

# HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER SIEGE WORLDWIDE

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

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## HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER SIEGE WORLDWIDE

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TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2016

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE [presiding]. This hearing will come to order. This morning we meet to survey the troubling state of human rights around the world.

Freedom House does a report every year. Its 2016 World Report shows the 10th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. Unfortunately, the world's most abusive governments continue their abuses while non-state actors have become boastful promoters of unspeakable evil.

Whether in Syria, Iraq, Libya, or the Sinai, ISIS has set a new standard for brutality—bombing Shi'ite neighborhoods, selling young Yazidi girls into sexual slavery, slitting the throats of Christians, throwing gay men to their deaths from rooftops. The House of Representatives and the White House have recognized ISIS attacks on Yazidis, on Christians, on Shia Muslims. All of this has been recognized as genocide, and “genocide” is the only word for it.

In Africa, Boko Haram continues to attack Christians and many Muslims. From church and mosque bombings to mass kidnappings of children, this deranged group has cut a wide swath of terror through Nigeria and neighboring countries, killing thousands and displacing millions.

In May, a mob of Islamists in southern Egypt reportedly forced a 70-year-old Christian woman to walk naked through the streets before burning down homes belonging to Christian families. This is just one of many recent attacks against Christians in Egypt.

Religious minorities from nearly every faith face persecution somewhere in the world.

Human trafficking remains a global epidemic that preys on millions of women, girls, and migrant workers who are trapped in degrading and dangerous forms of modern slavery. In June, the House passed Congressman Trott's legislation to address another ghoulis form of exploitation—trafficking in persons for the removal of their organs.

Many regimes such as China, Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Vietnam continue to deny basic political rights to their citizens. North Korea's brutal Kim dynasty continues to imprison entire families in

its vast and deadly gulag that holds more than 100,000 political prisoners. The death toll from the Assad regime's deliberate targeting of civilian populations in Syrian is staggering. It is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

According to experts, press freedom has declined to its lowest point in 12 years. In places like Russia and Iran, we have seen governments take extreme measures to stifle communication, intimidate political opposition, and deny basic rights of speech and assembly to disfavored groups, including LGBT persons.

Child marriage has dire, life-long consequences for the health, safety, education, and opportunity of the estimated 15 million girls that it victimizes every year. That is one girl every 2 seconds.

Torture, extrajudicial killings, forced conscription of child soldiers, so the list goes on and on.

Too often, public discussions present a false choice between stability and human rights. That has been the favored dodge of dictators and despots since the last century. But U.S. national security is bolstered when states are stable, and stability ultimately depends on respect for fundamental human rights. Human rights can't be our only foreign policy guide, but neither can human rights be discounted, which happens too often.

America has inspired the human rights movement worldwide for decades. This hearing will help us understand what is driving the global decline in human decency that I have mentioned and is to discuss how we can turn around this depressing trend, including by being the best example we can be. Promoting respect for the human rights of all people serves the national interest and the national values of the United States.

I now turn to Mr. Cicilline, and I yield him 2½ minutes. And I am informed that Mr. Engel in the meantime is on his way here.

Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you and Ranking Member Engel for holding this important hearing.

Human rights form the most fundamental basis of our democracy. What has set us apart from other nations for more than 200 years is our dedication to fundamental freedoms, equality, and universal values.

It is especially poignant that this hearing is being held on the 1-month anniversary of the massacre of 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, which underscores the importance of this hearing. If the basic human rights of people for simply being who they are makes them targets in the United States, sadly, serious and sometimes deadly human rights abuses exist in nations all over the world.

According to Freedom House, freedom around the world has been in steady decline for 10 years, and 2015 had the steepest decline yet. The war in Syria, the resulting refugee crisis, and the rise in extremism have all contributed to crackdowns in the name of so-called security and a general decline of human rights in every region in the world.

I am especially concerned by the uptick in abuses against vulnerable populations who are already at grave risk in many countries, especially religious and sexual minorities. In particular, lesbian and gay, bisexual, and transgender communities around the world

have experienced horrific violence, and violations of basic human rights have put individuals in these categories at grave risk for injury or death simply because of who they are. LGBT people abroad face horrific persecution, threats, constant harassment, lack of access to healthcare, marginalization, violence, and death because of their status or perceived status of being gay, lesbian, or transgender.

There is an important national security angle to this issue. Anti-LGBT rhetoric and violence that spreads around the world can also come home to harm American citizens. It is crucial that we fight this rhetoric and violence, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it ensures that it does not come back to harm American citizens again.

Countries that are attacking LGBT people are also the ones most likely to crack down on human rights and civil society generally. Nowhere have we seen this more violently than in ISIL-controlled territories, where men have been accused of same-sex activity and publicly-executed in horrifying ways.

In light of the ongoing discrimination and violence faced by the LGBT community around the world, their struggle for equality and justice abroad remains significant. There are still many countries in which homosexuality is illegal, LGBT persons are persecuted, and public support for the LGBT community is prohibited. Over 75 countries have anti-LGBT laws. There are nearly 300 reported cases of transgender people murdered in 29 different countries last year and countless underreported cases around the globe.

What may be most disturbing is that the highest number of murders have been in countries with strong trans-movements and civil society organizations that carry out forms of professional monitoring. Because of the particular heinous nature of the violations routinely committed against LGBT communities around the world, this hearing is particularly important. We know the United States Government's attention and engagement on human rights makes a difference.

In 2011, President Obama addressed the United Nations General Assembly and stated that, "No country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere."

Soon thereafter, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum entitled, "International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons," to address the global challenges of the LGBT community. In the following years, we saw the creation of the Office of the Special Envoy for Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Persons at the Department of State and a Senior LGBT Coordinator at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Our commitment to promoting the human rights of the LGBT community is clear and we must ensure it continues.

Although these examples of U.S. Government and U.N. support for LGBT human rights are positive steps, the violence and rights abuses faced by the LGBT community worldwide is unacceptable and we need to do more. A great man, Elie Wiesel, once told us, "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormenter, never the tormented."

It is on all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, to ensure that we continue working long after today to defend and protect human rights of all persons around the world. I hope this hearing will help to bring greater attention to these issues and motivate this committee to take action to protect the human rights of all people.

And I thank you again, Mr. Chairman and the ranking member, for yielding. I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

Let me introduce our distinguished panel here to the members. Ambassador Mark Lagon is the president of Freedom House. Previously, Ambassador Lagon served as the Ambassador-at-Large and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, as well as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. We welcome him back to the committee.

Dr. Thomas Farr is president of the Religious Freedom Institute, and prior to this position, Dr. Farr served as the founding Director of the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom.

Mrs. Amanda Schnetzer is the founding director of the Human Freedom Initiative at the George W. Bush Institute. Previously, Mrs. Schnetzer was a senior fellow and director of studies at Freedom House.

Mr. Mark Bromley is the chair at the Council for Global Equality, and previously, Mr. Bromley worked for more than a decade at Global Rights. And he served as a foreign policy fellow for Senator Feingold from 2001 to 2002.

So, without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statements will be made part of the record. Members will have 5 calendar days to submit statements or questions or any extraneous material for the record.

I am going to go to our ranking member, Mr. Engel, to use the balance of the time, if you have an opening statement you would like to make.

Mr. Eliot Engel of New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to commend our colleague, Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island, for his eloquent statement.

And I am glad the committee is focusing on threats to human rights around the world and how it ties into America's security and interests.

I know our witnesses are about to speak. I want to welcome you personally to the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The committee has considered a wide range of human rights issues that affect every region in the world, and we have dealt with abuse of civil and political rights as well as rights to life and personal safety.

And so, I want to welcome you.

We have seen a troubling trend in recent years. According to Freedom House, for the 10th consecutive year of declining freedom around the world, and 72 countries were in a downward trajectory



last year versus just 43 that made gains when it comes to human rights.

I am told that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, as we speak, is holding a hearing about legislation that we believe would permit discrimination against LGBT Americans. So, it is just always a fight.

And with respect to those rights, LGBT rights, we have seen a particularly disturbing trend of laws that criminalize same-sex activity and other oppressive political policies aimed at the LGBT community. We see this in places like Russia, Brunei, and Uganda. And when you see LGBT rights under assault, it is a pretty good predictor that governments are cracking down on human rights in civil society more generally.

Nowhere have we seen more horrific treatment of LGBT persons than in areas controlled by ISIS. Gay men have been publicly executed in just horrific ways. When we see these kinds of abuses, we have an obligation to act. Basic rights and human dignity are at the core of American values. No person should endure violence or discrimination just because of where they live, how they worship, or who they love.

And beyond a moral imperative of advancing human rights, we have a security interest in these issues. It has been a month today since the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. This was an ISIS-inspired hate crime. When messages of hatred and bigotry are allowed to thrive, it creates a risk to us right here at home.

So, I am glad, and I commend the chairman, that the committee is taking up this issue. I am grateful to all witnesses and I look forward to their testimony.

Again, I want to thank Mr. Cicilline.

And I want to just single out one of our witnesses, Mark Bromley, who will talk to us about the violence and persecution facing the LGBT communities around the world.

I thank all our four distinguished witnesses, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, I thank you, Mr. Engel.

And I will encourage Ambassador Lagon and all of our witnesses here, if you summarize your remarks, I think that is most impactful. And then, we will go to questions and answers after you have begun.

So, Ambassador, we will go with you first.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK P. LAGON,  
PRESIDENT, FREEDOM HOUSE**

Ambassador LAGON. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee, it is an honor to testify.

Human rights and freedoms around the world are inextricably linked to the national security and economic interests of the United States. Not only is investing in these principles a natural expression of our values, it is a necessity to protect our own interests. Our diplomacy and foreign assistance should empower human rights defenders and reformers to build free, flourishing, and peaceful societies.

“Freedom in the World,” Freedom House’s flagship publication, has, indeed, documented the 10th straight year of a global decline

in freedom affecting 105 countries during that decade. The three areas where the sharpest declines have occurred are freedom of expression, rule of law, and freedom of association.

Economic pressures have fueled public unrest and have been met with harsh crackdowns in many of the world's authoritarian countries. Rulers in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Russia, and Turkey, among others, have used antiterrorism laws, blasphemy and insult laws, and laws governing the registration and foreign funding of non-government organizations to effectively muzzle civil society and stamp out dissent. This crisis has been accompanied worldwide by growing xenophobic sentiment in many parts of the world, including in the West, in Europe.

It is my view and Freedom House's that it is better to spend a small amount now to strengthen good governance and maintain peace than to spend a large amount in the future on military intervention or rebuilding after war. Ethiopia is prime example. Viewed as a key partner in the war on terror, its harsh repression of dissent raises questions about its long-term viability as an effective partner.

We often fund healthcare, food aid, and climate change, and efforts like those in Ethiopia, but we don't always fund governance. But, without good governance, there can't be any reliable access to food or healthcare.

In the same way that security is unsustainable without fair, democratic institutions and rule of law, so, too, is economic development. Governments built on the respect for human rights and rule of law tend to foster transparent, stable environments conducive to free enterprise.

Strong growth in certain repressive states sometimes gives the misleading impression that authoritarianism is good for business. The People's Republic of China is a perfect example. Freedom House found that repression has worsened under President Xi Jinping. In response to the 2015 stock market drop, Xi's government has unleashed aggressive interventions in the market, enhanced censorship, arrested over 200 involved in public interest legal activism, and passed a sweeping, deliberately vague law which will impact more than 7,000 foreign NGOs and their local Chinese partners.

One of the affected organizations, the American Chamber of Commerce in China, found that anti-corruption and intellectual property rights remain a concern for Americans doing business in China. Their surveys also indicate that four out of five companies reported being negatively affected by Chinese internet censorship.

Freedom House argues that we should ensure that we are investing in our wins. Tunisia is one of the success stories of the Arab Spring, arguably, the only one, but its nascent democracy is still in danger. Terrorist attacks and ISIS recruitment tempt Tunisia's Government to take steps that might imperil the path toward democracy consolidation, undercutting the positive elections and new constitution ensuring civil liberties.

Another glimmer of hope is in Burma, where an overwhelming victory for Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy represents a remarkable turnaround, but ethnic and religious tensions persist with violence against the Muslim Rohingya and the

largely Christian Kachin. This is why Freedom House in its programmatic work has a project in Burma working on religious pluralism and why U.S. policy should continue to invest in Burma.

If we are serious about enabling nations to build free, flourishing, and peaceful societies, there are several things Freedom House would recommend.

First, the United States should make democracy and human rights integral to our foreign policy. In Egypt, for instance, a more effective U.S. policy would use the leverage of military assistance to pressure the el-Sisi regime to loosen its controls on Egyptian society and give Egyptians avenues for peaceful dissent to contribute to real stability.

Second, democracy and human rights should be a consistent component of our foreign policy agenda, raised at the highest levels from the President on down. A Freedom House study in late 2014 found that democratic powers tend to shy away from pressing human rights in China. That is a mistake, and for the United States it demeans, rather than increases, our credibility.

Third—and I will finish in a moment—we should generate solidarity among the democracies to invest in human rights and democracy support.

Fourth, we should support civil society groups consistently because they are key agents of peace and prosperity. We should not allow U.S. aid to prop up repressive governments that squash independent groups.

And finally, Congress should pass the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which will impose visa bans and asset freezes on foreign officials responsible for human rights violations and large-scale corruption.

Reversing the decade-long slide in human rights and democracy is important for stability and growth to be truly sustainable. The United States need to apply the many assets it has to fighting for pluralism. These steps are low-cost and high-value investments suited precisely to a time of husbanding resources for what is most important.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Lagon follows:]



## **The Global Decline in Freedom: Threats to U.S. Values and Interests**

**Mark P. Lagon**  
*President*

House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Hearing: "Global Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide"  
July 12, 2016

### **Introduction**

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee, it is an honor to testify before you today. I ask that my full written statement be admitted into the record.

We are here today to talk about the status of human rights and freedom around the world. I suspect there are a variety of opinions in this room about the degree to which the United States ought to be involved actively promoting human rights internationally. Some of you may wonder whether U.S. support can even make a difference or is a wise use of resources given our many pressing domestic needs, or alternative international strategic and economic objectives of the United States.

I believe that human rights and freedoms around the world are inextricably linked to the national security and economic interests of the United States. Not only is investing in these principles a natural expression of our values, it is a necessity to protect our own interests. America is safest when other nations around the world are peaceful and prosperous. Our diplomacy and our foreign assistance, therefore, should empower human rights defenders and reformers to build free, flourishing, peaceful societies.

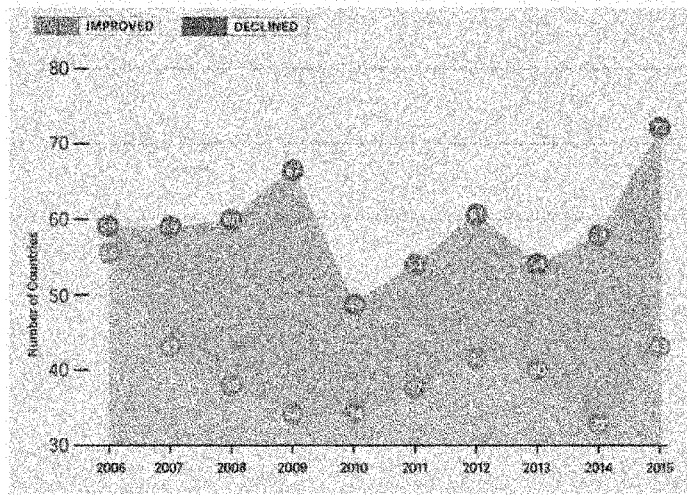
### Status of Freedoms Worldwide

What is the status of freedom globally? And how does it impact U.S. security interests and economic interests?

*Freedom in the World*, Freedom House's flagship publication, has documented the tenth straight year of global decline in freedom, with 105 countries experiencing a decline over the last decade. During that same timeframe, only 61 countries have seen an improvement.

