

occurrence. I encourage the Government of Cameroon to engage with diaspora organizations, along with a broad spectrum of Cameroonian civil society leader, in meaningful and constructive dialogue to resolve the conflict.

Moving forward, as we look for ways to address the situation in Cameroon, we must look to longtime President Paul Biya and his ongoing attacks on the legitimacy of Cameroon's democracy. President Biya rose to office in 1982 after serving as Prime Minister. In 2008, Presidential term limits were removed from Cameroon's Constitution. Protests ensued, but when the public wished to voice their disapproval of this decision, security forces violently repressed their actions.

In October 2018, Biya claimed a seventh Presidential victory in an election that many considered to be neither free nor fair. There were numerous credible reports of fraud, voter intimidation, violence, and low voter turnout in the Anglophone regions. The opposition party who reportedly came in second place, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, claims that it had the support of the people. In January of this year, protests and demonstrations against the October elections were summarily suppressed by the Biya regime. Over 200 people were arrested, including opposition leader Maurice Kamto and his close supporters.

The United Nations Secretary General, Amnesty International, and the International Law Commission have called for Mr. Kamto's release, and just last month, thousands of Cameroonian demonstrators in Yaounde with the same demand. Biya's government forces responded as they usually do, by arresting 73 of the demonstrators.

Even members of the President's own inner circle are not immune to his thuggery. In 2012, Mr. Marafa Hamidou Yaya, the former Secretary General of the Presidency, was arrested and sentenced to 25 years in prison for complicity in an embezzlement scheme that many suspect befell him not because of any actual involvement in embezzlement, but as a way to prevent him from ever challenging Biya for the Presidency. His arrest and imprisonment make clear that Biya will target anyone who threatens grip on power.

President Biya has the broad authority to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister, Cabinet members, judges, generals, and governors. The executive and judicial branches are clearly a product of the President's preference, rather than a reflection of the will of the people. Although several press outlets exist and multiple political parties compete in elections, freedom of expression is greatly constrained. Journalists have been jailed, and Reporters Without Borders has described the circumstances for Cameroonian media as a "climate of fear."

In addition to these democratic concerns, Cameroon currently faces three major humanitarian challenges, which are exasperated by President Biya's un-

checked authority. About 275,000 refugees from the Central African Republic reside in the eastern part of Cameroon. In the north, Boko Haram threatens the communities near the Nigerian border. And in the west, where most of Cameroon's Anglophone minority resides, a conflict among government security forces and those seeking independence from the rest of the country continues to escalate.

If that wasn't enough, reports indicate that U.S. military assistance to Cameroon is being used to arm the same forces accused of committing atrocities against English-speaking Cameroonians. For this reason, Senator DURBIN and I filed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would freeze security assistance to Cameroon, except for those funds that go towards combatting Boko Haram, until the U.S. Departments of Defense and State can certify that Cameroon's military and security forces have demonstrated progress in abiding by international human rights standards, particularly in regards to their actions in the Anglophone region.

Although Cameroon is an important partner in U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region, we cannot turn a blind eye to the extreme violence the government and its security forces have inflicted on innocent civilians. Human Rights Watch has documented extensive burning of villages by members of the security forces in the last 2 years in both the northwest and southwest regions, as well as rampant killings of civilians and sexual violence.

This February, the U.S. withheld millions of dollars in security assistance from Cameroon, on the condition that Biya and his forces work to improve the humanitarian situation there. No country should be able to receive U.S. military assistance while continuing to violently repress the rights of its own population.

America's strength is in our values. We must call out instances of human rights violations wherever they happen in the world. As a Congress, we have a special responsibility to use our voices when it is another government who is the perpetrator of these human rights abuses. This is the case for the situation in Cameroon. The violence must end. Innocent Cameroonians are caught in the crossfires of this political battle.

Communities have become too dangerous to live in. Hundreds of thousands of Cameroonians have been forced to flee their homes to escape the violence inflicted upon them. In November 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that at least 437,000 people were internally displaced in Cameroon from areas affected by this Anglophone conflict.

