

year were killed in Nigeria, according to Open Doors, an increase from the 80 percent it reported in 2021. Over 5,000 Nigerian Christians are reported to have been killed for their faith in 2022.

Most of this slaughter is now carried out by militants within the Fulani Muslim herder population, who have been allowed to act largely with impunity. While some Muslims have also been killed by the same forces, the Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa found that, from October 2019 to September 2022, Christians in Nigeria were 7.6 times more likely to be killed and 6 times more likely to be abducted than Muslims by terrorist and militia groups, when taking into account their population's proportions in Nigeria's states.

Catholic priests, evangelical pastors, and Methodist bishops have been special targets of kidnapping by Fulani and unidentified gunmen, typically shouting "Allahu Akbar." The pontifical organization, Aid to the Church in Need, reports that, since early 2022 alone, 100 Nigerian Catholic priests have been kidnapped and not yet freed, 20 of whom were murdered, with many of these attacks occurring on church grounds. Nigerian media also reports the kidnapping of two imams from their mosques in 2022. Since 2009, some 17,000 churches have been burned and attacked, while many of them—such as St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Ondo State that was attacked on Pentecost Sunday last year—were filled with worshippers. We are not aware of a single case that has been prosecuted.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reports that in "northcentral Nigeria, ethnonationalists fighting to promote Fulani interests target Christian civilians based on ethnoreligious identity." In recommending CPC designation, it concludes that the Nigerian Government has "routinely failed to investigate these attacks and prosecute those responsible, demonstrating a problematic level of apathy on the part of state officials."

In addition, terror groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province have attacked and killed thousands of Christians and Muslims who reject their dictates. Unknown numbers of Christian girls and women have been kidnapped into sexual slavery. Boko Haram kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls in 2014 in Chibok, Borno State, half of whom remain captive and are pressured to convert to Islam, while Leah Sharibu remains enslaved following a terrorist raid of her school in Dapchi, Yobe State, in 2018.

Lawlessness has resulted in millions of internally displaced Nigerians and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Just this year, in Nigeria's north central Benue State, whose population is overwhelmingly Christian, nearly two million farming families were displaced by Fulani militants. Some of them were then hunted down in their places of refuge and brutally hacked to death. Catholic Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of Benue's Makurdi diocese recently shared video documentation of the aftermath of one such attack with numerous Members of Congress.

Authorities also engage directly in religious persecution by enforcing Islamic blasphemy laws that have resulted in recent death sentences for Sufi musician Yahaya Sharif-Aminu and two Muslim clerics, and "religious insult" laws that led to a 24-year sentence for Nigeria's Humanist Association head, Mubarak Bala. Moreover, these laws have been accompanied by a routine grant of impunity for extrajudicial attacks against their perceived violators. Last year, there was the unprosecuted mob killing of student Deborah Emmanuel Yakubu after she was accused of blasphemy and the unprosecuted

serious death threats against the Sultan of Sokoto, Sokoto's Catholic bishop, and Rhoda Jatau, a Christian woman, all three of whom were targeted for expressing disapproval of Yakubu's murder.

IRFA requires frank assessments in the face of such grave religious freedom violations. The Secretary of State should acknowledge that Nigeria has "engaged in or tolerated" severe religious freedom violations, the statutory criteria warranting CPC designation. This is particularly important since the United States is a major partner of Nigeria, having given it over \$1 billion in foreign aid in 2022, alone.

As Africa's most populous country and its largest economy, Nigeria wields significant influence in Sub-Saharan Africa. By allowing religious persecution to proliferate within its borders, Nigeria is compounding already heightened regional insecurity. Both American interests and the International Religious Freedom Act require a response. We view the passage of the bi-partisan House Resolution 82 as an essential first step.

Sincerely,

David Curry President and CEO, Global Christian Relief; Governor Sam Brownback, Former Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Co-Chair, International Religious Freedom Summit; Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice Co-Chair, International Religious Freedom Summit;

Nina Shea, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute; Kristen Waggoner, President and CEO, Alliance Defending Freedom; Tony Perkins, Chairman, Family Research Council; Leonard Leo, Former Chair, US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

F. Brent Leatherwood, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission Southern Baptist Convention; Congressman Frank Wolf, Former Member of Congress 1981–2015, Retired; George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center; Mary Ann Glendon, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita Harvard University; Eric Patterson, President, Religious Freedom Institute; Jane Adolphe, Founder & Executive Director, International Catholic Jurists Forum; Jeff King, President, International Christian Concern (ICC).