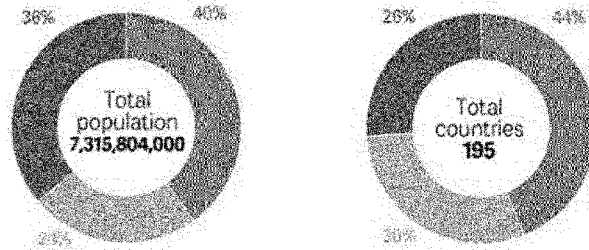
### A Decade Of Decline

Countries with net declines in aggregate score have outnumbered those with gains for the past 10 years.



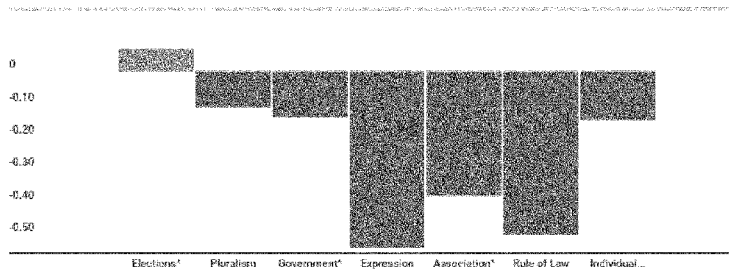
Thirty-six percent of the world's population lives in countries ranked as not free.

### Global Status By Population, Global Status By Country



The sharpest declines over a decade have occurred in the areas of freedom of expression, rule of law, and freedom of association.

### Key indicators in Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World* survey declining over the past ten years



\*Scored on a 12-point scale. All other indicators are scored on a 16-point scale.  
 Data from *Freedom in the World 2016*, available at [freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016](http://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016)

Economic pressures have fueled the decline. Slumping economies have fomented public unrest which has been met with harsh crackdowns by many of the world's authoritarian



Mark P. Lagon  
 House Foreign Affairs Committee  
 July 12, 2016

rulers. This is particularly the case in petro-autocracies for which energy resources and income has slipped as a crutch for their power. Many countries resort to anti-terrorism laws, blasphemy or insult laws and laws governing the registration and foreign funding of non-governmental organizations to effectively muzzle civil society and stamp out dissent. Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Russia, and Turkey, among others, all utilize such laws to varying degrees.

Ongoing conflicts in Syria and elsewhere, and threats from non-state actors, have driven the number of refugees and internally displaced persons to unprecedented levels, with 65.3 million people – or one out of every 113 people – displaced from their homes.<sup>1</sup> Let us not forget that the root cause is a human rights problem causing people to flee.

This crisis has been accompanied by rising xenophobic sentiment around the world including Europe. Xenophobia is growing in Western Europe, as evidenced by the Brexit vote, and has become incorporated into mainstream political discourse in Eastern Europe. In Poland, for example, the governing Law and Justice (PiS) party has espoused an anti-immigrant position and passed a counterterrorism law that curbs the freedoms of assembly and communication and places all foreigners under general suspicion. Only years ago, few would have predicted such a drastic backsliding in Europe.

In multiple countries we see how corruption and repression – inimical to U.S. strategic and economic interests – go hand in hand. Azerbaijan's government is the very definition of a kleptocracy – a society where the leaders make themselves rich by stealing from the people. President Ilham Aliyev, who took over upon his father's death, has seized and bulldozed lands to make way for flashy international sports competitions. He is so determined to cling to power and continue the corruption bankrolling his family and friends that he has launched a brutal crackdown on civil society, political opposition, and religious activists. Khadija Ismayilova, the reporter investigating the Aliyevs' web of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/6/5763b65a4/global-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>

corruption, was imprisoned on trumped up charges for more than a year before being released in May in response to international pressure. She is prohibited from leaving Baku, and charges still stand against her.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin's regime uses state power and resources to enrich politically connected elites, who in turn do Putin's bidding. The Russian government continues to rely on violence abroad to boost nationalism and distract from economic woes and is clamping down on dissent at home. In 2015, 111 civil society organizations were placed on the list of "foreign agents," and a new category of "undesirable organizations" was introduced to ban foreign non-profit organizations in Russia. The National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundations have both been named undesirable.

Venezuela is experiencing a humanitarian crisis caused by years of undemocratic governance and wide-scale government corruption. The economy has tanked; there are widespread food shortages; and arrests have become a routine tactic of political persecution. So far in 2016, 2,030 people have been detained, with 1,600 detentions occurring in June 2016 alone. Ninety-six political prisoners remain behind bars.

In Mexico, the democratically elected government is faltering due to a lack of political will to address escalating drug-related violence, and rampant impunity for crimes and violence. Mexico remains one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists, where it is not uncommon for reporters to be kidnapped and killed.<sup>2</sup>

Since its independence in the 1960s, Burundi has witnessed 40 years of sporadic violence fueled by ethnic and social tensions that has have resulted in widespread poverty. Its decade-long civil war, which ended in 2005, claimed the lives of 300,000. President Pierre Nkurunziza, democratically elected after the civil war, disregarded Burundi's constitution to run for a third term of office in July 2015, plunging the country into violence yet again, which continues to this day. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cpj.org/killed/americas/mexico/>



(OHCHR) noted recently that Burundi's political and security situation remains tense, with continued reports of enforced disappearances, abductions, extra judicial killings, and incommunicado detention of activists, amongst other grave violations. The UN reported 348 extrajudicial killings in the last year, and over 250,000 Burundian refugees have fled to neighboring countries. (I should note that the UN Human Rights Council ought to have suspended Burundi's membership, as it proved it could do with Libya when the late Colonel Gaddafi threatened to massacre his own citizens.)

In Egypt, the el-Sisi government's current campaign of repression is a wide-ranging and brutal assault on the fundamental rights of Egyptians, which surpasses the scale of repression under former President Hosni Mubarak. This crackdown has decimated the political opposition, crushed civil society, and muzzled a range of independent voices. And, by leaving no room for peaceful dissent, it has made Egypt less stable. The incidence of terrorist attacks has increased dramatically since Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took power in 2013. Given this record, despite our continued bankrolling, the United States cannot see Egypt's government as an ally in good standing serving our interests

We see some particular threats to human rights cutting across many cases. Minorities are often subject to abuse. From ISIS' campaign of genocide against Yazidis and Christians in Syria and Iraq, to the use of blasphemy laws in places like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Malaysia, to the assassination of atheists in Bangladesh, religious minorities remain a target for violence and state repression around the world.

Women's economic aspirations and the broader economies of their countries continue to suffer from unequal rights to property and inheritance as well as discriminatory practices that prevent women from working outside the home. Despite modest increases in women's political representation and the election of a number of female heads of government, 2015 saw few examples of genuine progress.

Vicious, violent attacks against LGBTI persons are still prevalent around the world, as evidenced by the recent murder of an LGBTI rights activist hacked to death in Bangladesh,

and the nightclub attack in Orlando. Violence against LGBTI persons routinely goes unpunished, and in more than 70 countries same sex relationships are criminalized.

If you look at such details, the global decline in freedom has made the world less hospitable to U.S. interests and underscores the need for U.S. attention to and investment in fostering pluralism and democracy.

### **Supporting Human Rights Strengthens Security Interests**

As Senator Lindsey Graham is rightly fond of saying, foreign aid is national security spending by another name. It is far preferable to spend a small amount in the present to strengthen good governance and maintain peace than to spend a large amount in the future attempting to completely rebuild governance institutions after nations have devolved into war, or a large amount of money and lives on military intervention.

Moreover, there is a difference between the superficial appearance of stability based on repression and the true stability that democracy brings. One argument popular with undemocratic leaders is that the crushing of dissent is necessary to maintain peace and stability. In fact, harsh rule often foments unrest, and unquestioning support for repressive regimes works against U.S. security interests.

Ethiopia is a prime example. Viewed as a key partner in the war on terror, its harsh repression of dissent raises questions about its long-term viability as an effective partner in this mission. The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) just marked its 25<sup>th</sup> year in power. In the most recent parliamentary elections held last year, the EPRDF announced a 100 percent victory belying credibility, having allegedly "won" every single seat in parliament and the regional councils.

Two laws – the Charities and Societies Proclamation, which restricts local civil society organizations' access to foreign funding, and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which allows the detention of suspects for up to four months without charge – have been used to imprison journalists and bloggers, opposition leaders, and civil society activists. They are

designed to quash all dissent. Human Rights Watch has repeatedly documented torture in Ethiopia's prisons.<sup>3</sup> As Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, have long been targets of arbitrary detention, repression, and displacement. In November 2015, the EPRDF decided to expand the boundaries of the capital at the expense of farmers and communities living in the surrounding areas of the Oromia region. This decision was made without adequate consultation with affected communities and sparked widespread protests resulting in the arrests of tens of thousands, including "students, teachers, musicians, opposition politicians, health workers, and people who provided assistance or shelter to fleeing students."<sup>4</sup> At least 400 have been killed by Ethiopian security forces; an unknown number remain in detention; and torture continues to be reported.<sup>5</sup> Protests like these break out because citizens have no other ways to engage in the political system or express discontent, which increases instability.

In fiscal years 2013 and 2014, Ethiopia received no democracy and governance funding from the United States, despite receiving a total of more than \$1.2 billion in foreign assistance. In fiscal year 2015, Ethiopia received nearly \$651 million in foreign assistance, but only \$1.25 million was designated for rule of law, good governance, and civil society. Everything else went into financing and training Ethiopia's military, and several noble efforts: addressing climate change, and the provision of health care, food aid, and education. But, there cannot be peace and stability if the government restricts political space and suppresses legitimate dissent with force. And without peace, there can be no reliable access to food or health care or education. A country cannot free itself from dependence on foreign aid without strong and accountable governance. U.S. tax dollars will be wasted as long as Ethiopia lacks rule of law, pluralism, and respect in practice of the

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/18/ethiopia-political-detainees-tortured> and <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/16/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopia-oromo-protests>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/16/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopia-oromo-protests>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/16/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopia-oromo-protests>

rights of all. The United States would be far wiser to fund a more comprehensive approach to development. We should work to strengthen human rights in Ethiopia to enable a truly peaceful, prosperous, and more reliable security partner.

#### **Supporting Human Rights Strengthens Economic Interests**

In the same way that security is unsustainable without fair, democratic institutions and rule of law, so, too, is economic development. Inclusive economic growth requires a strong and enforced legal framework, protection of property rights, freedom of association, and effective, accountable institutions. Governments built on respect for human rights and rule of law tend to foster transparent, stable environments that are conducive to the establishment and unfettered operation of private enterprise.

Strong growth in certain repressive states sometimes gives the misleading impression that authoritarianism is good for business.

The People's Republic of China is a perfect example of this. For years, many wondered if China's model of state-led capitalism offered a viable alternative to the Western model. Many argued that because China was such an economic powerhouse and because our economies were so interlinked we should not – or could not – speak out about China's egregious human rights abuses.

A recent Freedom House report found that repression has worsened under President Xi Jinping – intensifying for those commonly targeted in China, such as ethnic and religious minorities, activists, and journalists, and expanding to those not typically targeted for punishment, such as civic-minded entrepreneurs.

As China's economy has slumped, the CCP's efforts to censor the media and crackdown on dissent have intensified to a disturbing extent. In response to the 2015 stock market drop, Xi's government unleashed aggressive interventions in the market itself, initiated a new crackdown on civil society, and enhanced censorship and propaganda surrounding economic reporting. Wang Xiaolu, a respected financial reporter, was arrested for



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accurately reporting news about the downturn and forced to confess wrongdoing on national television<sup>6</sup>. Within a 48-hour period in July 2015, over 200 individuals involved in public-interest legal activism were taken into custody in a nationwide sweep. As many as 33 remain in custody one year later. Other targets, whose work the authorities had previously tolerated, included financial journalists, public health advocates, labor rights activists, and women's rights defenders. Prominent businessmen and securities traders were also rounded up, adding new risks to doing business in China. Just last week, on July 3, China's Cyberspace Administration declared that all news stories are prohibited from using social media sources unless first approved by authorities.

This April, China's legislature passed a sweeping, deliberately vague and subjective law, set to take effect January 1, 2017, that will impact more than 7000 foreign NGOs and their local Chinese partners, including groups working on health, environment, and education.<sup>7</sup> This law requires foreign NGOs wishing to operate within China to register with the government, and tightly restricts the type of groups allowed to register. Those registering will be required to hand over detailed information about their objectives, finances, and staff. It is unclear exactly how this law will impact American businesses and universities attempting to operate in China.

Many American business executives are walking on eggshells navigating China's business environment. The American Chamber of Commerce in China's 2016 Business Climate survey found that anticorruption and intellectual property rights remain a concern for Americans doing business in China.<sup>8</sup> Four out of five companies reported being negatively affected by Chinese internet censorship.<sup>9</sup> The AmCham survey indicates other top challenges are "increasing concerns about transparency, predictability and fairness of the regulatory environment and the ability of foreign companies to participate in the ongoing

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.com/crackdown-stock-market-reporting-shakes-chinas-financial-journalists-presents-threat-2142028>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/29/world/asia/china-foreign-ngo-law.html? r=0>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan\\_china\\_climate\\_2016.pdf](http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan_china_climate_2016.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/article/china-media-bulletin-issue-no-112-february-2016>

reforms in order to serve China's market."<sup>10</sup> Seventy-seven percent of respondents to the AmCham survey "feel that foreign businesses are less welcome than before in China," and one third of respondents said they are not planning to increase investment in China.<sup>11</sup>

Human rights and freedoms impact the economic bottom line. Weak rule of law and opaque, arbitrary governance increase the risks for U.S. investments and business operations. And without independent media, information is distorted. What happens to China's economy – which accounts for roughly 15 percent of global GDP and is rampant with manipulated economic statistics and falsified revenues statements – impacts not just the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people, but also the United States and international community.<sup>12</sup> If U.S. policymakers and business leaders want strong economic development we ought to be concerned with the state of human rights worldwide and we ought to press China and other authoritarian governments on these issues. Rule of law, freedom of expression, and democracy are not the only factors behind good economic performance, but more often than not they provide long-term political stability and resilient, corrective mechanisms that form a foundation for safe investment and steady growth.

#### **Investing in "Wins" is Crucial**

In the same way the United States ought to ensure that our foreign assistance is a wise investment by bolstering good governance and rule of law, so too, should we ensure that we are investing in our "wins." If foreign assistance that disappears the moment a country shows improvement, U.S. efforts will be for naught if that country is unable to sustain its success at key moments.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan\\_china\\_climate\\_2016.pdf](http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan_china_climate_2016.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan\\_china\\_climate\\_2016.pdf](http://www.iberchina.org/files/2016/amchan_china_climate_2016.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/business-and-finance/21662092-china-sneezing-rest-world-rightly-nervous-causes-and-consequences-chinas>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/12/28/theres-why-it-matters-that-china-is-admitting-that-its-statistics-are-unreliable/>; <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/958306.shtml>

Tunisia is the one success of the Arab Spring, which began when Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire to protest unemployment and unaccountable governance. It is a poignant example of how political liberties are tightly intertwined with economic and social aspirations. Tunisia held democratic elections under a new constitution and became the one country in the Arab world ranked as free by our Freedom in the World report.

But, Tunisia's nascent democracy is still in danger, and in many ways serves as a cautionary tale. The economy is struggling. Terrorist attacks spilling over from chaos and extremism in neighboring countries and ISIS recruitment in the country tempt Tunisia's government to take steps which might imperil its path toward democratic consolidation – undercutting the positive elections and an admirable new constitution to ensuring civil liberties and respectful pluralism in practice.

If counterterrorism trumps democratization or if the United States decreases support at this key moment, then successes gained could be lost.

In Burma, we've also seen improvements. A massive voter turnout produced an overwhelming victory in the 2015 parliamentary elections for longtime opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD), a remarkable turnaround in a country that until recently ranked among the world's most repressive.

