

Gaza, being beaten while lying on a motorcycle and going through tunnels. Like many of the hostages, she lived near the Palestinians in the kibbutzim outside of Gaza. They would regularly drive Palestinian patients from Gaza to the hospitals in Israel for treatment.

Like Lilach, a woman that Hamas murdered, who actually worked in the field of trauma relief focusing mainly on children, she was a longtime activist of Women in Black, an anti-war movement that was established by Israeli women after the first intifada. Seven of her family are still being held hostage, including a 3-year-old.

The cruel irony of the Hamas terrorist attack is that those who face the worst of October 7 believe the most in peace. They cared for their Palestinian neighbors. They believed in the two-state solution. This attack has changed their community and all of Israel forever.

I know that the kind of sheer evil we saw in the attack on October 7 is shocking and horrible. I was 15 months old when the Auschwitz-Birkenau and other concentration camps were liberated. I was too young to understand the headlines. But when I grew up, I heard the stories of life and death from survivors firsthand.

This experience of the Holocaust was imprinted on me and on an entire generation of Jews. It shaped our values in how we work, how we enact policy, and how we live with our families. It guides me today here on the floor of the Senate. It tells me that, despite this being the darkest days for Jews since the Holocaust, we must have faith. Despite bearing witness to some of the most horrific evil acts ever committed, we must find a way to reserve hope.

So, in closing, to the families of loved ones who are being held by Hamas: Do not lose hope. We will never stop standing with you. To the hostages themselves, you are not alone. We will not stop working for your safe return. I pray that you will be back home soon playing soccer, practicing piano, celebrating your birthdays, living life in Israel that is safe and secure and at peace.

That is our prayer, but it is also our mission. We will not rest until we do everything we can for the safe return of the hostages.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julia E.

Kobick, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, you are aware of the fact that I announced last week in the committee that we would vote to authorize subpoenas to Harlan Crow, Robin Arkley, and Leonard Leo as part of the Judiciary Committee's continuing investigation into the ethical situation at the U.S. Supreme Court.

I do not make this decision lightly. Seeking authorization to issue subpoenas is a relatively rare occurrence in the committee. So today I come to the floor for a few minutes to explain why we have taken this significant step.

Over the last several months, it has become clear that the Supreme Court is in desperate need of a binding code of ethics as we learned of lavish gifts and luxury travel that certain Supreme Court Justices have accepted from a gaggle of fawning billionaires.

Let's start with Justice Clarence Thomas. The sheer number and value of gifts accepted by Justice Thomas is staggering, and the shamelessness with which he accepted them is stunning. For decades, Justice Thomas has accepted lavish gifts from Harlan Crow, a conservative billionaire with business before the Supreme Court. These gifts have ranged from a \$19,000 Bible once owned by Frederick Douglass to a \$15,000 bust of Abraham Lincoln. Justice Thomas also accepted private jet trips and free lodging at Bohemian Grove, an exclusive all-male, invitation-only retreat in the redwoods of California. And these are only examples of what Justice Thomas disclosed.

After the Los Angeles Times reported on these disclosures, Justice Thomas, in 2004, 19 years ago, promptly stopped disclosing gifts as required by law.

We learned this year that he continued to accept expensive gifts for the past 19 years and that these billionaire benefactors have been part of a growing list.

There isn't time to detail all of the undisclosed gifts, which the press has discovered, and luxury travel that Justice Thomas has accepted, but for the sake of a record, I am going to give a few examples.

In 2019, Justice Thomas and his wife flew to Indonesia on Harlan Crow's private jet and boarded Crow's 162-foot superyacht, the Michaela Rose, to island hop with Harlan Crow and his wife.

The total cost of that trip alone could have exceeded half a million dollars if Justice Thomas had chartered the jet and yacht. Lucky for him, Harlan Crow was happy to cover the costs.

Justice Thomas also continued to join Crow on trips to Bohemian Grove in California. He visited Crow's ranch in East Texas, spent summers at

Crow's private resort in the Adirondacks.

But there is more. Crow paid thousands of dollars to cover tuition for Justice Thomas's grandnephew. He purchased real estate owned by Thomas and his relatives, including Thomas's mother's home, where she continues to live rent-free. And Crow donated half a million dollars to a conservative advocacy group founded by Justice Thomas's wife.

