

Mr. Speaker, this vote has been a long time in coming. I recognize the town's first selectman, Mr. Dana Barrow, and his predecessor, Mr. Gary Greenberg, who have diligently raised this issue, along with the town postmasters, with the Postal Service for many years laying out the real-life consequences of fragmenting this small community and essentially disconnecting it to the vital services that the residents require.

This week the House can help Scotland, as well as 44 other similarly situated towns, by passing H.R. 8753. The bill was reported out of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee unanimously and has strong, bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to support this measure, send it to the Senate for swift passage and to the President's desk. The hardworking, taxpaying citizens of these towns deserve to get the same level of postal service as every other community.

NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special tradition taking place this Saturday, December 14, 2024.

Every year, on the third Saturday of December, thousands of volunteers set out in a coordinated wreath-laying ceremony across the country and around the world. This ceremony is known as National Wreaths Across America Day.

In 1992, Morrill Worcester from Harrington, Maine, noticed he had an abundance of holiday wreaths and decided to take the opportunity to honor our country's fallen soldiers. After contacting his Senator, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in an older section of the cemetery.

This tradition would quietly continue until 2005 when a photo of the tombstones decorated with wreaths and covered with snow went viral. From there, this quiet annual tribute to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice transformed into a mission to remember, honor, and teach.

Since the viral photo, Wreaths Across America continues to grow. This Saturday, volunteers will lay wreaths at more than 2,500 locations in the United States, abroad, and at sea. This simple gesture is a way for all of us to express our appreciation during the holiday season.

Wreaths Across America is built on three guiding principles: remember, honor, and teach. Each of these principles carries profound meaning, reminding us of our responsibility to those who have given everything in defense of our freedoms.

First, we remember our fallen heroes.

Every name engraved on a headstone represents a life, a story of courage, dedication, and love for our great Nation. By laying a wreath at their final resting place, we say their name aloud, ensuring that they are never forgotten. It is a simple, yet powerful, act reminding us that freedom is not free. It is paid for by the men and women who answer the call of duty.

Second, we honor those who wear or have worn the uniform. Honoring our veterans is not limited to one day or one ceremony. It is a commitment we carry out throughout the year. We honor the courage of those who stood watch over our Nation, often in the face of incredible challenges. We also honor their families, who shared in their sacrifices and carried the weight of their absences.

Finally, we teach the next generation.

Wreaths Across America encourages us to pass these lessons on to the next generation. When we bring young people to participate, whether it is laying wreaths or hearing stories of service, we ensure that the values of duty, courage, and sacrifice are instilled in future leaders. These moments of connection are how we keep the memory of our veterans alive and ensure their contributions are not lost to time.

This past Saturday, what has become known as the country's longest veterans' parade, Wreaths Across America's annual Escort to Arlington, kicked off. The official route will travel down the East Coast stopping at schools, memorials, and other locations along the way to spread and to remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach the next generation the value of freedom.

Stops with public events will be held in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., before arriving at Arlington National Cemetery on the morning of Saturday, December 14, National Wreaths Across America Day.

This pilgrimage to Arlington National Cemetery represents the very best of our Nation. More than 250,000 wreaths will be hauled by tractor-trailers to their destination.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans remind us that our freedom is not guaranteed, but it is paid for by our dedicated servicemembers. This small gesture is one of the many ways we can thank them for their service.

I also recognize the organizers, volunteers, and participants who make Wreaths Across America possible. Their dedication ensures that hundreds of thousands of veterans are remembered with dignity and respect.

Mr. Speaker, if you are interested in volunteering, please visit wreathscrossamerica.org.

SUDAN: WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Sudan, where people are suffering the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, yet Sudan is all but invisible.

In 2004, I stood with my colleagues in the House and Senate, NGOs and movements, and President George W. Bush in denouncing genocide in Darfur and calling for an end to the killing and repression by Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir.