But, there is a long way to go. Meaningful democratic reforms will not be possible without the support of military leaders, who still exercise a great deal of control of many institutions. The Burmese parliament lacks capacity. More than 60 political prisoners remain jailed while 189 activists are awaiting charges.<sup>13</sup> And, ethnic and religious tensions persist, with widespread discrimination and violence against the Muslim Rohingya and continued attacks against the predominantly Christian Kachin. It is unclear whether the new NLD government is prepared to take the political risk of defending the fundamental rights of minorities.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://aappb.org/2016/06/aapp-b-monthly-chronology-of-may-2016-and-current-political-prisoners-list/>

This is why Freedom House has a project in Burma working on religious pluralism to facilitate a successful democratization. And, it's why U.S. policy must continue to closely monitor and invest in Burma.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The end goal of foreign assistance is for states to need it no longer – to become peaceful and prosperous on their own. But, the United States' foreign assistance will not effectively empower recipients' self-governance and self-sufficiency if our security and economic strategies disregard the importance of human rights and democracy.

If we are serious about enabling nations to build free, flourishing, peaceful societies, there are several things policymakers should do:

1. *The United States should make democracy and human rights integral to our foreign policy.* All too often, we pay lip service to these principles while sacrificing them for short-term expediency. Democracy and human rights should instead influence our decisions at key moments in critical places. In Egypt, for example, the U.S. government has criticized the most egregious abuses of the el-Sisi regime but largely carried on business as usual. While President el-Sisi portrays himself as a bulwark of stability, his repression in fact fuels further unrest. A more effective U.S. policy would use the leverage of military assistance to pressure the el-Sisi regime to loosen its controls on Egyptian society and give Egyptians avenues for peaceful dissent, which in turn would contribute to stability in the country.
2. *Democracy and human rights should be a consistent component on our foreign policy agenda, raised at the highest levels, from the U.S. President on down, even in the most complex of relationships.* While some tradeoffs with U.S. security or economic interests arise in certain places like China in the immediate term, a more forward-looking U.S. policy would keep democracy and human rights on the agenda, without weakening our message. [A Freedom House study](#) found that, when it comes to



China, the democratic nations studied almost always allowed immediate economic and strategic interests to override support for democracy and human rights. This is a mistake. Indeed, standing by our values bolsters – rather than demeans – our credibility with the Chinese regime on other issues.

3. *The United States should be both a leader and an international partner on democracy and human rights issues. We should work to generate solidarity among democracies to invest in human rights and democracy support, and then we should work jointly with our allies to accomplish shared goals in these areas. As history and experience has taught us, efforts to generate change are often most effective when they are pursued by like-minded democracies together.*
4. *We should support civil society consistently, as civil society groups are key agents of peace and prosperity in their countries. We should support them both in word and in action, and should not allow our military or economic aid to prop up repressive governments that squash independent groups and peaceful dissent.*
5. *Congress should pass and the President should sign the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which would impose visa bans and asset freezes on foreign officials responsible for gross human rights violations or large-scale corruption. This legislation would serve as an important and effective foreign policy tool by introducing targeted sanctions on individual officials and imposing tangible consequences on perpetrators.*

Reversing the decade-long slide in human rights and democracy Freedom House documents is important to American and universal values. But all the more, we have a *stake* in that work – for stability and growth which are truly sustainable. The United States needs to get out of its funk, and apply the assets it has to help those fighting for pluralism. And these steps are low-cost and high-value investments precisely suited to a time of husbanding resources for what is most important.



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Chairman ROYCE. Feel free if you want to follow up, Doctor. Do you have a few words there?

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS FARR, PH.D., PRESIDENT, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE**

Mr. FARR. I do, indeed.

Chairman ROYCE. Please share them with us.

Mr. FARR. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the committee, thanks for inviting me to testify. I am going to address the global crisis of religious freedom, the largely-ignored consequences of this crisis for our nation, and how religious freedom can increase American security here and abroad.

At a recent conference, a young Iraqi couple described the terrible travail of Christians in Iraq and Syria, and I quote: "ISIS terrorists are raping and killing children in front of their parents. Then, they are killing the parents." If something doesn't stop this slaughter, they told a stunned audience, Christians and Christianity will soon be eliminated. The same is true of the Yazidis and other minority religions.

This is but one of millions of stories of terrible human suffering resulting from the vile religious persecution that is occurring with growing frequency around the world. We are witnessing in the 21st century a global human rights catastrophe, one with extraordinary consequences for the United States.

Last month the Pew Research Center issued the latest in a series of annual reports. The findings are chilling. Let me cite three.

First, three-quarters of the world's population lives in countries where religious freedom is severely restricted.

Second, over the past 8 years, nations experiencing injuries and deaths from religion-related terrorism have increased from 17 nations to 60.

Third, social hostility toward religion in America has increased so dramatically that the United States is now listed in the category of high levels of social hostility toward religion.

Among the most serious consequences of this global crisis is the growing threat of violent Islamist extremism and terrorism, which continues to be incubated in the Middle East and exported around the world, including to the American homeland. Advancing religious freedom successfully in U.S. foreign policy would help to undermine terrorism. Unfortunately, religious freedom currently plays no part in our national security policy, but it should. The fate of Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria is closely related to American national security. If these minorities are eliminated, with them will go any opportunity for pluralism and stability. Iraq and Syria will become perpetual training grounds for terrorism.

Unfortunately, military means alone are not going to defeat the scourge of violent Islamist extremism. Even if we defeat ISIS as a military force, we will not have eliminated the source of terrorism. We must also defeat the ideology of extremist Islam. Otherwise, it will continue to spread as a global agent of terrorism. If we fail at this task, we will face continued upheaval in the Middle East and elsewhere as well as an increase in violent attacks on our own children at home.

The only force that can defeat the ideology of violent Islamist extremism is Muslims themselves, stakeholders in the nations where this ideology is dominant. But this cannot happen without the advancement of religious freedom in those nations.

In recent years, Georgetown's Religious Freedom Project has demonstrated how religious freedom helps societies achieve such goods as stable democracy, economic growth, and undermining violent religious extremism. For example, in many Muslim majority countries, public debate over Islam is dominated by those whose radical understandings of Islam are protected by laws against blasphemy and defamation. Muslims are, in effect, prevented from debating publicly their own religious principles.

Success in advancing religious freedom would break this radical monopoly, empowering Muslim reformers to argue not only that Islam rejects terrorism, but it requires equality for all citizens, including non-Muslims and women. Religious freedom will provide young Muslims an alternative to extremism by encouraging them to participate in their own political systems, an opportunity that has rarely existed in nations where Islamist terrorism has emerged and flourished.

And so, Mr. Chairman, if we succeed at advancing religious freedom, these societies will become more stable and the American people more safe and secure.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Farr follows:]

**U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Addressing the Global Crisis in Human Rights and Increasing American National Security**

Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, July 12, 2016

Thomas F. Farr\*

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify at this important hearing. My purpose today is to outline the distinctive religious freedom components of the global human rights crisis, and to suggest why the United States should be doing more to address both.

Let me begin, however, by commending this Committee for passing out HR 1150, the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, later passed unanimously in the House. The bill would kick start the process of accomplishing much of what I am advocating here today. It contains provisions that advocates have been urging for many years – including several that I outlined in 2014 testimony before two of this Committee’s Sub-Committees.

If the Wolf bill is passed in the Senate, the State Department will be required for the first time to provide the authority and resources needed by the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom to succeed in a world of declining religious freedom and increasing religious persecution.

State will also be required to provide more effective, systematic training for America’s diplomats in the meaning and value of religious freedom, and how to advance it in U.S. foreign policy.

And, for the first time, our foreign policy will be required to place the issue of international religious freedom squarely into official thinking about American national security.

I urge the Senate to pass the Wolf bill as soon as possible.

Because I have been critical of the State Department’s failures to advance religious freedom effectively, and will do so again today, I want to give credit where credit is due. There are State Department officials who care deeply about U.S. International Religious Freedom policy, and who have worked very hard to improve it. Their efforts have not been unavailing.

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\* Thomas Farr is President of the [Religious Freedom Institute](#), an NGO that seeks worldwide acceptance of religious liberty as a fundamental human right, the cornerstone of a successful society, and a source of national and international security. Farr is Associate Professor of the Practice of Religion and International Affairs at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, and Director of the [Religious Freedom Project](#) at Georgetown’s Berkley Center. He was the first Director of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom (1999-2003) and is the author of *World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty is Vital to American National Security* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

I want in particular to commend Ambassador at Large David Saperstein, and Knox Thames, Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Middle East and South/Central Asia. They have increased the IRF staff committed to this issue, added programs, and revitalized the process of designating “countries of particular concern.” They have instituted training abroad on religious freedom for US diplomats that is unprecedented. Special Advisor Thames has been a leader in establishing and developing the International Contact Group for International Religious Freedom.

Both men played a key role in the Department’s determination that ISIS actions against Christian, Yazidi and other minorities in Iraq and Syria constituted “genocide.” And later this month they will convene two days of meetings – one of them organized and hosted by Georgetown’s Religious Freedom Project -- to urge and galvanize the international community in planning for the future of those minorities.

I firmly believe that these efforts can and should be expanded and institutionalized, something that the Wolf bill will help accomplish.

Let me turn to the two questions I want to address today: the global crisis of religious freedom and the largely-ignored consequences of that crisis for vital American interests here and abroad.

#### **The Global Crisis in Religious Freedom**

A few months ago at a conference at Catholic University I heard a young Iraqi couple tell of the terrible travail of Christians in Iraq and Syria. I will never forget what they said: “[ISIS terrorists] are raping and killing children in front of their parents. Then they are killing the parents.”

If someone does not stop this slaughter, they told a stunned audience, Christians and Christianity will soon be eliminated in these two lands of the religion’s birth. The same is true of the Yazidis and other minorities in Iraq and Syria.

At the same conference, a Chinese woman named Sarah Liu told of being tortured and sexually abused for four months at a Chinese “Women’s Reeducation Through Labor Prison” because of her Christian beliefs. A subsequent arrest sent Sarah to Forced Labor Camp for three years. Her escape from China allowed her to tell her story, which may surprise those who think religious freedom is progressing in that nation.

A few years ago, in Gujarat India – the world’s largest democracy – Hindu extremists attacked Muslim women, some of them pregnant, raping and slaughtering women and their unborn children as they went from house to house. Terrified women called the local Hindu police begging for help. They were told: “we have no orders to save you,” a heartless response suggesting the complicity of government officials.

These are but a few of the millions of stories of terrible human suffering resulting from the vile religious persecution that is occurring with growing frequency around the world. We are

witnessing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a global human rights catastrophe, one with extraordinary, but largely unacknowledged, consequences for the United States.

Last month the non-partisan Pew Research Center issued the latest in a series of reports entitled *Global Restrictions on Religion*. These annual reports cover eight years from 2007 through 2014. They measure government restrictions on religion and social hostilities toward religion, including religion-related terrorism.

The findings are chilling.

First of all, some three-quarters of the world's people live in countries where religious freedom is severely restricted. Between 2007 and 2014, that figure has varied slightly, but has remained remarkably constant overall.

The same has been true of the religious groups most subject to harassment. For each of the eight years studied by Pew, Christians have been the most harassed group. In 2014, Christians were harassed in 108 countries. Muslims were not far behind, being subject to harassment in 100 countries – many of them Muslim-majority countries.

The most troubling change in this category has been the rapid increase in persecution of the third most harassed group – the Jews of the world. In 2007, Jews were harassed in 51 nations. By 2014, that number had increased by almost 60 percent -- to 81 countries. Many of these are Muslim-majority nations. But the problem is rising in Europe as well. Surely this should be a clarion call for all of us.

Perhaps the most striking change in the past eight years has been the increase in injuries and deaths from religion-related terrorist activities. In 2007, seventeen nations experienced such casualties. In 2014, the number of nations experiencing injuries or deaths from religion-related terrorism, such as those inflicted by groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda, had risen to sixty.

The Pew studies also reveal troubling patterns in the United States. As of 2014 social hostility toward religion in America has increased so dramatically that the U.S. is now listed in the category of countries with “high” levels of social hostility toward religion.

This phenomenon ought to be a source of concern to us all. I would note that we are seeing the same patterns in Western Europe: France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Greece and Italy all exhibit “high” hostility to religion. They join the United States in that category alongside nations that might be expected to be there, such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Libya, and Egypt.

This is not good company for America.

### **The Stakes**

What does all this mean for America and its foreign policy? Speaking broadly, I would suggest two very significant implications.

The first involves our nation's traditional commitment to human rights in general and religious freedom in particular. The growing hostility to religion in America suggests a decline in the belief that religious freedom is our first freedom. This may help explain why U.S. foreign policy has proven so ineffective in advancing this fundamental right.

But religious freedom stands at the core of what it means to be human. No person can live a fully human life without the right – protected in law and culture -- to seek God and to live in accord with the truth as he or she understands it.

Of course, a regime of religious freedom imposes limits. It does not justify violence or a state-mandated religious monopoly. At its core, religious freedom means an immunity from coercion on religious matters by any human agent, especially the state, and full equality under the law for all religious individuals and groups.

This concept of religious freedom underlay the American founding. It led to our understanding of religious liberty as “the first freedom,” without which the Founders believed American democracy would fail. Since then most Americans have understood religious liberty as the birthright of every person, necessary to the success of any society that seeks to establish a system of ordered liberty.

As far as I am concerned this rationale is, or ought to be, sufficient to energize American human rights policy in general and our religious freedom policy in particular. But we all know that it isn't that simple. Along with our own declining respect for religious freedom, the vagaries of American interests in the world complicate the attention given all human rights in our foreign policy.

China is an example of a huge and influential nation where our economic and strategic interests have traditionally led U.S. administrations to sideline human rights and religious freedom. It is true that the State Department always puts China on its list of “countries of particular concern” for its egregious violations of religious freedom, and that the Department has regular discussions with Chinese officials about its crackdowns on dissidents and minorities. But these efforts, while necessary, have had little or no effect on Chinese behavior. The problem is that our policy is largely rhetorical. It suggests movement, but rarely produces results.

When those results do occur, they usually involve China or some other nation responding to our demands to free a prisoner, or permit a family to emigrate. When that happens, of course, it is far from trivial – it is a reason for celebration. American diplomats involved should be applauded. But the release of a prisoner or the emigration of a family does nothing to change the structures of persecution. Those structures remain in place, leading to more and more human rights violations and human suffering.

The unfortunately reality is that America's religious freedom policy remains highly rhetorical and rarely focuses on structural change. When I testified a few years ago before the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, I was asked where U.S. IRF policy had made a

sustained impact. I had to say, in truth, “nowhere.” There was then, and there is today, not a single country in the world where our religious freedom efforts have induced systemic changes.

Some would doubtless argue that seeking structural change sets too high a bar, either because we have no right to seek such fundamental changes in other nations, or because we cannot hope to succeed. I disagree on both counts. American foreign policy can and should have a more sustained impact in advancing human rights and religious freedom abroad. But it will occur only if our government – including the executive and legislative branches – becomes convinced that these policies would enhance our fundamental interests, including our security here and abroad.

This leads to the second implication of the global crisis in human rights and religious freedom. Advancing religious freedom successfully would do precisely that – help U.S. foreign policy advance the interests and security of the American people. We should view our IRF policy as a key element of our national security policy, one that is much cheaper in blood and treasure than military action, and one that holds the potential to advance American interests across the board.

### **Religious Freedom Can Undermine Violent Religious Extremism and Terrorism**

Over the past six years the [Religious Freedom Project](#) at Georgetown University has developed a body of scholarly work that demonstrates in virtually all societies the potential connections between religious freedom and other individual and social goods. Human beings are truth seekers, and religious freedom protects the precious right to seek religious truths, and to live in accord with the truths discovered.