The Rt. Rev. Julian Dobbs, Diocesan Bishop The Anglican Diocese of the Living Word Anglican Church in North America; Timothy R. Head, Executive Director, Faith and Freedom Coalition; Dr. Randel Everett, President, 21Wilberforce; Stephen S. Enada, Executive President, International Committee on Nigeria; Faith McDonnell, Director, Katartismos Global; John Stonestreet, President, Colson Center for Christian Worldview.

Kelly Monroe Kullberg, Director, American Association of Evangelicals (AAE); Robert Nicholson, President and Founder Philos Project; Amanda Bowman, Chair, The Catholic Herald Institute; Gregory H. Stanton, Founding President, Genocide Watch; Kathryn Jean Lopez, Senior Fellow, National Review Institute; Alejandro Chafuén, Founder, International Freedom Educational Foundation; Mark Tooley, President, Institute on Religion and Democracy; Dede Laugesen, Executive Director, Save the Persecuted Christians; Richard Ghazal, In Defense of Christians.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF TEMPLE, TX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT AND CEO ROD HENRY

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to celebrate Temple, TX Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Rod Henry as he embarks on his richly deserved retirement after decades of devoted public service. He leaves behind a rich legacy of accomplishment and will remain an example of excellence for all who follow.

With integrity, honesty, and transparency, Rod has served 10 years as the President and CEO of the Temple Chamber of Commerce. Under his leadership, the Chamber has enhanced the success of members, provided opportunities for business owners, leaders, and their employees to learn and grow, and has served as a thoughtful and effective voice for the business community.

With his infectious "can do" spirit, Rod lives his life in service to others. Over his 46-year career, he has devoted his talents and energies to numerous community and professional organizations that make the world a better place and make cities like Temple great places to call home.

While Rod isn't tired of the privilege of public service, he knows that everything has its season. But stepping away from the Chamber won't give him much idle time as looks forward to watching Temple's continued growth and spending time with his beloved wife Benita and their family.

Retirement marks not the end of a career, but the beginning of a great adventure. As Rod Henry embarks on this new chapter in life, I thank him for his exceptional work, remain grateful for our friendship, and wish him the very best.

MONSERRAT DIAZ GARCIA

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Monserrat Diaz Garcia for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Monserrat has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Monserrat, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Monserrat's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Monserrat Diaz Garcia on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

CONGRATULATING HACIENDA-LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the principals, teachers, board members, staff, students, and families of Glen A. Wilson High School, Mesa Robles School, Los Molinos Elementary, and Wedgeworth Elementary in the Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District (HLPUSD), which all received the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Award this year from the U.S. Department of Education.

In particular, I want to commend the more than 450 students at these four distinguished schools who live in La Puente, Valinda, and West Puente Valley in California's 31st Congressional District: Wilson (197); Mesa Robles (137); Los Molinos (64); and Wedgeworth (55). I also extend my congratulations to Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jimenez, Board of Education President Christine H. Salazar, and the entire district, whose distinguished schools have made a profound and lasting impact on the lives of the students and families in the community.

Each year, the Department of Education recognizes the academic excellence and success in closing achievement and opportunity gaps of a select few elementary, middle, and high schools across the nation through the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The Blue Ribbon designation process is highly selective, with only 33 schools across the State of California and 353 nationally, receiving a 2023 Blue Ribbon designation.

On behalf of my constituents in California's 31st Congressional District, I want to proudly congratulate and thank everyone who has helped make these four Hacienda-La Puente schools the exemplary institutions that they are today.

HONORING JANET AARON

HON. BRANDON WILLIAMS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to honor Janet Aaron, Supervisor of the Town of Skaneateles, as she marks 40 years of service to her community.

Ms. Aaron's municipal career began in 1983 when she served at the Village of Skaneateles as a part-time clerk. In 1988 she became Deputy Town Clerk for the Town of Skaneateles, serving under Juanita Newell. Ms. Aaron was elected Skaneateles Town Clerk in 1994 and served successfully in this position until 2017. During her tenure as Town Clerk, Ms. Aaron obtained \$59,000 in grants for the Town Records Management Program, became a Certified Municipal Clerk, served as President of the Onondaga County Town Clerk's Association, and also served as the District Director of the New York State Town Clerks Association. As Town Clerk, Ms. Aaron worked with 7 town supervisors, several town councilors and

a number of board and committee members. In 2017, Ms. Aaron was elected Skaneateles Town Supervisor, starting her first term in 2018.

