed to the world in the Caesar photos, in the 55,000 photos.

And the horrific part of this—I don't know why totalitarian regimes do this, but they have a habit of taking the picture of every tortured, mangled body that they have killed and then numbering it with a number, and then number after number after number. It is now a process of civil society in Syria trying to figure out and tie these families together.

And the population that was massacred, whether it is Shia or Sunni or Alawites or Christian, it is as though the regime knows no bounds in terms of its suspicions. It is like Joe Stalin's rampage when he decided, in the 1930s, to begin his process of eliminating anyone who could potentially be an opponent: take them in and put them to the torture.

That is what is happening as we speak. And if the regime retakes southern Syria, thousands more will be detained and meet the same fate as those who are in those torture chambers today.

So this morning, we had the honor of welcoming Caesar. ADAM KINZINGER and I and other members of our committee had the opportunity once more to speak to the Syrian military defector who took those photos.

Four years ago, he met with our committee in his first public appearance following his defection. Those photos gave us an eyewitness account of the Assad regime's horrific brutality. And today, Caesar provided new, chilling testimony about the Assad regime's attacks against the Syrian people.

Industrial-scale torture, as I have told you, is being committed against thousands of detainees. And I will tell you, one picture that especially moved

me showed a young woman. She was an architect in the city. She had had her eyes gouged out. She was tortured to death and her crime was that she had delivered food and humanitarian aid to individuals targeted by the Assad regime.

As you know, the Blue Helmets in Syria who run into collapsing buildings in order to pull out victims, pull out civilians, they are nondenominational. These are people who volunteer, and they are frequently targeted. It is often those who are doing the rescuing who are targeted by that regime.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, there can be no real peace in Syria as long as the Assad regime, as long as Assad, himself, remains in power. We need a strategy that, in the name of humanity, moves beyond Assad to achieve a political solution that will secure a lasting peace among all of the parties there.

The House has twice passed legislation named after Caesar, sponsored by Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL and me, to impose sanctions on supporters of Syria's Assad regime, including sanctions on Iran and Russia, because that is where the materiel comes from. That is where the bombs come from. This legislation will help cut off funding that fuels Assad's war machine, and it gives our diplomats much-needed leverage in the political process.

Additionally, the Caesar bill will support the prosecution of the regime's war criminals. This includes U.S. assistance for cases being tried around the world, many based on evidence in the Caesar file, such as the one recently filed by prosecutors in Germany.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Senate still has not acted on this critical legislation. It is time to sanction Assad. It is time to sanction his backers. It is time to hold war criminals accountable and give justice to victims.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to quickly move forward. Please move this legislation to help protect Syrian civilians.

Again, I want to thank my colleague not only for his efforts and for his service to this country, including on the battlefield, but also for his service here today in the interest of humanity.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue and for his very eloquently delivered speech on the seriousness of what is happening.

The Syrian civil war is now in its eighth year, and it is approaching a very serious crossroad. While the media focus fades away after some chemical attack or a picture that steals our hearts for a moment, the war crimes being committed and the atrocities taking place in Syria are happening in full force right this very minute.

For the last 9 days, the southern border of Syria has been under constant bombardment from airstrikes and barrel bomb attacks. Despite a ceasefire

pact from Russia in July of 2017, we know Syria's main military ally has continued to carry out attacks on behalf of the Assad regime.

This critical moment will affect the future of Syria, the security interests of the United States, and stability within the international community. So what are we going to do about it?

Since World War I, we have held that chemical weapons have no place on the battlefield. We have held strong to this principle and its core to the values of our country.

We know that the President of Syria, the brutal dictator, Bashar al-Assad, and his ruthless regime have committed countless war crimes, and they are responsible for murdering more than half a million Syrians.

We know Assad has used chemical weapons countless times to attack and murder innocent civilians.

We know that Russian and Iranian regimes have supported and helped Assad in his genocide on the Syrian people, including airstrikes and attacks that account for more than 50,000 dead Syrian children.

We have seen the Assad regime, along with his Iranian and Russian backers, starve the people in cities like Madaya, Aleppo, and eastern Ghouta by using food as a weapon.

We know the Assad regime has often refused U.N. and other humanitarian organizations from delivering critical humanitarian assistance to the most ravaged cities in Syria.

Because we know this, we cannot turn a blind eye. We cannot just sweep this under the rug and ignore the horrific reality in Syria right now. We cannot isolate ourselves from this crisis.

What happens in Syria and what happens in the Middle East has a very real impact on our national security and the security of future generations. If we fail to act in Syria and fail to inflict punishment over the use of chemical weapons, we will ultimately see the end of the nonproliferation treaty of chemical weapons and open the world to ghastly horrors, perpetual insecurity, and extreme danger.