But religious freedom also helps societies achieve stable democracy, the equality of women, economic growth, the invigoration of religion itself, and the avoidance of violent religious extremism.

I invite you to review our work if you are interested,<sup>1</sup> but let me give you the bottom line: *where religious freedom is missing, other social goods are missing. The reverse is true as well: religious freedom contributes to social flourishing. This means that increasing religious freedom can contribute to human rights, democratic stability, and economic growth, and can undermine religious violence and extremism.* While religious liberty is not the only causative factor in producing these outcomes, it is both necessary and, more often than not, completely absent.

Our foreign policy should begin to take this serious deficiency into account.

For example, if we want to have a real impact on China’s perennial and brutal religious persecution against Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, and Christians, we ought to mount a sustained diplomatic effort to convince the Chinese that they can achieve one of their greatest

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Religious Freedom and Violent Religious Extremism: A Sourcebook of Modern Cases and Analysis* (The Religious Freedom Project, December 2012)



priorities as a nation – sustained economic growth -- if they simply back off their persecutory policies. We need to show the Chinese how greater religious freedom will help them protect their own interests.

The most immediate imperative for U.S. foreign policy is to undermine violent Islamist extremism and terrorism, especially as it continues to be incubated in the Middle East and exported around the world, including to the American homeland. Religious freedom should in my view play a much more central role in our national security policy than it currently does.

The plight of Christian and other minorities in Iraq and Syria represents more than a human rights catastrophe; it carries clear dangers for American national security. If these minorities are eliminated or forced to flee, with them will go any opportunity for pluralism and stability. Not only will this outcome put greater pressure on already-besieged Christian minorities elsewhere in the region, it will virtually ensure that Iraq and Syria become fields of permanent conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims, and perpetual training grounds for Islamist terrorism.

Both the U.S. administration and the Congress have declared as “genocide” what is happening to Christians, Yezidis and other minorities in Iraq and Syria. This is manifestly a good thing. But a declaration is nothing but empty rhetoric if it is not accompanied by action. I believe the administration’s military actions in the region have been anemic and ineffective. Like others, I earnestly hope that is changing with the liberation of Fallujah and the prospective liberation of Mosul from ISIS control.

But military means alone, however effective, are not going to defeat the scourge of violent Islamist extremism, of which ISIS is only the most virulent current practitioner. If we succeed in defeating ISIS as a military force and killing every one of its terrorists, we will not have eliminated the source of instability in the region and around the world -- the ideology that feeds extremism.

The *ideology* of extremist Islam must be defeated, or at least circumscribed and sidelined to an insignificant, occasional appearance, rather than the lethal, spreading global force of instability and violence that it is today. If we fail at this task, we will face continued upheaval in the Middle East, Europe and elsewhere, as well as an increase in violent attacks against our own children and grandchildren here at home.

Members of both political parties have written about how the United States might protect itself against this violent ideology, for example, improving our intelligence collection, interrupting the flow of funds to ISIS, building better alliances in the region, stopping the flow of extremists into our country, policing social media, and the like. Each of these ideas has some merit. But none is sufficient – individually or collectively.

The only force that can defeat the ideology of violent Islamist extremism is Muslim stakeholders in the nations where these ideas are dominant. But this cannot happen without the advancement of religious freedom in those nations.

Today in many Muslim-majority countries public debate over Islam is dominated by extremists who argue that the defense of Islam requires its insulation from criticism, especially from within. Laws against blasphemy, defamation and apostasy ensure the dominance of radical understandings of Islam, and prevent Muslims from debating their own religious principles and obligations.

Success in advancing religious freedom would break this monopoly, empowering liberal Muslims and reformers to argue not only that Islam rejects terrorism, but that it requires equality for all citizens of a Muslim-majority nation, including non-Muslim and female citizens.

Success will also provide young Muslims an alternative to violence and extremism by encouraging them to participate in their own political systems – an opportunity that has never existed within the nations where Islamist terrorism has emerged and flourished, such as the theocratic authoritarian systems of Saudi Arabia and Iran, or the secular authoritarian system of Assad's Syria and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Needless to say, none of this will be easy. But a sustained, all-of-government effort by U.S. foreign policy in advancing religious freedom could have a major impact in attacking the ideological wellsprings of Islamist terrorism. This will require leadership by the new President, the new Secretary of State, and the Congress.

Again, let me commend this Committee for its own leadership in passing HR 1150 in a bi-partisan fashion. Let us hope that this bill will trigger a new bipartisan conversation in America and in Washington DC – a conversation about how the advancement of religious freedom can help those societies where it occurs, and also help protect the American people against the vile enemy that threatens their security and well-being. We cannot fail in this effort.

Thank you for having me here today.

**STATEMENT OF MS. AMANDA SCHNETZER, DIRECTOR, HUMAN  
FREEDOM INITIATIVE, THE GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE**

Ms. SCHNETZER. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to be here today.

My comments will focus on the connection between promoting human rights and freedom abroad and maintaining our security here at home. Seventy-five years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his famous Four Freedoms speech to Congress. He warned that “at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today.” In making the case to end U.S. neutrality in the war, President Roosevelt redefined America’s role in the world by intertwining our national security with the fight against tyranny beyond our shores. “The future and safety of our country and our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders,” he warned.

This principle is just as relevant today, as the adversaries of freedom once again gain ground. Although substantially more people in the world experience liberty today than at the end of World War II, more than half the world’s population still lives in countries where basic political rights and civil liberties are only partly respected, if at all. The last decade, in particular, has not been good for freedom, as Mark Lagon told us.

As the challengers to liberalism gain adherence, it is in the direct and immediate interest of the United States to support the advance of human rights and freedom abroad. The current mood in the United States does not appear conducive to this strategy. New Pew research polling shows that 70 percent of Americans want the next administration to focus on domestic policy over foreign policy. Yet, in order to address the major threats that keep Americans awake at night, strong U.S. leadership is still required.

So, where do we go from here? One step would be for policy-makers to make the promotion of democracy and human rights an important part of their foreign policy agendas. This March, 139 policy experts, civil society leaders, and former elected officials, Republicans and Democrats alike, signed a letter encouraging the Presidential candidates to do just that. The letter called it a “false choice” to pit the pursuit of democratic ideals against national security.

A second step would be to engage the American people in a conversation about the impact of advancing freedom on our own peace, prosperity, and security here at home. At the end of World War II, for example, many questioned whether democracy was compatible with Germany and Japan. Today these are among our strongest partners and allies in the world, and Americans reap tangible benefits.

During the Cold War, the United States supported democratic reform in then authoritarian allies such as Taiwan and South Korea, the Philippines, and Chile. The end of the Cold War was a major victory for freedom in Central and Eastern Europe and for American peace and security.

Today the morale and strategic imperatives of advancing human rights can be seen in numerous examples. I will take three from our work at the Bush Institute.

As First Lady and still today, Laura Bush has made the empowerment of women in Afghanistan a priority. Women and girls have made important gains since the end of Taliban control. Yet, those achievements are fragile and the need for continued U.S. support and engagement is there. It matters to Americans because investing in women in Afghanistan promotes stability and helps reduce the possibility of future terrorist attacks on the United States emanating from that country.

The Institute is also investing in the next generation of women leaders in the Middle East, in Egypt and Tunisia. Tunisia may be the only success story of the Arab Spring, but the sentiments that inspired democratic uprisings across the region remain: Frustration with injustice, lack of freedom, and a dearth of economic opportunity.

The same factors were present in Syria, but the failure to liberalize there and elsewhere in the Middle East has had devastating consequences. It is in the interest of the United States to see the forces of freedom eventually prevail.

The Institute's Liberty and Leadership Forum is helping develop young leaders in Burma who are playing important roles in their country's democratic opening. For more than two decades, U.S. policy focused on isolating Burma's military junta and advancing the cause of Aung San Suu Kyi and the democratic opposition. Today Burma's strategic importance is also rising, as China grows more aggressive in consolidating its power and influence in Asia.

There is also the example of North Korea. In 2015, the Institute released a report calling for new approaches to address the human rights abuses of the Kim regimes. One of the report's recommendations is to treat human rights and the nuclear threat as symbiotic. Policy opportunities including human rights, integrating human rights into mainstream diplomacy, the sanctions regime, and frameworks for looking at future unification are among them. The recent decision to sanction Kim Jong Un and 10 other North Koreans for human rights abuses is a move in that direction.

A third step in breaking the false dichotomy of human rights and national security would be to encourage relevant research. The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, for example, has done important work documenting the DPRK's use of forced labor to generate revenue for the government, including its nuclear program.

Finally, a fourth step would be to seek immediate opportunities for bipartisan action. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan acknowledged that policymakers can disagree on many things, but he said, "on one point, all of us are united—our abhorrence of dictatorship in all its forms." He then called on leaders in Europe and the United States to "take actions to assist the campaign for democracy."

The founding of the National Endowment for Democracy followed a year later with strong bipartisan support. The creation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation in 2004 is another example of important bipartisan action.

In the current political environment, this may be a tall order, but the stakes at home and abroad are high, and American leadership is essential.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Schnetzer follows:]



GEORGE W. BUSH  
INSTITUTE

Statement before the  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
*Global Human Rights Under Siege*

Amanda Watson Schnetzer  
Director, Human Freedom Initiative, George W. Bush Institute

Tuesday, July 12, 2016  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Room 2172

DRAFT

Chairman Royce, Representative Engel, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear here today.

My name is Amanda Schnitzer. I direct the Human Freedom Initiative at the nonprofit, nonpartisan George W. Bush Institute in Dallas, Texas. At the Bush Institute, we believe that freedom is a universal human right, and that freedom is essential to lasting peace and prosperity at home and around the world. We work to develop leaders in emerging democracies, stand with those who still live under tyranny, and foster U.S. leadership through policy and action.

My comments will focus on the connection between promoting human rights and freedom abroad and maintaining our security here at home.

Seventy-five years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his famous Four Freedoms speech to Congress. He warned that “at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today.”

In making the case to end U.S. neutrality in World War II, President Roosevelt redefined America’s role in the world by intertwining our national security with the fight against tyranny beyond our shores.

“The future and safety of our country and of our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders,” he warned.

As Will Inboden, of the University of Texas, and I wrote in the inaugural issue of *The Catalyst*, a Bush Institute Journal of Ideas, this principle is just as relevant today, as the adversaries of freedom once again gain ground.

Although substantially more people in the world experience liberty today than at the end of World War II, more than half the world’s population still lives in countries where basic political rights and civil liberties are only partly respected, if at all. The last decade in particular has not been good for freedom.

For ten consecutive years, the human rights organization Freedom House has documented more setbacks than gains for freedom around the world.<sup>1</sup> The National Endowment for Democracy has warned of authoritarian regimes cracking down at home while also “seeking to reshape the international order and democratic norms.”<sup>2</sup>

There are the champions of authoritarian capitalism like China, Russia, and Vietnam. There is the anti-democratic, anti-market club of countries in Latin America like Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, and Bolivia. There is the rise of illiberal democracies in places like Hungary and Turkey. There is militant Islamism and other forms of repression that dominate in the Middle East and North Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> “Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies: Global Freedom Under Pressure,” *Freedom in the World 2016*: [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH\\_FITW\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2016.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> “Resurgent Dictatorship: The Global Assault on Democracy”: <http://www.resurgentdictatorship.org/about-us/>.

As these and other challengers to liberalism gain adherents, it is in the direct and immediate interest of the United States to support the advance of human rights and freedom abroad.

The current mood in the United States does not appear conducive to this strategy. New Pew Research polling shows that 69 percent of Americans believe the United States should “concentrate more on our own national problems.” Seventy percent want the next U.S. president to focus on domestic policy over foreign policy. Yet in order to address the “major threats” that keep Americans awake at night—ISIS, foreign cyberattacks, global economic instability, the spread of infectious diseases, the refugee crisis—strong U.S. leadership is required, as are strategies that help advance rule of law, good governance, open markets, and other features of free societies.<sup>3</sup>

So where do we go from here?

One step would be for policymakers, presidential candidates, and other public office hopefuls to make the promotion of democracy and human rights an important part of their foreign policy agendas. This March, 139 policy experts, civil society leaders, and former elected officials—Republicans and Democrats alike—signed a letter encouraging the presidential candidates to do just that.

While recognizing that “democracy and human rights cannot be the only items on the foreign policy agenda,” the letter calls it a “false choice” to pit the pursuit of democratic ideals against national security. I was proud to sign that letter.

A second step would be to engage the American people in a conversation about the impact of advancing freedom on our own peace, prosperity, and security.

At the end of World War II, for example, many questioned whether democracy was compatible with Germany and Japan. The United States actively supported the development of democratic institutions and practices. Today, Germany and Japan are among our strongest partners and allies in the world, and Americans reap tangible benefits.

In North Texas, where the Bush Institute is located, the relocation of Toyota’s North American headquarters is expected to create jobs and have an economic impact of \$7 billion in the first ten years, according to estimates when the move was announced.

During the Cold War, the United States supported democratic reform in then-authoritarian allies such as Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Chile. The end of the Cold War was a major victory for freedom in Central and Eastern Europe. After decades of Soviet nuclear threat, it also was a great victory for American peace and security.

Today, the moral and strategic imperatives of advancing human rights can be seen in numerous examples. I will take four from our work at the Bush Institute.

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<sup>3</sup> “Public Uncertain, Divided Over America’s Place in the World,” Pew Research Center, May 2016: <file:///C:/Users/aschnitzer/Downloads/05-05-2016-Foreign-policy-APW-release.pdf>



Schnitzer: Testimony, House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 12, 2016

As First Lady, and still today, Laura Bush has made the empowerment of women in Afghanistan a priority. Women and girls have made important gains in education, the economy, and society since the end of Taliban control. Yet those achievements are fragile and need continued U.S. support and engagement.

It matters to Americans because investing in women in Afghanistan promotes stability and helps reduce the possibility of future terrorist attacks on the United States emanating from that country.<sup>4</sup>

The Institute is also investing in the next generation of women leaders in the Middle East, because we know that women are agents of peace, prosperity, and stability in their communities and countries. Our Women's Initiative Fellowship Program has graduated more than 60 women from Egypt and Tunisia since 2012.

Tunisia may be the only success story of the Arab Spring, but the sentiments that inspired democratic uprisings across the region remain: frustration with injustice, lack of freedom, and a dearth of economic opportunity. The same factors were present in Syria, but the failure to liberalize there and elsewhere in the Middle East has had devastating consequences and helped lay the groundwork for Islamic extremism and ISIS. It is in the economic and security interests of the United States to see the forces of freedom eventually prevail.

The Bush Institute's Liberty and Leadership Forum is helping develop young leaders in Burma who are playing important roles in their country's democratic opening. For more than two decades U.S. policy focused on isolating Burma's military junta and advancing the cause of Aung San Suu Kyi and the democratic opposition. Important human rights concerns remain, including the severe plight of Rohingya Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities. Burma's strategic importance to the United States is also rising as China grows more aggressive in consolidating influence and power in Asia.

Pandemic disease and other health crises are also threats to our national security. In an interconnected world, disease can spread rapidly and cripple societies caught in its path. In Africa, the Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon, a global partnership fighting women's cancers with which the Bush Institute is affiliated, is building on the PEPFAR platform and the global health community's progress in reducing deaths from HIV/AIDS to address cervical and breast cancer. The recent Ebola crisis in West Africa brought the risk to Americans extremely close to home, including in Dallas where the first patient in the country was diagnosed.