In April of 2019, I celebrated the courage of the Sudanese people who overthrew Bashir in a nonviolent mass movement. I supported their aspirations to create a new democratic, civilian government. Their hopes were frustrated in October 2021 when two generals carried out a military coup against the transitional government.

Then in April 2023, those two generals, one in charge of the Sudanese Armed Forces, the SAF, and the other in charge of the Rapid Support Forces, the RSF, turned on one another in a power struggle that has laid waste to Sudan. Both sides have been accused of carrying out war crimes, and the RSF has been accused of atrocities that might rise to the level of genocide in Darfur.

The U.S. must use all of its leverage and every tool and mechanism available to ostracize these warlords and those who provide them with funds, military aid, and supplies. Yet, after 19 months of carnage, we have failed to do so.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese people are being killed, tortured, raped, and starved. They believe that the world has forgotten them. Some 26 million people need food assistance. Close to 10 million people have been classified as on the cusp of famine or are already in its grip. The number of deaths by malnutrition is rising.

Let me salute the brave Sudanese and international groups working day and night inside Sudan to provide life-saving food, medicine, and services to the Sudanese people.

In northern Darfur, the Zamzam camp for internally displaced, where more than one-half million people seek shelter, has received support from humanitarian networks in my home State of Massachusetts for decades. In August, Zamzam was officially classified as "in famine." In late November, the World Food Programme finally reached camp Zamzam with critical food supplies. Then, during the first week in December, the RSF attacked Zamzam. Shelling resulted in deaths, injuries, and disrupted deliveries of emergency supplies.

The SAF is also carrying out military operations in the area around Zamzam.

What is happening in Zamzam is happening throughout Sudan. Civilians are targeted by both sides. Sudanese and international humanitarian workers are targeted along with their lifesaving work.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and the international community condemns such actions but do nothing, nothing, Mr. Speaker, to end them.

Foreign actors such as the UAE, Egypt, China, Russia, Iran, and companies based in Türkiye, Egypt, Serbia, Yemen, and Russia continue to supply the warring sides with weapons and supplies.

One of the greatest abusers, the UAE, is accused of supplying the RSF with military equipment. Yet, rather than sanctioning the UAE, the U.S. recently announced that it is sending the UAE \$1.2 billion in military equipment.

Mr. Speaker, how can that be?

Shame on us, and shame on this administration.

I applaud Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and Congresswoman SARA JACOBS for introducing resolutions of disapproval for these arms sales. Shame on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate and House leadership for failing to rapidly bring these resolutions to the Senate and House floors through regular order in the House and expedited procedures in the Senate.

Last Tuesday, Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member MEEKS introduced H.R. 10268 to impose sanctions on those supplying military aid to the warring parties and support pathways to a cessation of hostilities and peace.

Many of my House colleagues have led letters and introduced resolutions on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, but it is simply not enough.

President Biden, President-elect Trump, Congress, and the international community must commit to use all their leverage to achieve a cessation of hostilities, protect civilians, and get humanitarian aid inside Sudan.

Only then will the Sudanese people know that they have not been forgotten by the American people and by the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD a letter dated August 16, 2024, addressed to Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power, from several Members of Congress; and a letter dated 6 of December 2024 to Senators Risch and Young from several Sudanese and international civil society groups.

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

There was no objection.

AUGUST 16, 2024.

DEAR SECRETARY BLINKEN AND ADMINISTRATOR POWER,

We write with alarm at the catastrophic humanitarian emergency unfolding in Sudan, emphasized by the declaration of famine in the 500,000-person Zamzam refugee camp in war-ravaged Darfur—the world's first confirmed famine since 2017. In the face of such incredible suffering, the U.S. must take extraordinary measures to support Sudanese civilians. We appreciate the Administration's efforts at the ALPS Group talks in Switzerland to address Sudan's humanitarian crisis, including by securing commitments from both parties to provide unhindered humanitarian access through Adre border crossing and along the Dabbah

Road for 3 months, which all parties must immediately operationalize and expand to facilitate a famine response. We urge the U.S. to build on the peace talks to prioritize the scaling up of humanitarian aid in Sudan, through greater resources and staffing for Special Envoy Tom Perriello, more concerted U.S. leadership to push for creative solutions to aid delivery obstacles, support for a new pledging conference, and greater attention from the UN.