There are also thousands of refugees who have left Cameroon completely. As of late November 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that it had reg-

istered more than 32,000 Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria who came from the affected Anglophone regions. The persecuted Cameroonians seeking refuge in Nigeria include dozens of Anglophone activists, but in January 2018, 47 of those activists were forcibly returned to Cameroonian authorities. Many of those returned had reportedly submitted asylum claims in Nigeria, so it is especially troubling that they were made to return to the country from which they fled. Ten of the 47 activists who were forcibly returned from Nigeria now face charges before a military court that would be punishable by the death penalty. The other 37 reportedly remain in detention without charge.

Even non-Cameroonians have found themselves in the midst of this turmoil. On October 30, 2018, U.S. missionary Charles Wesco was killed near the town of Bamenda, Cameroon.

We must act in the face of these gross violations of human rights. We must encourage all actors in the Cameroonian conflict to prioritize respect for human life over the desire for political gain. This must be done by first agreeing to an immediate ceasefire and allowing humanitarian assistance to reach those in need. The Cameroonian Government and Armed Forces must exercise restraint in their actions and ensure that protests remain peaceful.

Leaders on both sides must be willing to engage in constructive dialogue with civil society members to achieve to a political solution, one that is based upon respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. Failure to do so will only prolong the conflict and lead to an increase in violence and mass displacement of the Anglophone minority.

In closing, I would like to again thank Maryland's vibrant Cameroonian diaspora for their continued engagement with myself and my office, and encourage my Senate colleagues to support my and Senator YOUNG's resolution which addresses many of these issues. Congress has a responsibility to continue to shine a spotlight on ongoing human rights abuses and the duty to advocate for upholding the rights of all citizens in Cameroon, regardless of their religious and political beliefs or the regions in which they reside.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 2019 ARKANSAS WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame Class of 2019 inductees and celebrate their contributions to our State and our country.

Founded in 2014, the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame honors women whose contributions have influenced the direction of Arkansas in their community or the State as a whole. The

AWHOF recognizes women, contemporary or historical, who have achieved prominence within the State. By providing a place for women in the State to be admired, the AWHOF inspires future generations of young Arkansas women to achieve great things.

Alice Andrews is a conservationist and a leading voice for environmental protection in Arkansas. As a farmer's daughter, Alice developed an interest in the environment and protecting land and water resources. Alice's conservation efforts began with advocacy work for the Buffalo River designation in 1972, which protects the river from industrial uses that may change its natural character or surrounding habitat. She has continued her efforts by serving on the Arkansas Trails Council, being appointed to the Arkansas Scenic Rivers Commission and serving as president of the Ozark Society. Alice has also been credited with helping preserve the landscape where iconic landmarks including the Big Dam Bridge, Two Rivers Bridge, and the River Trail, can be found. Her continued support and consultation with nonprofits, governments, and local churches have made Arkansas a better place for many generations to live, work and play.

Olivia Myers Farrell is among Arkansas's most influential women in media. She graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock before starting her career as part of the advertising department at the Arkansas Writers Project at the Arkansas Times. She then cofounded Arkansas Business and Southern magazine in the years following. Olivia has been honored as a Young Achiever by the National Council of Women of the United States—one of only six women selected in 1984 and the first Arkansas woman to receive the honor. She then became the CEO and principal owner of the Arkansas Business Publishing Group, which has received numerous awards for outstanding journalism by its publications, including Arkansas Business, Little Rock Family, and Little Rock Soiree. In 1998, she cofounded the Arkansas Women's Foundation to improve the educational status and skills of Arkansas women and girls in STEM fields, promote philanthropy by and for women, and enhance the economic viability of emerging leaders in Arkansas. Her efforts in the community earned her the Distinguished Citizen Award given by former Governor Mike Beebe in 2012.