There's also the example of North Korea. In 2015, the Bush Institute released a report calling for new approaches to address the human rights abuses of the Kim regime. One of the report's recommendations is to treat human rights and the nuclear threat as symbiotic. Policy opportunities include integrating human rights into mainstream diplomacy, the sanctions regime, and frameworks for looking at future unification of the peninsula.<sup>5</sup> The recent decision to

<sup>4</sup> "Afghanistan and U.S. Security," Atlantic Council, October 2015:

[http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/20151016\\_Afghanistan\\_and\\_us\\_security.pdf](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/20151016_Afghanistan_and_us_security.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Victor Cha, "Light Through the Darkness: Improving the Human Condition in North Korea. Defining a New Path Forward," January 2015: [http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwb\\_north\\_korea\\_report\\_call\\_to\\_action.pdf](http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwb_north_korea_report_call_to_action.pdf)

Schnitzer: Testimony, House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 12, 2016

sanction Kim Jong Un and ten other North Koreans for human rights abuses is a move in that direction.

A third step in breaking down the false dichotomy of human rights and national security would be to encourage and increase support for relevant research. The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, for example, has done important work documenting the DPRK's human rights abuses and use of forced labor to generate revenue for the government, including its nuclear program.<sup>6</sup>

A fourth step would be to seek immediate opportunities for bipartisan action. Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech stands against the backdrop of a bipartisan tradition of support for liberty. Both Republican and Democrat presidents have affirmed the U.S. commitment to standing for freedom at home and leading the advance of freedom abroad. Congress, too, has played an important role.

In 1982, in his now-famous address to the British Parliament at Westminster, President Ronald Reagan acknowledged that policy makers can disagree on many things but, he said, "on one point all of us are united—our abhorrence of dictatorship in all its forms." He then called on leaders in Europe and the United States to "take actions to assist the campaign for democracy."

The founding of the National Endowment for Democracy followed a year later with strong bipartisan support. The creation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation in 2004 is another example of important bipartisan action. Ensuring continued support for democracy and development assistance overseas, promoting progress on human rights in trade and economic agreements, and continuing support for initiatives like PEPFAR that relieve human suffering are just some of the options available to policymakers today.

In the current political environment, this may be a tall order, but the stakes at home and abroad are high and American leadership is essential.

Thank you.

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<sup>6</sup> Kim Kwang-Jin, "Gulag, Inc.: The Use of Forced Labor in North Korea's Export Industries," Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016: [http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/KKJ\\_Gulag\\_INC\\_FinalFinal\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/KKJ_Gulag_INC_FinalFinal_WEB.pdf)

**STATEMENT OF MR. MARK BROMLEY, CHAIR, THE COUNCIL  
FOR GLOBAL EQUALITY**

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Engel. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline, for your opening remarks.

I would like to say a bit more today about the human rights protections that are under siege for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals globally. The targeted attack on the gay bar in Orlando just 1 month ago, as already noted, is a sobering reminder of that fact. I would like to argue here today that targeted LGBT violence and anti-LGBT propaganda in general challenge fundamental democratic values and pluralistic societies everywhere.

For many LGBT individuals globally, particularly in the nearly 80 countries that criminalize consensual same-sex relationships with long prison sentences or death, violence is an everyday reality. The State Department's Annual Human Rights Report confirms this. In this year's report, targeted LGBT killings are cited in countries ranging from Honduras to Russia to Pakistan. In Zimbabwe, families subjected their LGBTI members to corrective rape. In Ecuador, private treatment centers confined LGBTI persons against their will. From Azerbaijan to Kenya and from Guatemala to Turkey, and Indonesia to Sri Lanka, the State Department reports on the abuse of LGBT citizens by police forces.

Given these findings and turning back to Orlando and its global legacy, I believe our country and our allies must not underreact or overreact, and we must not confuse the difference between the two. To be sure, ISIS is, indeed, a threat to the LGBT community, as it is to other ethnic and religious communities in the Middle East and beyond. As noted already, the State Department has found that ISIS is responsible for genocide against Yazidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims. In the same way, ISIS has also targeted LGBT individuals with ferocious violence and a similar intent to destroy the community.

OutRight Action International has documented more than 40 men who have been accused of sodomy and killed in horrific public executions in the recent past, and those are just the cases that ISIS itself has taken credit for. Last summer the United States and Chile cosponsored a Security Council briefing on LGBT-related atrocities in ISIS areas.

But ISIS is not the only perpetrator. On another front, Russia has led a new assault on LGBT organizations and individuals through an anti-propaganda law that bans all public discussion of homosexuality, even in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Authoritarian governments from Uganda to Kazakhstan, and even allies such as Egypt and Indonesia, have adopted anti-LGBT rhetoric to justify the closing of civic space. While targeting gay groups, Russia has also gone after democracy and human rights groups, and it just adopted alarming new restrictions on religious groups as well.

At the same time, I urge us not to overreact. We must not close our borders or turn inward. We need to offer protection to refugees, including LGBT refugees who are some of the most vulnerable individuals on the planet. And we must not allow countries to justify sweeping anti-democratic actions in response to terrorism.

So, in this global environment, what course should we chart abroad? First, in the LGBT context, we should continue to invest in the Global Equality Fund at the State Department, which is supported by 13 other countries under U.S. leadership. The Fund has assisted frontline human rights defenders in more than 80 countries globally. The State Department is also identifying opportunities to address bias-motivated violence by supporting law enforcement and by including new hate crimes courses in our International Law Enforcement Academies around the world.

We also should support USAID and the World Bank as they identify development opportunities for individuals and demonstrate the macroeconomic benefits of LGBT participation in the workplace. A World Bank study recently concluded that homophobia costs the Indian economy \$31 billion or more annually in lost economic opportunities. In short, these very modest U.S. investments offer important long-term dividends.

This is also the moment to engage multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. The Human Rights Council created a new, independent expert position to respond to these abuses just 2 weeks ago. And the U.N. Security Council condemned the killings in Orlando, recognizing for the first time that individuals were targeted because of their sexual orientation.

Mr. Chairman, countries that turn on their own LGBT citizens or that scapegoat them to distract from broader political or economic failings are equally likely to turn on other ethnic or religious minorities and on human rights and democracy groups writ large. The Anti-Defamation League has documented strong links between anti-Semitism and homophobia in Europe and beyond. The actors are the same, the intentions are the same, and the violence is too often the same.

In contrast, our strongest allies, from Canada to our European partners to Israel, have strong civil rights protections for their LGBT citizens. This is not a coincidence, and we should make that point to governments that hope to deepen their relationship with the United States.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bromley follows:]

**Mark Kayson Bromley**  
**Council Chair, Council for Global Equality**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**“Global Human Rights Under Siege”**  
**July 12, 2016**

Mr. Chairman,

I am honored to join you today to discuss “Global Human Rights Under Siege.” Human rights protections are indeed under siege – and that is particularly true for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals globally. The targeted attack on a gay bar in Orlando just one month ago today, which killed 49 young persons and wounded scores more, provides a sobering reminder of that fact, and it lends a jarring perspective from which to consider the global human rights landscape today.

If the persecution of LGBT individuals was ever considered a minor distraction, meriting little policy interest, the Orlando massacre has proven that idea wrong. My comments this morning aim to prove that idea wrong as well. I submit that such ISIS-inspired violence, and that anti-LGBT propaganda in general, are part of a global conflict of ideas, one that challenges fundamental democratic values and pluralistic societies everywhere. We must respond to this challenge by recommitting ourselves and our country to the fundamental freedoms and democratic ideals that have made our country strong.

For many LGBT individuals globally, particularly in the nearly 80 countries that criminalize consensual same-sex relationships with long prison sentences or death, violence is an everyday reality. To quote Thomas Hobbes, in the absence of government protection, or, worse yet, when your government turns on you and actively persecutes you, life becomes “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

Life is *solitary* when you are criminalized for who you are and who you love; when the clubs, coffee shops and community centers where you might meet other LGBT persons are raided by the police as criminal venues, and the patrons arrested and forced to undergo dangerous and humiliating anal exams to try to prove homosexual sexual activity. Life is materially *poor* when you are driven out of school, denied job opportunities and pushed to the margins of your country’s economy. Life is *nasty and brutish* when you are targeted for hate crimes, “corrective rape,” or extrajudicial execution. And life is certainly *short* when you are gunned down in a club like the pulse nightclub in Orlando – or on the streets of any city in Central America. Indeed, the UN and others have estimated the life expectancy of transgender women in Central America to be less than 35 years of age.

The State Department's annual human rights reports confirms this daily reality. As usual, this year's report offers disturbing pictures of violence being committed against LGBT people worldwide, from Afghanistan to Honduras to Kenya. In this year's report, targeted LGBT killings are cited in countries ranging from Germany to Honduras and Russia to Pakistan. Attacks are commonly identified as occurring in both public and private spaces. The Mali report explains that "family members, neighbors, and groups of strangers in public places committed the majority of violent acts, and police frequently refused to intervene." But even in the home, the report recognizes that LGBT individuals are targeted for abuse and sexual violence by family members, including in countries ranging from Belize to Romania and Cambodia to Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe report notes that "some families reportedly subjected their LGBTI members to 'corrective' rape and forced marriages to encourage heterosexual conduct." In Ecuador, "LGBTI organizations and the government continued to report that private treatment centers confined LGBTI persons against their will to 'cure' or 'dehomosexualize' them." Although illegal, the clinics also reportedly used extreme treatments, including rape.

The vast majority of the State Department country reports cite a reluctance on the part of victims – characterized as outright fear – to report such abuse to authorities in the belief that they would be ignored at best but also potentially targeted by the police for filing the complaint. The South Africa report discusses the "secondary victimization" of individuals, particularly lesbian and transgender women, including cases in which police harassed, ridiculed, and assaulted victims of sexual- and gender-based violence who reported abuse.

In many other cases, from Azerbaijan to Kenya and from Guatemala to Turkey and Indonesia to Sri Lanka, the State Department report notes patterns of abuse of LGBTI citizens by police or other security forces, or other inappropriate police action. The Bolivia report cites a study that found that 82 percent of those surveyed "knew of at least one person whom police had arbitrarily detained due to sexual orientation or gender identity." Police in all regions regularly extorted money from presumed LGBT individuals by threatening to arrest or expose them, including when LGBT individuals attempted to report violence or seek protection. In Mexico and Venezuela, cases of violence are often recorded by the police as "crimes of passion" that are then ignored in the belief that they are little more than domestic squabbles between jilted lovers.

Given these findings, and turning back to Orlando and its global legacy, I believe our country and our allies must not under-react or overreact, and that we must not obfuscate the difference between these two extremes. To be sure, in response to the Orlando attack, we must recognize that ISIS is indeed a threat to the LGBT community, as it is to other ethnic and religious communities in the Middle East and beyond. The State Department has found that ISIS is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims. In the same way, ISIS has also targeted LGBT individuals with ferocious violence and a similar intent to destroy the community.

One of the Council for Global Equality's member organizations, OutRight Action International, has monitored ISIS-affiliated propaganda sites, and they have documented more than 40 men

who have been accused of sodomy and killed in horrific public executions over the past 19 months – and those are just the cases that ISIS itself has taken credit for on social media. In response to this violence, for the first time last summer, the United States and Chile co-sponsored a Security Council briefing on LGBT-related atrocities in ISIS-controlled areas.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the global assault on the fundamental freedoms of LGBT citizens is not limited to ISIS-controlled territories. With echoes of Orlando, in April we also witnessed the brutal murder by an ISIS-inspired group of a gay man in Bangladesh who worked as a local employee for USAID and published a gay-rights magazine. Russia has led a new assault on LGBT organizations and individuals through an “anti-propaganda” law that bans all public discussion of homosexuality, even in the context of HIV/AIDS, and it is using the law and other related prohibitions on democracy groups to close down LGBT organizations and LGBT-friendly venues. Versions of this Russian law have popped up in one form or another across most of the former Soviet Union and they are emerging now in Africa, where criminal penalties for LGBT individuals are already severe – and severely enforced in a number of African countries.

Indeed, this ISIS violence and propaganda is part of a larger war of ideas, one that challenges democratic values and pluralistic societies. But we must be clear: It is a war of ideas not religions. Authoritarian governments from Uganda to Kazakhstan, and even allies such as Egypt and India and Indonesia, have adopted anti-LGBT rhetoric to justify the closing of civil society space and to limit democratic engagement. Freedom House records this in its annual survey as a point of fact: democracy and human rights groups are under severe threat, and attacks on LGBT groups are often the first line of assault in that broader crackdown.

At the same time, I would urge us not to overreact to the violence in Orlando or to ISIS threats beyond our country. We must not close our borders or turn inward. We need to keep our borders open and offer protection, together with our European allies, for those refugees who are most vulnerable – those who cannot wait out the conflict in a camp or in a neighboring country because they simply would not survive. This includes LGBT refugees fleeing persecution. LGBT refugees are some of the most vulnerable individuals on the planet; even in their most desperate hour of flight, they are rejected by their own refugee community and exposed to extreme levels of violence and persecution at every turn.

Finally, we must not allow countries to obfuscate or to justify sweeping anti-democratic actions in response to terrorism. Instead, we must hold ourselves and our allies to our international human rights commitments, rejecting any inclination to exploit very real terror threats as a justification to shut down legitimate democracy and civil society organizations, including LGBT groups. Turkey recently banned a gay pride parade for the second year in a row, citing threats of terrorism to justify the ban. While we know, tragically, that there is a very legitimate threat of terrorism in Turkey, safe accommodations could have been secured to allow peaceful forms of expression and association in a safe venue. At the same time, a leading LGBT group in the country has accused the government of failing to provide its office and its employees with appropriate physical protection in the face of this very same terrorism threat.

So in this global environment, where civil society space is shrinking, where countries like Russia and China are exporting sophisticated cyber surveillance technology that allow authoritarian governments to spy on the legitimate democratic initiatives of their citizens, where fundamental protections for ethnic, religious and LGBT minorities are denied, and where the very notions of pluralism and democratic citizenship are being questioned by allies and foes alike, what course should we chart at home and abroad? The only proper way forward, and the only fitting tribute to Orlando, is to double-down on our investments in civil rights at home, human rights abroad and democratic governance globally.

U.S. financial support for good governance and human rights overseas must be protected even in difficult budget years – surely there should be bipartisan support for these investments given the trends that we have identified today. This is all the more important as our European allies, longstanding co-investors in human rights programs globally, are turning inward to respond to existential internal challenges. In the LGBT context, this means that we should continue to invest in the Global Equality Fund at the State Department, which is supported by 13 other countries under U.S. leadership. The fund has supported front-line human rights defenders as they stand for fundamental rights for LGBT individuals in more than 80 countries globally.

We should support USAID and the World Bank as they identify development opportunities for marginalized LGBT individuals, and in so doing demonstrating the macro-economic benefits of LGBT participation in the workplace. A World Bank study recently concluded that homophobia costs the Indian economy \$31 billion or more annually in lost economic opportunities. To their credit, the State Department's Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons, together with USAID's Senior LGBT Coordinator, are leveraging these opportunities to ensure that our investments in human rights and development today pay off with handsome democratic and economic dividends in the years ahead. In short, modest U.S. assistance to global LGBT communities offers an unparalleled long-term return on investment.

Recognizing the magnitude of hate violence targeting LGBT individuals everywhere, the State Department, working closely with civil society and the private sector, is also identifying opportunities to address bias-motivated violence using our global rule of law and criminal justice assets, recognizing in particular the need for law enforcement, judges, legislatures, governments, and civil society to work together to respond comprehensively and decisively to such violence. This year's State Department human rights report reminds us that there is much more work to do. But it also provides a glimmer of hope, recognizing some of the unique steps that a handful of governments are taking to acknowledge, document and respond to extremely high levels of bias-motivated violence targeting LGBT individuals.