The lack of international attention has obscured a horrific reality: the war in Sudan is the largest humanitarian disaster in the world today. The country is experiencing higher rates of displacement, death, and starvation than during the Darfur genocide in the early 2000s. As Special Envoy Tom Perriello recently testified, the death toll from the war could be as many as 150,000 people. Millions of civilians are experiencing violence, with 6.7 million people at risk of conflict-related sexual violence, which disproportionately impacts women and girls. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system, 26 million Sudanese, about half the country's population, are suffering crisis levels of hunger—the worst food insecurity in Sudan the IPC has ever recorded. By one estimate, two and a half million Sudanese could die of hunger-related causes in the next four months. Sudan is also experiencing the world's largest displacement crisis: 10 million people have been forced from their homes since the war began 16 months ago, two million of whom have fled to neighboring countries where humanitarian assistance is already at a breaking point. Sudan is experiencing a crisis of historic proportions with lasting consequences for U.S. interests in the region. There is no time to waste: the United States must bring the full weight of our diplomatic power and foreign assistance to bear to meaningfully improve the conditions on the ground.

Surging humanitarian resources to desperate civilians and bringing an end to this conflict should be a top priority of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, with commensurate resources and high-level diplomatic attention. We encourage the inclusion of relevant international partners in a centralized process to bring both the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to the table for further talks to end the war. In the meantime, it is essential that the U.S. seize the momentum of the ALPS Group talks to continue to mobilize its own resources and those of the international community to dramatically scale up the humanitarian response and save civilian lives in Sudan.

Breaking the current stalemate requires the work of a robust team backed by serious resources, and it is critical that the Special Envoy has the support needed to be successful. Alongside the diplomatic line of effort, we urge greater U.S. leadership in pushing for creative solutions to circumvent the numerous obstacles to aid delivery created by the SAF and RSF and to secure consistent and sustained access to the Adre border crossing after the initial three-month opening period. The risk of recurring impediments to traditional UN cross-line and cross-border humanitarian operations also make investing in alternative aid mechanisms all the more important. We urge you to ramp up support for cash programming and market-based assistance and direct greater funding to locally-led, grassroots response organizations like Emergency Response Rooms that are leading humanitarian efforts in many hard-to-access areas.

From a broader perspective, we are also concerned that only 37% out of the \$2.7 billion of the UN's humanitarian appeal for

Sudan is currently funded. We urge the Administration to push for another emergency pledging conference in light of the recent famine declaration and the temporary reopening of the Adre crossing, and to engage urgently with international partners to encourage a multilateral surge of contributions. The U.S. should also utilize its position at the UN to help catalyze international action. We hope the U.S. is able to leverage the upcoming UN General Assembly to elevate the crisis to the highest levels of global action, including urging the UN Security Council to hold open briefings on Sudan until famine conditions are improved. Ending the Sudan crisis will require a deliberate and well-resourced U.S. response. We want to work with you to ensure the U.S. puts forward a policy that holistically addresses the humanitarian, political, economic, and regional impacts of the war.

Famine is a reality on the ground in Sudan and the deprivation at Zamzam camp just scratches the surface of a much broader catastrophe. If we are to stop the suffering, the United States and our partners around the world must act swiftly and decisively to save civilian lives.