Jo Luck attended Hendrix College before graduating from David Lipscomb College with a degree in education in 1963. Jo went on to earn a master's degree from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and served as the assistant director in the Governor's Office of Volunteer Services before becoming the first director of the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. Under Governor Bill Clinton, she became the executive director of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Under Jo's guid-

ance, the economic impact of Arkansas' tourism industry more than doubled. In 1992, she became president and CEO of Little Rock-based Heifer International—a global nonprofit dedicated to fighting hunger and poverty—where she served until 2010. Under her leadership, the organization's state-of-the-art, LEED-certified headquarters was designed and built. In 2011, Jo was appointed by Barack Obama to serve on the U.S. Agency for International Development's Board for International Food and Agricultural Development. She has worked throughout her career to improve food availability around the globe and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Charlotte Tillary Schexnayder was born in Tillary, AR, in 1923. When she was 16 years old, she enrolled in the University of Arkansas at Monticello while also freelance writing for the McGehee Times. She went on to become editor of the McGehee Times in October 1944. She and her husband Melvin worked at the newspaper for 6 years before purchasing the Dumas Clarion, which they owned for more than four decades. Although the paper was largely known for local news, Charlotte took an editorial stand on many issues, including the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock along with economic and development issues in Dumas, AR. Along with being a critical voice in local media, Charlotte was a board member of the Dumas Chamber of Commerce and served as the first female president of the organization. In 1975, Governor David Pryor appointed Charlotte to the Arkansas Board of Pardons and Parole, making her the first female to serve on the group's board. Charlotte went on to become president of many journalism organizations, including Arkansas Press Women, the Little Rock chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Federation of Press Women, the Arkansas Press Association, and the National Newspaper Association. In 1984, she was elected to the State house of representatives where she served until 1999. While in office, she was the lead sponsor for several bills, including the expansion of the Freedom of Information Act, a bill creating the Arkansas Ethics Commission, and the creation of a sales tax for a research center and endowed chair at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in alcohol abuse prevention. Charlotte's consistent efforts to improve her community and State are both courageous and groundbreaking.

Carolyn Witherspoon graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1974 and continued her education at the UALR School of Law, where she graduated with honors in 1978. Throughout her legal career, Carolyn has advocated for promoting a healthy work-life balance and supported and founded organizations that serve women. She served as the commissioner of the Arkansas Real Estate Commission from 1978 until 1981, when

she became the president of the Arkansas Association of Women's Lawyers. Her law practice has centered on representing private and public employees in defending employment-related matters, including title VII litigation. Her practice has led her to serve as president of the Pulaski County Bar Association and the Arkansas Bar Association, where she became the first woman to hold that position. As one of the top lawyers from Arkansas, she has been honored to serve on the Union Internationale des Advocats. Carolyn has also earned recognition from the American Psychological Association, the Society for Human Resources Management, and the State of Arkansas. Her firm has been honored with the WE WORKS Award three times for incorporating flexibility in workplace practices. Under her direction, Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon, and Galchus is the only firm in the State of Arkansas with 50 percent ownership by female attorneys. Her community involvement includes serving on the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault and as former president of the Women's Foundation of Arkansas, as well as providing legal services to low-income people through a program known as VOCALS. We can be proud of Carolyn's contributions to the legal community in our State, country, and internationally.

Diane Frances Divers Kincaid Blair was born in Washington, DC in 1938. She graduated cum laude from Cornell University's Department of Government in 1959. When she returned to Washington, she served as an analyst for the President's Committee on Government Contracts, a research assistant with the Senate Special Committee on Unemployment, and legislative secretary and speechwriter for former U.S. Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri. After marrying Arkansan Hugh Kincaid, she moved to Fayetteville in 1963. Diane completed her master's degree through the Department of Political Science at the University of Arkansas in 1967. The following year, Kincaid became a part-time lecturer in political science at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and in 1979 became an assistant professor of political science. In 1971, Governor Dale Bumpers appointed Diane to chair the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. In 1976, Governor David Pryor selected her to chair a commission on public employee rights. In 1980, she was appointed to the commission for the Arkansas Educational Television Networks, where she served until 1993. She also served as an advisor for the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1992 and 4 years later worked on the President's reelection campaign. President Clinton appointed Diane to the board of directors of the U.S. Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which she later chaired. Diane authored two books, including "Arkansas Politics and Government: Do the People Rule?" which is used by many Arkansas colleges and

universities as part of their curriculums. Blair passed away in 2000 of lung cancer, but left behind a legacy of service and dedication to the State of Arkansas.