This is also the moment to double-down on our investments in multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Council are playing leading roles in responding to violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity globally. Just two weeks ago, following a request from over 600 civil society organizations from 147 countries, the Human Rights Council created a new Independent Expert position to document and respond to



such abuses. This is a long-awaited and groundbreaking development that will unlock existing resources to elevate the UN's attention to LGBT hate crimes and related violations. And with strong U.S. leadership, the UN Security Council last month condemned the killings in Orlando, recognizing for the first time that these individuals were targeted because of their sexual orientation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your attention to these human rights concerns. It should be clear that countries that turn on their own LGBT citizens, or that scapegoat their LGBT citizens to distract from broader political or economic failings, are equally likely to turn on other ethnic or religious minorities and on human rights and democracy groups writ large. In contrast, all of our strongest allies, from Canada to our European partners to Israel, have strong civil rights protections for their LGBT citizens. This is not a coincidence, and the State Department's Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI persons should continue to make that point to those governments that hope to deepen their diplomatic and economic relationship with the United States in the years to come.

As a supplement to this testimony, please see a map by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association that charts laws impacting LGBT citizens in countries across the globe.

**MAY 2016**  
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**SEXUAL ORIENTATION LAWS IN THE WORLD - OVERVIEW**  
ILGA, THE INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION



**CRIMINALISATION**  
 IMPRISONMENT: 75 countries and 5 entities  
 DEATH PENALTY: 15 States (for parts of)  
 Death penalty not known to be implemented  
 Morality laws (religion based) that limit LGBT freedom of expression and association

**PROTECTION**  
 ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS: 75 countries and 85 entities  
 Constitution, other non-discrimination practices, hate crime and hate speech  
 NO SPECIFIC LEGISLATION  
 Laws penalising same-sex sexual acts decriminalised, or never existed

**RECOGNITION**  
 RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX UNIONS: 34 countries and 65 entities  
 JOINT ADOPTION: 27 countries and 28 entities  
 SECOND PARENT ADOPTION: 17 countries and parts of Italy  
 Marriage: Equal (almost equal) substitute to marriage  
 Clearly inferior substitute to marriage

The data presented in this map, and the three accompanying separate maps on Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition, are based on state-sponsored or Commission-sponsored research, and are not intended to represent the views of ILGA or any other organization. The report is available in the original English, Spanish, and Chinese. The report was updated in May 2016. The report was coordinated by Amey, Gurnell and Beato Sobottin (ILGA), and designed by Edwards (Linn) Productions (edwardsl.com).

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Bromley.

Let me begin with a question to Mr. Farr. This concerns the importance of promotion of religious freedom in the fight against radical Islamist extremists such as ISIS or Boko Haram. How would you say the United States could most productively support that goal?

Mr. FARR. Well, thanks for that question, Mr. Chairman. One very practical thing, if I might say so, if I could commend the committee for passing out H.R. 1150, which is now in the Senate. If that bill is signed and sent to the President and he signs it, I think it will energize the State Department. It is the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom bill. It will empower, give greater resources and status to the Ambassador-at-Large, who is an excellent Ambassador, David Saperstein, along with Knox Thames, who is the Special Advisor for Minorities in the region. These people, if they had more authority and resources, I think could do the kinds of things that I think the United States could do, but is not doing.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Doctor. I appreciate that.

Let me ask Mrs. Schnetzer a question here about North Korea. I know you have done a lot of work on that front. Maybe you could tell us what could improve the human rights situation there in North Korea, in your view.

Ms. SCHNETZER. Yes, sir. I think the way to improve the human condition in North Korea is multifaceted. Our work at the Bush Institute, we have introduced reports that talk about opportunities both for government, for civil society, and for the private sector to try to address the grievous abuse of human rights in that country.

There are a variety of ways to do that from a policy standpoint and for civil society and business to engage. One example that we are continuing to work on is the opportunity on the policy front to look at the intersection of our approach to human rights in North Korea and our concerns about security and nuclear, and that, for too long, those two have been considered in parallel form, perhaps as disconnected from one another. What we are finding is that those two are intimately linked; that the way the North Korean Government treats its own people has a direct link to how they engage others in the world and act internationally. And as I mentioned, there is even research beginning to emerge that shows that things like the use of slave labor, the human rights abuses of the regime can be directly connected to the resources coming into the regime, including for its nuclear program.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

The last question I am going to ask is the Freedom House's report would label Russia as not free. So, Mr. Lagon, Ambassador, we have seen the space for independent media sort of disappear in Russia. We had the opposition leader Krym Realii blocked, or I should say the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reporter. More concerning to me was Vladimir Kara-Murza, the journalist that was poisoned last December. And then, in January you had President Putin signing the new law, the restrictions on social media and internet communications. I would just ask you for your observations on this.

Ambassador LAGON. A lot of people have focused on the situation for civil society groups with the foreign agents law and the undesir-

able organizations law. I am glad you ask about the media situation. There has been longstanding control or influence over major media operations, but things are getting worse for journalists.

It is part of two lobes of active, well-funded Russian policy: Control of the media at home and intimidation of those who would be dissenting voices.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, when you are being poisoned, when you tell your audience, “I fear that I might be poisoned by the regime”——

Ambassador LAGON. That is about as intimidating as it gets.

Chairman ROYCE. But, I mean, you get poisoned and, then, you are hospitalized for poisoning.

Ambassador LAGON. Yes.

Chairman ROYCE. It is concerning. It is concerning to me because the independent media, I was following some of the reporters in Moscow and one of the last independent papers. After the fifth journalist was shot without anyone discovering who shot him, it began to establish in my mind the conclusion that the regime apparently didn’t want any independent media.

So, I would ask, how impactful has the West been in finding alternative ways to get information in through social media or in through broadcasting to offset some of this?

Ambassador LAGON. Not impactful enough. And I think that your own interest in public diplomacy and legislation to focus on that is very important. I think the United States should work on assisting indigenous independent media, funding to train journalists. We are encouraged in emergency assistance to all of the world to those who are intimidated as voices in the media and as human rights defenders.

I think Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty not only should have good content on the political situation, filling in for the absence of independent media, but it should actually be designed to engage viewers more. In fact, to have entertainment will allow more people to hear the truth as well.

And think about ProPublica that has looked at the web of corruption around the world. We ought to try to promote something similar to ProPublica in Russia to cover the corruption situation because the gangland violence situation that you describe in Russia is because of the mating of human rights oppression and corruption in the regime.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. My time has expired.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record testimony from the Human Rights Campaign in support of this hearing.

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Bromley, let me ask you this question: In March 2015, I sent a bipartisan letter to USAID with Chairman Emeritus Ros-Lehtinen urging targeted funding to protect the human rights of LGBT individuals in the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. As you know, violence against the LGBT community in these countries has reached dangerous

levels. I was particularly disturbed by the recent murder of LGBT activist Rene Martinez in Honduras. The United States is providing \$750 million in new assistance to Central America this year and, hopefully, in subsequent years. How can this funding be used to help the LGBT community in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala? How specifically can USAID and the State Department better assist the LGBT population in Central America? I know Chairman Ros-Lehtinen joins me in concern of all these issues.

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you, Mr. Engel, and thank you, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, for your support on that initiative.

As you mentioned, the levels of violence in Central America are dangerously high. The average life expectancy of a transgender woman in Central America is estimated to be 35 years of age and probably lower in Honduras and some other countries. So, this is a real epidemic of violence, and support is important.

There have been some steps with U.S. Government support, including the creation of a Special Victims Unit in Honduras to help investigate LGBT cases as well as other priority human rights cases, and new hate crimes training covering LGBT hate crimes for police officers from that region in our International Law Enforcement Academy in San Salvador. But, to date, we haven't really seen the fruits of these investments.

I think the key is that we really need to double-down on our investment in that area to bring civil society into the process, so that they are working with the ILEA, that they are working with the Special Victims Unit, to really ensure that there is coordinated action on civil society's side as well as the government side to respond to these abuses.

And, ultimately, at the political level from your seat here in Congress and from our Embassies in those countries, we need to ensure that the political will is there. I think we have seen moments of political will, but at times that political will has stumbled. So, I think more of the same, but it is an urgent request.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Let me ask you this: You have mentioned in your testimony the horrific abuses inflicted by ISIS on gay men, people being thrown off buildings, stoned to death, and all videotaped to serve as a warning to others. LGBT individuals are sometimes forced to flee for their lives, and I understand that it is difficult to determine how many refugees of LGBT there are since LGBT people often do not self-identify. They fear violence and retaliation from their community or even from other refugees.

So, it seems to me the LGBT refugees from different parts of the world suffer unique vulnerabilities and face difficult circumstances. Can you tell us more about that, the continued challenges they face while fleeing or in a refugee camp, or even when already resettled in another country?

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

Absolutely. As I mentioned, LGBT refugees are probably some of the most vulnerable individuals on the planet. Even when they are forced to flee their own country, which is a decision that no individual takes lightly, they find themselves in a refugee community, often in a country that is equally hostile to LGBT individuals, in a refugee community that doesn't understand their own situation

or their claim for protection on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. And they are exposed to extreme levels of violence and persecution in camp settings, in particular.

We are seeing large concentrations of LGBT refugees, particularly in cities in Turkey, where they are also very vulnerable and often forced to the margins of society. Fortunately, UNHCR and the U.S. Government are looking at opportunities to identify those LGBT refugees. As you noted, the first challenge is convincing them that it is safe to come out, to tell authorities, to tell UNHCR who they are and why they need protection. Once they are identified, there are opportunities to offer additional protections, to offer refugee processing in a way that is both sensitive and efficient, to try to get them out of danger as quickly as possible.

But those steps need additional support. We really need to continue to push UNHCR, which is on the frontlines here. As the largest investor in UNHCR, I think we can make sure that they make a difference.

Mr. ENGEL. And let me ask you one final question. The State Department Global Equality Fund supports courageous frontline human rights defenders, and not enough can be said of their bravery to fight against the hate and the violence, the vitriol. I think of the dauntless Frank Mugisha in Uganda whose colleague was brutally murdered; he continues to stand up for those who want dignity in their lives or the countless others who work under the threat of violence, detention, and beatings.

What more can the U.S. Government do to support these frontline human rights defenders?

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you.

I do think the Global Equality Fund is a remarkable fund and one that we have really been able to use to great advantage. It is co-funded by 13 other governments. So, we are not in this alone. We are pooling the resources, and the U.S. is using our broad reach through our Embassies to really lead that Fund and help identify those activists on the frontline who are most in need of support.

But I think we need to really support that fund. We can grow it with more governments. I believe there are a couple more that are going to be coming into the Fund. But that takes diplomatic engagement and it takes U.S. leadership to show that we will continue to be a leader in that Fund and in this struggle to support some of these truly brave human rights defenders who are on the frontlines in places like Uganda and elsewhere where it is really difficult to be standing up for fundamental freedoms and for pluralistic societies.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, and I want to thank all the witnesses. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Randy Weber of Texas.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Lagon, this is for you. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2015 Annual Report stated that, "By any measure, religious freedoms abroad has been under serious and sustained assault since 2015." Of course, we all have been talking about that. You know that.

The Freedom House's 2016 Freedom in the World report noted violence against religious minorities on each continent, paying spe-

cial recognition to assaults in India, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cuba, Angola, and Macedonia. This increase in violence against religious minorities prompted many to flee their homelands and seek refuge elsewhere, especially in Europe. And then, the report goes on to state that, "This mass influx fueled an already-rising tide of hatred and violence targeting Muslims and Jews, particularly in Western Europe."

With that as a backdrop, there have been reports of rising anti-Semitism in Europe, the BDS Movement, for example, especially in states that had a resurgence of the far right and far left parties gaining—I don't know if they are gaining control but obviously being active. Last year, Israel saw the largest immigration of Jews in decades. Some have attributed this growing anti-Semitism to general xenophobic responses to mass immigration from the Middle East. Do you believe that is a reasonable correlation?

Ambassador LAGON. I think there are people who are responding in Europe in xenophobic and nativist ways, and they are putting Muslims all into one category. I think that there is a really disturbing trend which one has seen over years that has spiked on anti-Semitism as well. It is not something I like doing to have to point out that there are disturbing trends among Western countries. But the kinds of statements that you see from the Czech President about those arriving from the Middle East who are Muslims being an organized invasion and the increase in the assault, even in Germany which has welcomed those who are refugees, and of neo-Nazis in an anti-Semitic way, we are seeing a trend of an increase in the worst kind of xenophobia, not just discrimination, but real violent persecution.

Mr. WEBER. As Ambassador-at-Large, 2007 to 2009—is that right?—you, obviously, have paid attention and, obviously, what you all do is paying attention. Do you know of any other anti-Semitic against the Jewish state, do you know of any other xenophobic, as you call it, response to a country or a state like that against the Jewish state of Israel?

Ambassador LAGON. Well, there is a distinctive persecution of Israel, and one sees it, in particular, in the U.N. For my sins, I worked for the State Department on U.N. affairs.

Mr. WEBER. For your "sins"?

Ambassador LAGON. Yes, for my sins. You know, working as a Deputy Assistant Secretary—

Mr. WEBER. You must have had some really bad sins. [Laughter.]

Ambassador LAGON. I see that at the U.N. where there is a distinct special focus on Israel and, in fact, even global conferences that are on xenophobia have focused distinctly on Israel.

Mr. WEBER. Okay, but why is that? You are quantitating it with the amount of focus. Why?

Ambassador LAGON. In my view, it is a stalking horse for a criticism of the West, a criticism of globalization, and a criticism of big democratic powers by picking on Israel.

But I think it is worth looking at a broader pattern of xenophobia. My parents are immigrants from Poland. I am deeply disturbed, as anyone should be, about the turn of events in Poland where the government is quite nationalist and it is treating those who are migrants as possibly suspect for terrorism. We should

worry about the coarsening of views in Europe and, indeed, in the United States. Anti-Semitism is one of the most disturbing forms of it, but not the only.

Mr. WEBER. But would you say that the rise of terrorism—it depends on how far back you want to go—but anti-Semitism has been around a long—I don't know of any other state, and this is your specialty, any other people who have been discriminated against on that level like the anti-Semitism that we have seen for years. Would you agree with that?

Ambassador LAGON. Well, anti-Semitism has, sadly, been a corrosive feeling for centuries. We should remember every time we invoke the phrase “never again” related to genocide that we are most likely speaking of an effort to stamp out the Jewish people in Europe.

Mr. WEBER. So, one last question.

Ambassador LAGON. And anti-Semitism continues in mild, intense, and in deeply-violent—

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Well, I am out of time. Forgive me.

But one last question very quickly, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

So, you are watching the Iran nuclear giveaway, I call it. And so, you are watching the statements of Ayatollah Khomeini that Israel is a one-bomb nation. Does that concern you?

Ambassador LAGON. Yes, of course it does. And I think that you should take dictators and theocrats seriously when they talk about trying to wipe a nation off the map.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Thank you.

Ambassador LAGON. If I may just comment, for a long time U.S. policy tried to satisfy the human rights issues on Iran to focus on the nuclear issue. Now that there is a nuclear deal, no matter what one might think of it, it is time to focus on those human rights issues and put the kind of pressure on Iran—

Mr. WEBER. So, let me paraphrase it, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

So, what you are saying is, if a dictatorial regime has zero respect for human rights, they can't be trusted and need to be dealt with in a harsh way?

Ambassador LAGON. I have no trust for a regime that treats its own political opponents or certain minority groups as less than human.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

I have one question just for the record that I won't ask for an oral response, but it builds on what the gentleman just said, and it is a tough one. And that is, is it appropriate in screening refugees from the Middle East and determining who to admit to exclude someone who has such extreme anti-Semitic views that their presence in the host country, they may not engage in violence themselves, but it creates a culture in which violent anti-Semitism is applauded, at least in one cultural segment of the country? So, I will ask for that as a written response.

Mrs. Schnetzer pointed out the slave labor problem in North Korea. I should point out that, while the case on work camps is now closed, there is only a matter of time before it is, I think, reopened. There is just too much money to be made there. And those



slave labor products may well enter the United States duty-free under our free trade agreements and particularly TPP. Those of us who fought for ironclad assurance that goods made north of the DMZ would not enter duty-free failed in both agreements. And it is only a matter of time, I think, before slave labor goods come into our country from Kasung.