Sincerely,

Sara Jacobs, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Africa; Sydney Kamlager-Dove, James P. McGovern, Lois Frankel, Norma J. Torres, Jamie Raskin, Abigail Davis Spanberger, Greg Casar, Delia C. Ramirez, Raúl M. Grijalva, Jonathan L. Jackson, Alma S. Adams, Ph.D., Madeleine Dean, Ilhan Omar, Dina Titus, Pramila Jayapal, Maxine Waters, Frederica S. Wilson, Nikema Williams, Betty McCollum, Gwen S. Moore, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Brad Sherman, Stephen F. Lynch, Andy Kim, Maxwell Alejandro Frost, Mike Quigley, Seth Moulton, Rashida Tlaib, Gerald E. Connolly, Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, Mark DeSaulnier, Bennie G. Thompson, Daniel T. Kildee, Nydia M. Velázquez, Gabe Amo, Seth Magaziner, André Carson, Ami Bera, M.D., Jennifer L. McClellan, Kevin Mullin, Danny K. Davis, Yvette D. Clarke, Nanette Diaz Barragán, Robert Garcia, Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr., Teresa Leger Fernández, Rosa L. DeLauro, Juan Vargas, Greg Stanton, William R. Keating; Members of Congress.

KEEP EYES ON SUDAN,
December 6, 2024.

Hon. SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH,
Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate.

Hon. SENATOR TODD YOUNG,
Member, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate.

DEAR SENATORS RISCH AND YOUNG: Qui Potest, Debet!

We, the undersigned Sudanese and international civil society groups, write to you with an urgent appeal to support the Van Hollen-Jacobs legislative package aimed at conditioning U.S. arms sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on ending its support to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia in Sudan. These bills represent a crucial step toward halting one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time.

The situation in Sudan is dire. Since April 2023, when a brutal war erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF, our country has descended into unprecedented levels of violence and suffering. Millions of civilians have been displaced, and the RSF has been credibly accused of systematically using starvation, sexual violence, and ethnic cleansing as weapons of war. In January 2024, the UN Darfur Panel of Experts unequivocally confirmed the UAE's role in arming the RSF, further fueling this catastrophe. The U.S. State Department itself has determined that the RSF's atrocities constitute crimes against humanity and

ethnic cleansing, echoing the genocide in Darfur that began two decades ago.

The United States has a long history of leveraging its foreign policy tools to uphold human rights and prevent atrocities. Notably, during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, the U.S. spearheaded arms embargoes and economic sanctions to curtail the flow of weapons to perpetrators of ethnic cleansing. Such precedents underscore the moral and strategic importance of using U.S. influence to hold states accountable for actions that destabilize regions and perpetuate human suffering.

The UAE's continued support for the RSF through arms transfers not only violates international norms but also undermines global stability and the values the United States seeks to uphold. By halting its arms sales to the UAE until it ceases its support for the RSF, the United States can send a clear message: it will not tolerate impunity for those who enable crimes against humanity.

Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and Representative SARA JACOBS have introduced bills (S. 5376 and H.R. 8501) and Joint Resolutions of Disapproval (S.J. Res. 118 and H.J. Res. 226) that would condition U.S. arms sales to the UAE on its cessation of support for the RSF. These measures are both principled and pragmatic. Blocking the \$1.2 billion sale of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (GMLRS) and Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) to the UAE would increase the political costs of its actions in Sudan while raising international awareness of the devastating conflict in our country.

Sudan stands on the brink of collapse, and the international community's inaction is emboldening perpetrators of mass atrocities. Supporting the Van Hollen-Jacobs bills is a necessary and timely intervention. It aligns with the United States' commitment to human rights, international law, and the prevention of atrocity crimes.