I support the President's enforcement of those red lines, but we must not be naive enough to think that, if we show weakness elsewhere, it will not happen again.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that the United States invade Syria, put 100,000 troops in, and start a regional war, not in the slightest. What I am suggesting is that we take a stand for what is right, what is just, and what is in the best interests of the United States and the freedom-loving people around the world.

We need a long-term strategy in Syria that leads to a solution of peace and an end to the ongoing, deadly, and horrific conflict. This strategy should also include the end of the Assad regime and a place at the table for all people at the table of government.

First, we must maintain a presence in Syria and we must uphold the dees-

calation zones that have already been established. By bolstering these areas and making it known that the United States remains in the region, we can thwart the strongmen of Russia and Iran from pushing into these areas and targeting civilians.

Internally, both Russia and Iran are fractured and tired. They both view Syria as a power-grab opportunity to take on their enemies: the United States and Israel. It comes as no surprise, as we know the true intentions of these bad actors anyway.

That being said, we cannot allow Iran to complete its land bridge through the middle of Syria, and we cannot trust the Russians ever on anything. Russian strikes have obliterated residential areas in Syria, displacing thousands. The area's major hospitals and makeshift hospitals have been targeted and destroyed.

Let me say that again. The region's hospitals have been targeted and destroyed. We must take measures to punish Russia and Iran for their crimes.

Next, given the dire situation in places like Daraa, we need to establish no-fly zones and maintain a presence to ensure they are being enforced by us and our allies. This is vital for the safety of our coalition units, the humanitarian aid volunteers, and the Syrian civilians who have been forced to flee their homes and their communities.

We need to hold Assad, his regime, and the Russian and Iranian supporters accountable.

In April, I spoke on the House floor in support of a bill I introduced with my House Foreign Affairs Committee colleagues, H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act. This bill, which passed the House and now sits in the Senate, is a step in the right direction in taking actions in Syria and punishing the Assad regime for its horrific war crimes.

H.R. 4681 needs to be implemented, as do the sanctions passed last year against the supporters of the Assad regime for their role in the genocide of Syrian civilians.

Most importantly, the United States needs to remind the people of Syria that we stand with them. We stand for freedom, and we stand against the inhumane crimes committed against them by this barbaric regime and their Russian and Iranian backers.

If you are a 10-year-old kid in Syria and your dad was killed by an airstrike, you might see ISIS as the only opponent to Bashar al-Assad, the butcher of Damascus who brutalized your family, who destroyed your home, who bombed your school, and who left you without an education or opportunity. If you are this 10-year-old kid in Syria right now, you are likely to be a rich target of ISIS recruitment. Sadly, the next generation of terrorism will likely stem from these regions that have no hope or opportunity, that feel completely abandoned and ignored by the international community.

I spoke to a Syrian regime defector yesterday named Caesar. Caesar defected from the Assad regime and brought with him thousands of pictures and documents proving that the regime tortures, starves, and kills innocent people every day. And, if that isn't enough, they document these atrocities with cold precision, reminiscent of the actions of Nazi Germany. It is chilling.

□ 1315

Caesar risks his life by sharing his experiences. In our meetings, he selflessly focuses on others. He emphasized how gravely the people of Syria are suffering every single day. And every single day, the people of Syria cling to the hope that America will speak up and stand with them.

I pray for peace, and I urge the administration to position the United States as the global leader this world needs right now.

I also implore the Senate to pass the Caesar Act, sanctioning regime officials involved in the torture and opening the path to their capture and trial as war criminals. They must be held accountable.

We have passed this bill repeatedly, and we will do so again if we must. But the Senate has an opportunity to make this law and stand with the values that we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Syria need to know that there is hope. Right now, our lack of a strategy in Syria is leaving many with little hope or faith in the United States or our allies.

I believe America has a mission in the world, and it is to be an example of self-governance in a world drowning in strongmen, cruelty, and chaos. I believe we have an opportunity to show the people of Syria, and the world, that the American Dream continues. We are still that shining city on a hill and a beacon of hope for peace and prosperity.

When that light dims, it doesn't give America an opportunity to look within and relax, regain ourselves, and look coldly and detached at the rest of the world. History has shown again and again that a dimming light in American leadership only guarantees a future fight, a future calling up of a generation of Americans to, once again, defeat an enemy.

But if we remember this God-given mission and the light on the hill continues to beam bright, then we can create a generation within the camps of our enemies who rejects their ideology and implements change from within. Behind the Iron Curtain, it wasn't America's military action that sliced it in half. It was people behind it seeing our light, peering over that wall, and tearing it down so they, too, could enjoy those freedoms.

As a great President, John F. Kennedy, said: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Bashar al-Assad will ultimately pay an awful, eternal price when he meets his Maker. Let's move that appointment up so that justice here or in the afterlife is swift and soon. Let's shine our light on the actions of Iran and Russia. Let's expose with that brightness the torture and the bombing of aid convoys and hospitals. Let's shine that light on the plight of people simply trying to live their lives and to raise their children to be police officers, doctors, farmers, factory workers, and mothers and fathers.