I could go on and on and on because the list of gifts Justice Thomas has chosen to accept and failed to disclose goes on and on and on.

Justice Thomas is not the only Supreme Court Justice who has accepted lavish gifts from billionaires and refused to disclose them. In 2008, Justice Samuel Alito boarded a private jet bound for Alaska to enjoy a luxury fishing trip, a trip that should have cost him over \$100,000, but it didn't cost him one penny because of the man who organized the flight and joined Alito on the luxury fishing trip, Leonard Leo.

Mr. Leo arranged Justice Alito's free flight to Alaska and his free lodging once he arrived. Their host at the luxury fishing lodge was a gentleman named Robin Arkley. Over the next few days, Justice Alito and his travel companions enjoyed guided fishing trips, flights on bush planes, meals of Alaskan king crab and Kobe beef, and wines costing upward of \$1,000 a bottle.

Justice Alito did not disclose any of this, and when challenged, for example, on the jet ride—why that should be disclosed—he said he didn't view it as a gift because if he didn't go, the seat on the plane would have gone empty.

That is an interesting analysis of a gift from a strict constructionist.

This kind of scandalous behavior cannot continue. One former Federal judge who served for years on the judicial committee that reviews the Justices' financial disclosures had this to say about the gifts to Justice Thomas:

In my career, I don't remember ever seeing this degree of largesse given to anybody.

When referring to the cascade of gifts from Harlan Crow to Justice Thomas, the former chief White House ethics lawyer for Republican President George W. Bush said:

This is way outside the norm. This is way in excess of anything I've seen.

And renowned conservative jurist, Judge J. Michael Luttig, stated in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Supreme Court should want to lead by the example that only it can set. It should want to conduct itself in its non-judicial activities in all ways such that it is beyond reproach.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has not lived up to this expectation. That is why our Senate Judiciary Committee is exercising its constitutional authority to investigate. Months ago, I, along with my Democratic colleagues on the committee, sent letters to Crow, Arkley, and Leo, among others, seeking details about what exactly

has been provided to Supreme Court Justices. Our goal has been to understand how specific individuals and groups with business before the Court have used undisclosed gifts to gain private access to Justices—access not afforded to others.

For months, Crow has refused to fully comply with the committee's requests, and Leo has completely stonewalled the committee. Only now, under threat of subpoena, Mr. Arkley has stepped forward, and we are looking forward to continuing our conversation with him this week.

The fact that we have to go to this length is unacceptable but necessary. The Senate and the American people deserve to know the full extent of how billionaires with interests before the Court use their immense wealth to buy private access to our Supreme Court.

That is why, on Thursday, the Judiciary Committee will vote to authorize subpoenas for these individuals. The vote is a critical step in the committee's exercise of its constitutional right and duty to conduct oversight of the Federal judiciary. It is critical to the committee's effort to restore the Court's reputation. The highest Court in the land should not have the lowest standard of ethics.

This is not a fight I wanted, but now that it has come to this, the Judiciary Committee will not back down.

Most Americans are shocked to know or to learn that the nine Justices on the Supreme Court are the only high-ranking Federal officials in the United States of America who are beyond the reach of a code of ethics. How do you explain that?

How can you explain that every Federal judge in America is bound by a code of ethics except for the nine Supreme Court Justices?

What is so special about them? The Constitution makes it clear that we don't have royalty in this country. They are acting like they belong to some legal fraternity or sorority. That has got to come to an end.

When you look at the situation, Members of Congress are held to standards—and I am not complaining. I knew what I was getting into when I signed up for this job—held to standards of disclosure and limitation on gifts.

I cannot tell you how many times I have said to a person: Is this worth more than 50 bucks? If they answer: Well, maybe, it might be, I say: Well, keep it and thanks for thinking of me.

That is the kind of thing that just becomes a routine part of public service. These lavish gifts, particularly from individuals who have business before the Court, are just unacceptable and inexplicable.

It is important for us to have a response when people ask: What are you doing to clean up things at the Supreme Court?

The first thing we did, I think, was the responsible and respectable thing to do. We invited the Chief Justice of

the Supreme Court to appear before our committee and tell us his thoughts on the subject and what he believes should be done to deal with this bad publicity and these disclosures. He declined the invitation. I don't hold it against him. He explained, in my presence, a few weeks ago why he did. I understand it. I disagree with it, but I understand it.