In her career as Supervisor, Ms. Aaron has a host of achievements to her credit. Some of the many accomplishments realized under her leadership include upgrades to Austin Park, repair of the Soldiers and Sailors monument at Lakeview Cemetery, updates to the Mandana Boat Launch, establishment of the Town of Skaneateles Facebook Page, updates to the Comprehensive Plan, and new signage and branding throughout the Town. In addition, Ms. Aaron helped organize the Skaneateles Watershed Municipal Partnership, formed a Hamlet Committee, and oversaw the refinancing of the joint fire department bond with the Village of Skaneateles saving over \$100,000 over the life of the bond. Always focused on the needs of residents, Ms. Aaron lobbied Spectrum to provide internet to parts of Skaneateles's rural community and oversaw the purchase of town streetlights and conversion to LED, saving the lighting district over \$30,000 per year. Ms. Aaron worked tirelessly to continue services during COVID-19 by developing protocols, providing protection for employees and residents that included remotely connecting employees to the office so they could work during the pandemic to meet the needs of residents. As a dedicated advocate of the town, Ms. Aaron helped to acquire grant funding for Smart Cities security cameras, hamlet planning, shared services, and most recently the water district, securing \$4.4 million, the largest grant the community has ever received.

Ms. Aaron is a third-generation member of the Skaneateles community. Her grandparents owned Pine Grove Dairy which provided door to door milk delivery in both the village and town. Ms. Aaron graduated from Skaneateles Central School and then attended Cayuga Community College earning her degree in Business Administration. She was married to the love of her life for 40 years until his passing in 2012. Her family includes a son, stepdaughter and 4 grandchildren. In addition to her work for the village and town, Ms. Aaron has dedicated many hours to volunteer work with various organizations including the Skaneateles Historical Society.

Janet Aaron's love for her community is evident in her decades of municipal and volunteer service. On behalf of New York's 22nd Congressional District, I offer my sincere appreciation and congratulations on the occasion of her retirement.

HONORING GENESIS HOUSE FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I celebrate Genesis House, which for the past 30 years has provided meaningful opportunities and hope for people living with mental health challenges in Livingston County, Michigan.

Founded in 1998 in Howell, Genesis House is a program of Livingston County Community Mental Health and part of the evidence-based Clubhouse International model designed to im-

prove the lives of those who participate by providing social support, education, and employment. One of more than 300 such clubhouses worldwide, Genesis House is so much more than a physical gathering space; it's a place members can call home. At Genesis House, people navigating life with mental illness can learn, grow, and develop the individual skills they need to increase their independence and continue their recovery. In this model, Clubhouse members and staff work together to carry out daily duties, with staff mainly serving as coaches, cheerleaders, and talent scouts, pouring their faith into those who may not yet believe in themselves.

In addition to providing a place for meaningful social and recreational opportunities for hundreds of members, over the past 30 years Genesis House has partnered with dozens of local employers and organizations to help members find and retain gainful employment.

It's a powerful vision of social and economic inclusion, and one that I had the chance to see firsthand when I visited Genesis House in 2019 at its Fowlerville location. There, as members answered phones, prepared meals, and tidied the facility, I heard how much the Clubhouse meant to them. I saw what a restorative atmosphere it was, and that it was clearly a community of people dedicated to walking alongside one another on the path to a better life, no matter how long it takes or how difficult it is.

Recently, Genesis House returned to its Howell roots and took over a larger, brighter space with the capacity to serve even more members. The new location, where sunlight pours in through floor-to-ceiling windows, is a powerful metaphor for the light that Genesis House shines in the community, and the glow of resilience of its members. As we mark 30 years of success for Genesis House, I salute all those who have supported this organization along the way, by fundraising, volunteering, and helping to spread the word about the organization and break the stigma around mental illness. I pay tribute to the members and the staff for the hard work they do each day to make this house a home. Long may Genesis House, a beacon of hope for so many, continue to shine in Howell and beyond.

MICHELLE DAVILA ROJAS

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michelle Davila Rojas for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Michelle has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Michelle, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Michelle's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Oberon Middle School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Michelle Davila Rojas on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.