Let's speak out for the freedom-loving people who so desperately need our voice. Let's shine our light on the oppressive darkness around the world.

Mr. Speaker, let's save Syria.

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

IBEW LOCAL 134, DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with excitement and a sense of pride in my heart. Today, Mr. Speaker, I am here to share some great news coming out of my hometown of Chicago, Illinois, because next week, on Monday, a group of smart, dedicated, and hard-working young African American men from Dunbar High School located in my district will start new jobs in the skills-based industry.

These jobs, Mr. Speaker, and the young men's employment are a result of a robust partnership and a sincere commitment to diversity that brought the city of Chicago, the Chicago public schools, and the IBEW Local 134 together to form an innovative construction trades program.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely encouraged by these motivated and diligent young men who never gave up and who saw the opportunity and hope that was available to them that extended beyond their environment. This program, the partnership it represents, and the hopes that it inspires is spot on. It is exactly the type of investment our most vulnerable communities need because it has the potential to yield life-altering results.

Programs like this one not only provide hope by decreasing joblessness, but they have the ability to play a major role in reducing the pervasive violence that plagues our Nation and our communities.

This particular program, Mr. Speaker, is an important endeavor that offers more opportunities to underserved communities across the Nation by providing students in their junior and senior years of high school the chance to learn skills in fields including general construction, carpentry, heating, air conditioning, plumbing, welding, and electrical work, among many, many others.

After graduation, students have multiple options available to them. They can enter a pre-apprenticeship program; they can pursue a postsecondary education; or they can obtain professional certification that will lead to immediate employment, as it has for these young men.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment and recognize Mayor Rahm Emanuel's commitment to seeing this program's initiation and inauguration to get off the ground.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this would not have been possible without the hard work and devotion of some dedicated individuals and organizations. So I want to thank the IBEW Local 134 and Don Finn, its president, and the city of Chicago, the Chicago public schools, and, most importantly, the instructors and the mentors of these young men for their persistence in seeing that this vision emerged and ensuring that the next generation that builds America represents the diversity of America.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely wish these young men the best as they embark on this new chapter in their lives. I want them to know that, with their perseverance, they have made it easier for those individuals, those young men and young women, who will follow in their footsteps.

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

WHERE IS THE GOP?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GALLEGOS. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to follow Mr. RUSH, who was my Congressman growing up all through high school and actually in elementary school.

Mr. Speaker, at this very moment, House Republicans are racing out of Washington. Families are being torn apart; children are being ripped from the arms of their mothers; and women who have fled horrific violence are being deported back to their abusers. Yet my Republican colleagues are nowhere to be found.

Where are they, Mr. Speaker?

House Republicans are fleeing the scene of an accident. They are running from the shame and embarrassment of yesterday's vote on the GOP immigration bill. They are headed for the exits while thousands of kids cry in cages at our borders tonight.

That is right, with the world watching and with a humanitarian crisis unfolding right here in America, Speaker RYAN and the House Republicans simply just gave up and went home.

The other party fought for weeks behind closed doors. They traded accusations and insults, many of which were quickly leaked to the press. Yesterday, they finally put an immigration bill on

the House floor, and it failed by the largest margin in recent memory.

But instead of allowing a vote on a true compromise, like the Aguilar-Hurd legislation, Speaker RYAN and his leadership team decided to call it quits. They chose to put their fingers in their ears while thousands of kids are crying out for their mothers.

Mr. Speaker, 121-301. That was the vote yesterday, and 121-301 tells the story of a Republican Conference in crisis. When he officially retires, 121-301 should be in the first line of any story written about PAUL RYAN's speakership.

If Republicans aren't interested in governing, they should at least step aside and let Democrats take over. If Speaker RYAN isn't interested in actually solving problems, he should get an early start on his retirement, because right now, it sure looks like House Republicans are more interested in fighting each other than fighting for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot about civility as of late. Republicans are upset that Members of this body have said mean things about the President. Republicans whine on FOX News about the White House press secretary being turned away from a restaurant. Republicans writing in the opinion pages are wringing their hands about the deterioration of our public discourse. Give me a break already.

□ 1330

Isn't it time that we worried less about the lack of civility in our politics and more about the lack of humanity in our government?

Here is all I ask: When my Republican colleagues are enjoying their fireworks and barbecues with their loved ones next week, I hope they will spare a thought for the mothers separated from their loved ones because of Donald Trump's outrageous cruelty. And I hope, just for a minute, that my Republican friends will pause and think about their own responsibility for this tragedy.

I hope, just for a moment, that they will stop to wonder what future generations of Americans will say about the leaders of today who opted for silence or civility in the face of so much human suffering.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in the House of Representatives today to announce the reintroduction of the LGBTQ Pride