We urge you to cosponsor and advocate for the passage of these bills. The United States has the leverage to influence the UAE's actions, and with that power comes the responsibility to act. By supporting this legislation, you can help end the suffering of millions and reaffirm America's leadership in defending human dignity and justice.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

Fikra for Studies and Development (FikraSD)
 The Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society (RCDCS)
 The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
 The Sentry
 Nonviolence International (USA)
 The Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
 Saferworld
 Sudan Solidarity Campaign
 Sudanese Center for Peace and Justice
 Combating Violence against Women Unit—Sudan
 Sudanese Center for Human Rights and Media Freedom
 McElligott International
 Autumn Development Organization—Sudan
 Sudanese Food Bank Organization
 Sudanese Network for Ending War and Building Peace
 TopCare LLC
 Sudanese Center for Democracy and Development (SCDD)

DICTATOR ASSAD DEFEATED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on Truth Social, President-elect Donald Trump correctly identified that: "Assad is gone". . . . "His protector, Russia, Russia, Russia, led by Vladimir Putin . . . because of Ukraine, where close to 600,000 Russian soldiers lay wounded or dead . . . forever.

Russia and Iran "are in a weakened state right now, one because of Ukraine and a bad economy, the other because of Israel and its fighting success."

Courageous Ukrainians, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, have determined Israelis, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have made an achievement for freedom and democracy for the world. With maximum pressure by President Donald Trump, peace through strength will become a reality. Americans should read National Review's "The Morning Jolt" with Jim Geraghty today "The World's Most Murderous Ophthalmologist Calls It Quits."

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent, as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength, and our sympathy and prayers to beloved Congressman MIKE BURGESS on the passing of his daughter Christine Burgess.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, Social Security, as you know, is the number one anti-poverty program in this country for the elderly and the number one anti-poverty program in the country for our children.

More than 70 million Americans receive Social Security. Yet, it has been more than 54 years since Congress has last enacted any legislation to enhance Social Security.

Richard Nixon was the President of the United States the last time that Congress enhanced the benefits of Social Security. With more than 10,000 baby boomers a day becoming eligible for Social Security, you can understand the impact that this has, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, more than 154,000 people in Alabama in your district alone receive Social Security; 111,000-plus for pensions; 19,000 receive disability payments; more than 9,000 widows; 4,000 spouses; and more than 9,000 children.

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Mr. Speaker, \$275 million a month comes into your district to supply the people of that district with the essential benefits they need and to keep

most of them out of poverty. Where do they spend this money? They spend it right back in the communities that they live in.

This is an important economic enhancement, as well, and Congress has not taken any action in more than 54 years. Now, the Republican Study Committee says that it is going to cut Social Security.

The benefits are going to be cut regardless of whether Congress takes no action. That is why Congress should act and act now. We shouldn't be looking to cut benefits for the citizens we represent. We should be enhancing benefits that haven't been touched in more than 50 years.

President Trump has now called for tax cuts for Social Security. That is laudable in and of itself. However, he does not pay for them.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues know that when you don't pay for those benefits, the money comes directly out of the trust fund. The great irony in attempting to say that Congress is going to give citizens a tax cut is that what Members are really doing is cutting benefits by more than 36 percent for all those individuals.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have a plan that calls for a tax cut, as well, but it is paid for. The American people need to know that these benefits need to be paid for, and Congress needs to take action. Otherwise, we will continue to stress the Social Security trust fund that Congress hasn't acted on in over 50-plus years.

I am sure, for a number of people listening in the audience and our viewers, they understand what this means, but they probably weren't aware that it is going to take a vote of Congress. This isn't something the President can do through executive action or that the Supreme Court is going to do. It is going to take an act of Congress specifically on behalf of the individuals we are sworn to serve.

By passing a tax cut that is not paid for, what my colleagues are really doing is cutting benefits for all recipients, including those who will receive the tax cut. Even though they may get some temporary relief, the program will be impacted in the long term. Meanwhile, people like Elon Musk are paying nothing into a system that desperately needs the help of Congress.

PRIORITIZING WELL-BEING OF AMERICANS OVER WASHINGTON INEFFICIENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, securing our southern border still remains one of our most urgent and pressing challenges facing our country.

House Republicans are taking decisive action with the National Defense Authorization Act, which we will be taking up soon. It is a bill that not