But 11 years ago, was the first time I contacted the Chief Justice and said: This has got to come to an end. Tell us what you are going to do about establishing a code of ethics on the Supreme Court. Eleven years ago and nothing—nothing—has happened since.

I want to salute and commend my colleague Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of the State of Rhode Island. He has been a leader on this topic in the subcommittee which he chairs on the Judiciary Committee, and we have co-operated in this effort.

We will meet this week. This is not the first time the Judiciary Committee will be asked to issue subpoenas. They happened before under Republican leadership as well in a much different type of case. But the fact of the matter is, we have tried carefully and studiously to come up with this information the right way, and, unfortunately, we have not gotten the kind of results we wanted. A subpoena, we hope, will jar loose the information to explain exactly what happened with the gift-giving by several individuals.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, one of my extraordinary friends in Chicago is Dr. Sahloul. Dr. Sahloul is a Syrian American. He is an exceptional man, and his wife Suzanne is also an extraordinary person. He has created an organization called MedGlobal. The best way to summarize what it does is to think of doctors without frontiers and how they travel across the world and go to some of the most dangerous places and volunteer medical assistance. Dr. Sahloul, through MedGlobal, has done the same thing.

Many of the doctors who volunteer for MedGlobal are Muslim and from the Middle East themselves, but they can be found in any spot in the world. He calls me from places, and I have run into him in places and seen him. I just can't believe what this man does. He risks his life to go to war zones to treat people who have been injured. I think so highly of him.

He has a friend in Gaza—a friend, a doctor—who was highlighted in the New York Times several days ago, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of the pediatric ward at Kamal Adwan Hospital. Many of the casualties from the Jabalia strikes were taken to that hospital. I read this article, and I have reread it many times. I try to understand what is happening on the ground in Gaza. Let me start at the beginning.

What the terrorist group Hamas did to Israel was an atrocity. The attack on October 7 cannot be rationalized, explained, or, for that matter, forgiven

for what they did to the innocent victims in Israel. The fact that Israel is defending itself is perfectly right in my eyes. They have a right to do that. Of course, Hamas continues to be a terrorist threat to them, and to try to stop Hamas and this activity is understood.

At the same time, it is important that they accept the standards which civilized nations accept even in the conduct of warfare. That is the message that has been delivered by President Biden and again by Antony Blinken, our Secretary of State, over and over: Be careful that your ultimate reaction is consistent with the threat and used to the basic standards of civilization. That has been a request over and over again.

The reason I come to the floor is because I got a call this morning from Dr. Sahloul, and he spoke this morning to Dr. Hussam again about the situation at this hospital. What the doctor had to say is basically what was in the article in The New York Times.

I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD at this point.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

GAZA DOCTOR WITNESSING NIGHTMARISH SITUATION

(By Hiba Yazbek and Karen Zraick)

The Jabaliya neighborhood north of Gaza City was pummeled with Israeli airstrikes for a third consecutive day on Thursday, while doctors treating the victims described nightmarish scenes of operating without basic supplies or anesthesia.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, director of the pediatric ward at Kamal Adwan Hospital, where many of the casualties from the Jabaliya strikes were taken, said the majority of the people arriving were children. Many were severely burned or were missing limbs.

On Tuesday, after the first strike in Jabaliya, the hospital received about 40 people who did not survive, and 250 others who were wounded, he said. The numbers were nearly the same on Wednesday, when another strike hit. On Thursday, a strike damaged a United Nations school being used as a shelter and sent in another wave of patients: 10 dead and 80 others wounded.

"I've never in my life seen injuries this bad," Dr. Abu Safiya said on Thursday by phone, adding, "We saw children without heads."

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, which runs the school, said that the school had been among four of its shelters—housing nearly 20,000 people total—that had been damaged in the previous 24 hours. Twenty people were reported to have been killed at the Jabaliya shelter, the agency said, along with three people in other strikes at the Shati and Bureij camps.

The Israeli military said that in its strikes on Jabaliya, it had been targeting Hamas commanders who played key roles in the attacks on Oct. 7, which Israeli officials said killed more than 1,400 people. The military also said that Hamas had an extensive tunnel network in Jabaliya.

On Wednesday, Dr. Abu Safiya said, he was working with a colleague in the hospital's neonatal intensive-care unit—one of two units that still had power amid a severe fuel shortage—when casualties from Jabaliya started arriving.