Louise McPhetridge Thaden was born in Bentonville on a small family farm and became interested in aviation at an early age. She attended the University of Arkansas, but never graduated. Instead, she continued to pursue her love of flying, taking her skills to Kansas and eventually California and working various jobs until she eventually earned her pilot's license. She became the only female pilot to simultaneously hold the women's record for speed, altitude, and solo endurance, beating out Amelia Earhart and other pilots at the National Women's Air Derby in 1929. Together Earhart and Thaden formed the Ninety-Nines, an advocacy group for women pilots. Additionally, Louise opened a flight school for women at the Penn School of Aviation and raised the scholarship money for its first 12 students. In 1932, she set a refueling endurance record of 196 hours in the air over Long Island. In 1936, Louise became the first woman to win the Bendix Transcontinental Air Race from New York to Los Angeles. She was the 1937 recipient of the Harmon Trophy, which is the highest honor given to a female pilot. Her achievements have been honored in numerous ways, including by the community of Bentonville, where its airport now bears her name, as well as by former Governor David Pryor's declaration of August 22 as "Louise M. Thaden Day." She was posthumously inducted into the International Aerospace Hall of Fame in 1999. Louise's pioneering and competitive spirit will continue to inspire future generations of pilots and women for many years to come.

The final inductee, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Beta Pi Omega Chapter, was chartered in Little Rock in 1937. It is the oldest graduate chapter in the State of Arkansas. The chapter's 265 members regularly complete service projects and host health fairs, workshops, education programs, voter drive, and fundraisers. The group's members use their education, skill, and expertise to make an impact in the community. Beta Pi Omega has sponsored the chartering of two new Alpha Kappa Alpha chapters in the State, Gamma Alpha Chapter at Philander Smith College and Epsilon Phi Chapter at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Through the years, over 500 High School seniors and college students have received scholarships or other assistance from Beta Pi Omega. The chapter has been recognized for its programs and partnerships with the Little Rock School District, American Heart Association, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Lions Club International. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Beta Pi Omega chapter has demonstrated a true commitment to improving Arkansas for future genera-

tions of citizens in all corners of the State.

Congratulations to the 2019 Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame inductees. We are grateful for their contributions to our State and the work they have done to inspire all Arkansans to achieve great things and help their neighbors and fellow citizens through their efforts to uplift and improve their communities.●

TRIBUTE TO FATHER THOMAS TOBIN

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Father Thomas Tobin, of Carter County, for his leadership in the church and devotion to serving the faithful of Montana.

Father Tobin was ordained in a small church in Tipperary, Ireland, in June of 1959, shortly after, he made the trek to Montana in September of 1959. During his 38 years of service, he ministered across Big Sky Country, including in Billings, Hilger, Livingston, Big Sandy, Baker, and Ekalaka.

As a member of the Knights of Columbus, Father Tobin has been active in promoting Christian values from his local parish to the broader community.

Father Tobin has been a strong defender of the pro-life movement—regularly defending the rights of the unborn from the pulpit. He has participated in a handful of right-to-life marches and has routinely promoted pro-life activities.

During the days leading up to the 9/11 attacks, Father Tobin was in New York City visiting parishes. When the attacks unfolded, Father Tobin delayed his return home to Montana to pray and minister to the people of New York City.

In addition to his devout faith and commitment to others, Father Tobin has a profound love for our great outdoors. Those who know him best say he can often be found at a local dam or lake with a fishing pole. He also enjoys long drives in the country and taking long walks and hikes.

I am proud to honor Father Tobin as this week's Montanan of the Week. His devotion to his Catholic faith and his community is exemplary of the Montana spirit.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2156. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual Selected Acquisition Reports (SARs) for the Army Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAPs) (OSS-2019-0850); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2157. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2158. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-92, "Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Support Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2159. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-93, "Firearms Safety Omnibus Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2160. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-94, "Closing of a Portion of South Dakota Avenue, N.E., Adjacent to Squares 3760 and 3766, S.O. 18-40261, Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2161. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-95, "Warehousing and Storage Eminent Domain Authority Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2162. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-96, "Power Line Undergrounding Program Certified Business Enterprise Utilization Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2163. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-97, "Children's Hospital Research and Innovation Campus Phase 1 Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2164. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-98, "St. Elizabeths East Redevelopment Support Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2165. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-99, "Department of Health Functions Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2166. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-107, "Mypheduh Films DBA Sankofa Video and Books Real Property Tax Exemption Act of 2019"; to the Committee on