I want to comment a little bit about the background here, and that is legitimacy. Governments need to answer the question, why is it legitimate for them to rule? For hundreds of years, monarchy served as an answer. Now monarchy is being swept into the dust bin of history. Democracy is the only system that can answer that question, and it can allow for peaceful succession and a role for opponents.

There are a few other systems that offer legitimacy. Communism, there is no vanguard of the proletariat left. Theocracy exists in Iran, and there are some dictatorships allied by theocratic elements. I fear that that is becoming increasingly true in Turkey.

But, ultimately, you end up with a lot of governments that are just illegitimate who cannot answer the question, why are you in power except you happen to have guns? And so, they try to find an enemy. First, they seek an external enemy with exaggerated nationalism, but they also can seek an internal enemy, and then, they can demonize that enemy and use that as a way to rally support.

Switching to another topic, I believe it was the chairman who pointed out how horrific events in Syria are. We should point out that those millions of displaced people and hundreds of thousands of deaths could not occur if Assad didn't have allies. There is a lot of focus on Russia because, even if a former nuclear power does something modest, you have to pay a lot of attention because they have hundreds of nuclear weapons behind them.

But most of Assad's support comes from Iran. Thugs are being flown into Damascus or being brought by Iran in from Lebanon. And we are now asked to provide the planes that will be used to take more thugs, more weapons, to Assad. As long as we put "Air Iran," rather than "Iran Air Force," on the outside of these planes, we are told that that cleanses our soul and our responsibility. And we are told that we should sell these with no U.N. monitor to make sure that the plane is not used to fly to carry weapons to Assad.

Finally, let me be the only person to say anything happy here. And that is, if you look at the long arc of history, it does bend toward justice. That is not a phrase that I invented. In the 18th century there was only one democracy. We had far more in the 19th century. We had far, far more in the 20th century. And I am confident that we will see in the 21st century the march of democracy and human rights around the world.

Let me try to bring in one question. Mr. Bromley, in 2011, the Obama administration issues its Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance Human Rights of LGBT Persons. How are they doing?

Mr. BROMLEY. Great. Thank you for that question.

The Presidential Memorandum I think has been a very important government-wide tool to look at the various funding streams and programs that we have internationally that could be leveraged to really offer additional support for LGBT communities in some

really hostile environments. And I think they have been doing a really good job.

I think there are a couple of important features of the Presidential Memorandum. It requires each of the foreign affairs agencies to report annually back to the White House on what they have been doing to really look at the problem and leverage some of their existing assets to address the problem of discrimination and violence against LGBT individuals. And that reporting-back process allows additional interagency coordination and sharing and some reflection that allows us to carry forward and really create some new synergies in our programming. So, I think that has been incredibly important.

I also think that it has allowed a focus on violence prevention. I think at the end of the day what we really need to do is use our foreign affairs assets to help countries tamp down on hate violence and the really extreme levels of violence against LGBT individuals. That will allow them, then, to organize and demand their rights as legitimate citizens in any country.

And so, I think, again, this coordination, particularly around violence prevention programs and human rights initiatives, has been incredibly important, and we certainly hope that it is an effort that will continue into future administrations.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, the case on industrial complexes, as you know, has been shut down. And secondarily, there is a conflict division, shall we say, between how we read the agreement? The agreement seems pretty ironclad in terms of disallowing South Korea to participate if they allow those goats to come through. I know the enforcement is an issue with you, but just for the record.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I did note in my comments that it is currently shut down, but I suspect that it will be opened in the next year or two.

And as to whether the language is adequate, one has to wonder why the proponents of the agreement were unwilling to put in the iron ironclad language that many of us were pushing and why they insisted upon the language that I think will allow the—

Chairman ROYCE. No, no. I think they put in what they thought was the iron ironclad, but maybe there is a new iron ironclad—

Mr. SHERMAN. They certainly didn't listen to those of us who were pushing for—

Chairman ROYCE. Suffice it to say that there is a disagreement on the interpretation there.

We are going to go to Mr. Ted Yoho of Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the panelists being here.

And when I ask these questions or my statement, I want you to think how we can better do our foreign aid and how we can get better results ultimately, is what we are looking for.

Freedom House, the 2016 Freedom in the World report, a decline in global freedom in each of the past 10 years; 60 percent of the world's population now living in countries designated as partly free or not free at all. Perhaps even more troubling has been the recent

backsliding of respect for human rights in longstanding democracies. Many regimes have responded to popular grievance and anti-democratic sentiment by closing space for political dissent and uncensored discourse. Other countries have seen discrimination against religious minorities, LGBT, you know, what we have talked about here.

In Malawi, albinos have become targets for organ harvesting, fueled by beliefs that their body parts can be used in witchcraft to bring wealth and cure disease. And Russian world human rights offenders, Putin's regime closed independent media outlets and jailed journalists. And we see that all over the world. And a perceived rise in anti-Semitism across Europe has led to record numbers of Jewish immigrants leaving, as Mr. Weber talked about, for Israel.

You know, it just goes on and on and on, and it gets to be a very bleak picture. Yet, the United States of America and other countries have invested billions and billions, if not trillions, of dollars over the last 30 years, 40 years. In Ethiopia, since World War II, we have given tens of billions of dollars. Yet, everything seems to be in decline.

And I think it was you, Ambassador Lagon, talking about the human rights and suppression along with corruption go hand-in-hand with declining freedoms. I just came back from a trip in South America. In every country we went to there was corruption in the government. We have been over to Africa, the Middle East. Corruption in all these governments, yet we do business with them. We know countries like Vietnam are involved in the slave trade, human trafficking, things like that, and we put stipulations on them that you must meet our standards and we will trade with you, or you must meet our standards and we will give you foreign aid. Yet, we know they are not doing it. Yet, we trade with them and we give them foreign aid.

Why should we continue that? Why should I go back to my district and talk to my constituents and say, "We have to keep giving foreign aid."? And I understand the purpose. We are trying to create democracy and good trading partners. But I think it is time that we played hard ball in this and pick out those countries that are willing to come to this side of the table, and let's support those. And if we can get a win here, you know, success breeds success.

But what we are doing over the last 30 years seems to be lunacy on the majority of it for me. What are your comments?

Ambassador LAGON. Why don't I briefly just talk about the tools that we have in the toolbox? Legislators, those in the executive branch, have an opportunity to talk with the American people about what we can do.

We should be able to use the sticks. One reason I am in favor of the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Act is to target those particular officials who are responsible for corruption or the human rights abuses themselves, put the squeeze on them, and put their leaders in the position of either cutting them loose and losing backers in their heinous regimes or hugging them and showing that their regimes are bad.

I used to be the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large to Combat Trafficking in Persons. When countries are on Tier 3, they should get the sanc-

tions that the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act provides for and not be given a waiver.

In terms of aid, which you properly ask about, Ethiopia is a fantastic example in which the United States has bankrolled a government, ostensibly to fight terrorism. In Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014, there was a combined \$1.2 billion in foreign assistance and not a dime on governance programs. And it has gotten all the way up to \$1.25 billion in governance programs out of over \$650 million in aid in Fiscal Year 2015. That is an imbalance.

Then, finally, I need to make an appeal. If you are worried about the budget problem for the United States and spending our resources in a prudent way, governance programs are a good small investment. That is actually a form of foreign assistance that makes much more sense than those that have no ties whatsoever.

Mr. YOHO. Where can you give me an example that has worked well? Because Ethiopia, I look at your Freedom Index from your organization; they are not free. After billions and billions and billions of dollars being put into that, why are we not getting a better result or bang for the buck.

Ambassador LAGON. Let me give you a couple of examples, one that involves Freedom House and one that is not—

Mr. YOHO. Hold on just a minute.

Madam Chairman?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Yes, you are a little bit over, but maybe we will do that in a concise answer.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you.

Ambassador LAGON. I will be quick.

In Burma, Freedom House is working on religious pluralism and tolerance, so that the gains in the direction of democracy, which are by no means consolidated, can, in fact, be worthwhile. That is a place for a little bit of sustained assistance.

In Nigeria, one of the few countries in which there has been continued aid in sub-Saharan Africa, the fact that all the democracy support organizations like NDI and others were there helped the elections go in the right direction, and we now have a tougher regime that confronts corruption and fights Boko Haram.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Thank you, Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ambassador Lagon, thank you. Thank you for being here, and all the other witnesses that we have here.

As a followup to my colleague Ted Yoho, is selective enforcement problematic in terms of other countries taking us seriously? We have seemed to turn a blind eye to some countries and, yet, we come down hard on others. Do you see that as a problem for all the countries to take us seriously and say, “Well, you know, they do this in Ethiopia.”?

Ambassador LAGON. Selectivity is a problem. In fact, when the United States itself engages in forms of surveillance or treatment of detainees that make it easier for dictators to say, “Well, you are doing the same things we are,” that is a problem.

But the selectivity of sanctions and of assistance programs is a problem. One reason Freedom House is so strongly in favor of the Global Magnitsky legislation is that there are some countries that you are not going to imagine there being comprehensive sanctions. The United States is not going to embrace comprehensive sanctions against China because of our business engagement. But it would be really important to have legislation where you could target those officials who are responsible for corruption and the worst human rights abuses, so that you signal that it will not be something the United States would accept. And that would really help with that problem of selectivity.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you.

Dr. Farr, I represent a large group of Catholic Christians in my district. One of the concerns that I always have when I speak to them, and they share with me, is their safety. I am just wondering, are they safer today than they were in Egypt?

Mr. FARR. I don't know how the answer to that could be yes. I think the answer is, no, they are not safer. One could make an argument that under General el-Sisi things have calmed down. So, if you compare it to a year or 2 years ago when Egypt seemed to be on the verge of internal collapse, they are safer for the moment. But, if you look at this over the long-term, I think the Coptic Christians and other minorities in Egypt remain in peril, which is why I support the idea of not only targeted funding of religious freedom activists in places like Egypt, but a more systemic approach to developing religious freedom not only as a way of protecting Copts, but of developing good governance in Egypt. So, I think religious freedom for the Copts as well as all of Egypt's citizens can protect the Copts. The answer to your question is, no, they are not. In my view, we are not doing enough to address this problem over the long-term.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you.

I am one of those people that believes that in South America we are going in reverse. You have Ecuador where they beat up, they file lawsuits against the press. Are we going backwards in some of these countries?

Ambassador LAGON. I think we are going backwards, and that is a disturbing thing when countries that have been in a free category or, you know, would be considered democracies are going backward. There is a trend of populism in Latin America, and in South America in particular, where the formula is leaders speaking in favor of the poor in their country, but, in fact, being grossly corrupt, intimidating opposition and media. So, the pattern you describe in Ecuador has also been seen in Venezuela in a most heinous form, but in Bolivia and elsewhere.

But there are glimmers of hope. The fact that people——

Mr. SIRES. Except in Cuba.

Ambassador LAGON. In Venezuela things went in the right direction.

Mr. SIRES. Yes, but, except in Cuba, there is no hope there.

Ambassador LAGON. Cuba, I am not saying that there is a regionwide trend that is in the right direction. It is, in fact, in the wrong direction. But in two places, glimmers of hope: Argentina moving away from the Kirchner's corruption and intimidation of

opposition and those people standing up to the Venezuelan Government and coming out for parliamentary elections late last year in favor of the opposition.

Mr. SIRES. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Sires.

Mr. Perry is recognized.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Ambassador, I want to focus a little bit of attention on the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and the fact that it seems to be enshrined in the U.N. Human Rights Council by their votes and actions.

I am wondering if you could advise us as well, Mrs. Schnetzer, on what you think the United States should do to leverage our position to curb that financially, if you think that that is something, or otherwise. Because what I see, it is almost unbelievable that we just stand for it and allow it to continue.

Ambassador LAGON. Look, I have very open eyes about the U.N.'s problems, which is the main place where people attack Israel and sometimes express anti-Semitism.

Mr. PERRY. Sometimes? Sometimes they don't.

Ambassador LAGON. It is regularly a place where Israel is focused on more than any other nation for criticism. However, it is my view, as someone who is involved in the negotiation of creating the U.N. Human Rights Council, that for all of its faults, it is better for the United States to be in the room and to create an atmosphere in which there is more balance rather than less balance.

Mr. PERRY. Okay, so we are in the room, but how are we stopping it?

Ambassador LAGON. The United States is the only nation that not only can assert its vote, but actually form coalitions and browbeat other nations into moving in the right direction. It is a worse situation for Israel at any U.N. body if the United States is not there.

Mr. PERRY. All right. If I could, Mrs. Schnetzer, any thoughts quickly?

Ms. SCHNETZER. Yes, sir. So, I think it is important to note that in the Middle East today there are two democratic countries, Tunisia and Israel. I think it is important to continue to find ways to stand by those countries that are our democratic allies and supporters—

Mr. PERRY. Agreed.

Ms. SCHNETZER [continuing]. And those that are moving in the right direction, but still have a long way to go.

I do think that it is important for the United States and for Government and for Congress to find those opportunities for leveraging influence. I am disturbed about the trends that we see in Europe today. I am disturbed about some of the rhetoric in our own country today, and to find the opportunities for leverage and influence is important.

Mr. PERRY. Let me just tell you from this policymaker's standpoint it doesn't seem like we have a plan or a vision to tangibly do that. It is a goal, but we are looking for some opportunity that shows up at some point, and then, we will take advantage of the

opportunity. That is hoping on chance and luck, and I would like to see us do a better job.

I have a limited amount of time, so I appreciate that.

Mr. Bromley, listening to your statements, I am wondering about your organization's position on Sharia and its treatment of the LGBT community in the countries where Sharia is strictly enforced, if there is such a community in those communities. I have heard of a lot of funding, advocacy for a lot of funding, but other than reports, not a whole lot of deliverables. And I am just wondering about your—we can get into that, but what is your organization's public position and statements on that issue of Sharia, not only the treatment of women, but the LGBT community, in particular?

Mr. BROMLEY. Certainly. Thank you for the question.

The most radical interpretation of Sharia does include the death penalty for LGBT individuals, and that, obviously, is a grave human rights—

Mr. PERRY. I know that. I want to know what your position is. What are your public—and I don't mean to be short, but I have got a limited amount of time. So, I am trying to get the information.

Mr. BROMLEY. I mean, we have condemned the death penalty that was adapted in Brunei as part of a Sharia reform in Brunei, and we have been quite critical of that and believe, actually, that that raises serious questions about whether Brunei should be in—

Mr. PERRY. So, you only condemn the death penalty portion of Sharia or you condemn the actions of Sharia as they—

Mr. BROMLEY. No, absolutely other actions of Sharia, including lesser penalties that are still corporal penalties or any penalty for consensual same-sex relationships is a violation of fundamental human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. PERRY. And what about those practitioners that would wish to enact and practice Sharia in America with the same prohibitions for women and for the LGBT community? What is your organization's public position?

Mr. BROMLEY. Well, with respect to the LGBT community, you know, any strict enforcement of Sharia would be a violation of the U.S. Constitution, and we obviously—

Mr. PERRY. And you have made those statements in that regard?

Mr. BROMLEY. I would be happy to. I am making them now.

Mr. PERRY. Okay. That is important.

Mr. BROMLEY. Absolutely.

Mr. PERRY. It is important to make sure people are aware, if you are going to have this message, to have it out there, not just have it reactively when asked, but have it proactively as an advocate for human rights for every single person on every single continent, including this one.

Mr. BROMLEY. No, absolutely. There are mixed systems that don't interpret Sharia that way. But a strict interpretation of Sharia would be a violation of the Constitution of the U.S. and certainly a violation of U.N. human rights.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield.

Chairman ROYCE [presiding]. Thank you.

We will go to Mr. David Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you again and Ranking Member Engel for holding this hearing.

I also want to thank Representative Lowenthal who I know rearranged his schedule at another subcommittee hearing to be here today, and I appreciate that very much.

Thank you to our panelists. This testimony has been really helpful and I think illustrates how serious human rights issues are around the world. And we could probably have you here all day and continue this discussion, but I will try to get to my questions.

First, the State Department report on human rights cited a pattern of abuse against LGBT people around the world from police or other security forces in countries around the world. And this is a really serious issue.

As an example, the report states that 82 percent of people surveyed in Bolivia claim that they or someone they knew had been detained arbitrarily by police because of their sexual identity. So, Mr. Bromley, would you speak to this issue, and Mr. Ambassador, about what we can do and what we are doing successfully to help sensitize police on protection rather than persecution of LGBT individuals around the world, and how we can do that more effectively?

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline. I think this is an absolutely important question. I do think police violence is really the key to a lot of other forms of persecution and subjugation of LGBT individuals in many countries.

I think the key is really trying to find opportunities to work with police forces to ensure that they see tolerance and respect for LGBT individuals, and, indeed, all minorities, including religious or ethnic minorities, as a point of professionalism. To do that, we have seen U.S. Embassies reaching out and supporting international visitor programs, for example, for senior police officers. There have been a number of senior police officers who have come to the United States from Jamaica, where there are high levels of violence against the LGBT community. And that opportunity to come here and to talk to other police officers in the United States, and understand that professionals don't do this and that it is simply not acceptable, I think those really are making a difference, those visitor programs.

And there are ILEAs, International Law Enforcement Academies, that are rolling out hate crime trainings through all of the ILEAs this year. Again, I think that makes the point that this sort of violence is not professional, it is not acceptable, and it is not going to result in promotion to higher levels of your profession.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

Mr. Lagon?

Ambassador LAGON. So, in law enforcement you see problems, a sense of omission and a sense of commission. If law enforcement do not hold to account those who would commit violent acts of hate against the LGBT community, then justice isn't real. If they are actually complicit in committing violence against the LGBT community or harassing them, that is a horrendous problem.

You asked about how we can improve the situation. One, I think that the envoy that exists at the State Department for LGBT issues should be codified. I commend you for trying to make that



position a permanent one, one that doesn't have to depend on a particular President or a particular Secretary of State.

And then, secondly, we have talked about the Global Equality Fund. Freedom House is the coordinator of a consortium called Dignity for All that gives emergency assistance to LGBT persons and activists who are under duress. That is exactly the kind of investment that makes sense to help those who are most vulnerable.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

I have two final questions. A number of ASEAN countries criminalize homosexuality, including Brunei, Singapore, Myanmar, and Malaysia. Other than Thailand, there is no country in the ASEAN group that has anti-discrimination laws that guarantee equality of all citizens regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

What strategies could the U.S. Government employ in our engagement with ASEAN and these countries, in particular, to encourage these governments to address these human rights challenges?

The second question is, what countries are LGBT persons most under threat and where should we be kind of paying attention in the next year or two that might not be on our radar?

So, I will ask you, Mr. Ambassador and Mr. Bromley.

Ambassador LAGON. Yes, I will go first this time.

I think when you look at the ASEAN countries, we should think of the voice of the United States as twofold, from the U.S. Government but, very importantly, from the business community, since the United States has such reach.

So, having an envoy that is dedicated for these issues and making sure that, when there is a dialog at the Secretary of State level or the Cabinet level, that these issues be brought up, including by those who are conducting the trade relationship. That makes sense.

The business community knows that they will not have as dynamic an investment atmosphere or a labor force if it doesn't include everybody who has talent, including the LGBT community. So, U.S.-headquartered multinational corporations have been and should all the more speak up with ASEAN nations: You need to have greater assets in your economy and not to sideline LGBT people.

Mr. BROMLEY. For ASEAN, I would definitely echo that. I think in that region our business relationships are stronger than some of our political and diplomatic relationships. And certainly, I know in the negotiations of the Trans-Pacific Partnership these issues have been raised. I think however that goes forward, whether it is renegotiated or goes forward as is, we need to continue to leverage that trading relationship, that economic relationship to move forward.

It is absolutely unacceptable that Singapore recently told multinational corporations that they should not be supporting their LGBT employees or Pride events in Singapore. As the hub of multinational business in Asia, that is just not acceptable, and we need to make that clear both diplomatically but economically as well.

In terms of your other question on countries to look toward in the coming years, I do think Turkey is really important. It is the one country in the Middle East where we have seen a vibrant LGBT civil society community. It is the country where we have

thousands, tens of thousands of LGBT refugees from the entire region.

Unfortunately, the trends have been in the wrong direction. The past 2 years the Pride parades have been prohibited. Parliamentarians from Europe who tried to attend have been arrested. I think the trends are really concerning, but I think it is the country where we really need to figure out how to turn that around and to encourage a pluralistic view in a Middle Eastern country that has such a large geopolitical significance.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you very much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

We go to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you for holding this hearing on such an important topic.

I believe that the cause of human rights must be a larger priority in our foreign policy agenda. The administration's requests for human rights and democracy and governance funding are lower every year, and Congress has had to fill in the gap by providing more for these programs on its own.

On top of that, the sanctions laws, which are designed to hold human rights violators accountable, are not being enforced the way that they should be. For example, the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act authorized the State Department to deny visas, freeze the assets of Venezuelan officials responsible for human rights abuses. Yet, the State Department has only pulled approximately 60 visas and the last and only time that anyone was sanctioned was in March 2015, when seven individuals, only seven, were designated. We can do better. We must do better.

In my native homeland of Cuba, human rights have not been improved one bit as freedom of expression remains severely restricted. People are still being harassed. They are being beaten, imprisoned for speaking out against the regime.

But, rather than using the tools at our disposal in these countries and everywhere to hold regimes accountable, restrictions are instead being lifted, putting more money into these authoritarian regimes and, then, used to repress the people of Cuba, for example.

We see it also in places like Iran where, despite abundant evidence of human rights violations and multiple laws that allow the State Department to sanction responsible officials, the laws are simply not being enforced.

In places like Egypt, where we have an important ally, our inability to program funds for human rights and other development challenges has created a backlog of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Promoting and defending human rights worldwide is one of our core values. That is what we stand for as a country. It is crucial to both our economic and national security. They are all intertwined.

So, while it is proper and correct that we continue to appropriate funds and pass sanctions laws with these goals in mind, if they are not going to be used, if they are not going to be enforced, we are only damaging our own interests while abandoning all of those who are still suffering.

So, I ask three questions in general and anyone can answer. How effective can we be at promoting and defending human rights if we aren't programming the funds set aside for this purpose or even enforcing the laws designed to hold human rights violators accountable? Secondly, how can we ensure that people living under repressive regimes who need our assistance, they need it the most, are getting the help that they need? And lastly, how can we hold the administration, any administration from any party, responsible when it refuses to enforce the sanctions laws that Congress passes? Ambassador?

Ambassador LAGON. Let me address the group of your questions this way: On programming, I think it is very important that Congress took the step in the appropriations bill of fencing off funding for democracy and governance. Because anytime that there is a Presidential initiative, and it may be worthy, Power Africa or whatever, the funding that Congress would like to see spent on our values and the basic interests, as I argue in my testimony, found in democratic governance, those funds get raided. So, it is a great thing that Congress took that step.

To address your first and your last questions, sanctions, it is not a panacea, but I am a strong advocate of the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Act because, especially if it is in its strongest versions of the legislation, Congress has an opportunity to nominate those who ought to be subject to those sanctions as officials responsible for corruption and repression. If Congress is concerned about the executive branch using sanctions, the strongest version of the Global Magnitsky bill gives Congress that voice.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I am sorry I have to have a phone call. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ileana. I appreciate it.

Alan Lowenthal from California.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I want to compliment you and commend you for holding this hearing on the 1-month anniversary of tragic events in Orlando.

And it is so important that, as we talk about the siege on human rights throughout the world, that we have spent a great deal of time and energy on the human rights of the LGBT community. I want to thank you, Mr. Chair, for holding this.

I want to move on to Mr. Bromley and follow up on what the Ambassador said about the creation of the special envoy position. I worked on that with Senator Markey when we first introduced last session the International Human Rights Defense Act. And now, we have a bill with many Members of Congress as cosponsors to codify that and make it permanent.

I want to state on the record I think Mr. Berry has done an excellent job. He has traveled throughout the world crisscrossing, speaking to everybody. I think he has been bold in his message that LGBT rights are human rights. It is a difficult task and he has done an amazing job. I really wish to commend him and his professionalism.

I would really like to know what you believe is the significance of this special envoy position and what it has meant to the inter-

national LGBT community. And how important is it that we make this a permanent position at the State Department?

Mr. BROMLEY. Thank you, Mr. Lowenthal, and thank you for your leadership in supporting that position.

We absolutely agree with you that the position should be codified. It is an important position. And we also agree that Randy Berry, the special envoy, has done a remarkable job in that position. In just 1 year, he has been to 30 countries. I think his focus has been really thoughtful. He has been to some of the difficult countries, but he has been to many of the countries that we consider to be in the movable middle, countries where some one-on-one diplomatic engagement in the right way with the right tone, often behind the scenes, really can make a difference; where we can talk to countries like Vietnam that actually are starting to go in the right direction, not on other human rights issues, but at least on this one. And I think those conversations have been incredibly important.

Initially, we were not supportive of creating a position at the very beginning of this administration when the Human Rights Bureau was really starting to look at how to integrate LGBT issues in a more holistic way into our human rights policies. And we thought that, if you created a position right away, it would likely be, you know, it could impact that integration of the issue across the Department.

But the Human Rights Bureau has really led a thoughtful integration effort, and it came to the point, with your support and others, where we really needed a focal point to ensure that the integration that is happening in the regional bureaus, in the functional bureaus, that there is some coordination and that there is a person out there traveling the world, representing our values on these issues. So, we think it is incredibly important. Randy Berry has done a fantastic job, and we absolutely would like to see this codified.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I would like to return and change the subject a little bit to Vietnam and Cambodia. You just mentioned Vietnam and some of the advances. I think it was the Ambassador who said that human rights should be an integral part of our foreign policy.

You know, recently, President Obama visited Vietnam. The administration lifted the lethal weapons sale ban to Vietnam. I thought this was supposed to be tied to improvement on human rights. Have you seen any evidence, have any of you seen any evidence that lifting the lethal weapons sales ban was justified by human rights improvement? Was this a decision that was based upon what we have seen? Because I have not seen any dramatic human rights improvement.

Ambassador LAGON. If I were President Obama, I would be pretty angry because, when he visited Vietnam, that government went to great lengths to embarrass him by putting pressure on human rights defenders precisely when he went there.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. That is exactly right.

Ambassador LAGON. I happen to be in favor of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. I think openness helps. I happen to be encouraged that Vietnam and Burma want better relations with the United States because of trying to counteract China in the region. But we

should not let nations like Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia off the hook on human rights and human trafficking because of some alleged strategic interests. We aren't doing anybody a favor thinking counterbalancing China or free trade is a reason to lose the leverage to talk about human rights.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, just in conclusion, you know, this discussion that we are talking about, about human rights, comes at the same time that Dr. Kem Ley, a prominent political advocate and anti-corruption activist, was shot and killed in Phnom Penh in Cambodia. At the same time, there is this repressive crackdown by the Government of Cambodia against all political opponents.

My question is, are we doing enough to promote a democracy and the rule of law in Cambodia? I know we are going to be looking at a markup this week. But I would just like to end by saying, in the midst of all of this, we are seeing, I agree, some changes. We have had a wonderful hearing today. But I am also seeing some of the most repressive activities going on throughout the world.

With that, I will yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Alan.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. And thank you for your leadership on the Cambodia resolution.

Chairman ROYCE. I appreciate it very much, Mr. Lowenthal.

We will now go to Dan Donovan from New York.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I apologize for my tardiness. I was chairing a homeland security hearing at the same time this began. So, a lot of the things that you spoke about I missed. So, I would rather ask a general question to all of you, rather than repeating a lot of the things you probably already spoke of.

You know, our country is based on freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech. Not every country is. We respect human rights, maybe not so well at times, but the lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual community, for women's rights. We don't exploit children for the most part, I believe. That is our belief, whether it be sexually or in the workplace. But other countries do and other countries don't have the same beliefs that we do.

Are we able to change the mindset, the culture of other countries? Do carrots work, like trade agreements, as you said, Mr. Ambassador? Or do sanctions work, as we spoke about, some of my colleagues spoke about earlier, sanctioning countries that exploit people and don't recognize human rights?

I was just curious about your general opinion about whether or not we, as a nation, can change the way of life in other nations to more conform to our beliefs and our way of life.

Ambassador LAGON. Let me be brief. It is such a big and important question.

Mr. DONOVAN. That is why I asked the question.

Ambassador LAGON. But I think we should just be careful, when we talk about cultures, that we don't kind of become resigned that things can't change.

You know, these things are universal. To quote former President Bush, it is a form of bigotry of having low expectations for certain cultures, that they can't support human rights or they won't sup-

port human rights or that they are not ready for democracy. We should try to encourage before we turn to sanctions, I think to show that countries will benefit themselves from more open economies, and being inclusive, including all the assets in those societies, is the way to start.

But, ultimately, if they are flagrant human rights abusers, we should be willing to use sanctions. And we should be careful that countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, that we treat as allies in a global struggle against terrorism, are not so flagrantly engaging in repression, including in Saudi Arabia against a certain brand of Muslims, Shia, that, in fact, it is not serving our interests.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Donovan, if I could just quickly respond to that as well?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes, please.

Mr. FARR. I agree with Mark that sanctions are an important part of the toolkit, but they can't be the only one. In the region of religious freedom, the sanctions have been pretty much the only arrow in the quiver for these 20 years almost since the International Religious Freedom Act was passed. I think it is an important arrow and it is being strengthened.

But, in order to change countries at a cultural level, you have to, in my view, go to their self-interest. I think there are arguments—we have discussed some of them here today—on the issue of religious freedom. If you want stable democracy and you are a highly religious society, it simply won't work without religious freedom. If you want economic growth and development in your country and you are a highly-religious society, you can't do it without religious freedom.

Our Founders understood this. William Penn said, "Come to Pennsylvania. We have religious freedom. It is good for business."

So, this isn't rocket science, but we don't do a very good job at making these arguments to countries that they can accept that leapfrogs some of these cultural boundaries. There are self-interest arguments that we have to make.

Ms. SCHNETZER. Thank you, sir, for that important question.

I work at the Bush Institute. We start with one basic principle, that freedom is a universal human right. So that, regardless of where you are born on the earth, what language you speak, what religion you practice or don't practice, there is something innate in the human being that wants to be free and wants to exercise that freedom.

And so, there are sort of two sides, I think, to the answer of your question. One is, with governments that repress their own people, what are the tools of influence and leverage that we can use to encourage them to move in the right direction?

The other side of that is, what support can we give to the individuals who are on the frontlines of advocating for freedom and human rights in their countries? And so, funding and other kinds of support to them is critical. Whether it is in Burma or Cuba or in the Middle East, those human frustrations I think are the same. And it is important to remember them, but also use those tools of influence that we have as well.

Mr. DONOVAN. So, you would suggest, besides external influences like the United States Government, supporting the internal influ-

ences on trying to change the suppression of human rights is equally as important?

Ms. SCHNETZER. Yes, sir, I do. I think it is important to provide support and encouragement and the spotlight, and all the things that we can do for those who want that support.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bromley, 2 seconds because the chairman is ready to shut down.

Mr. BROMLEY. Absolutely. And in the LGBT context, changing hearts and minds is a long-term objective, but it is one that we are making progress on. U.S. "carrots" diplomatically are working. And when the President travels and speaks about LGBT issues, it really does make a difference. When he traveled to Kenya last year and spoke at State House about LGBT issues as a fundamental human right, that really did change the discourse in Kenya. And there were some really nasty bills that were moving through the Parliament in Kenya that have disappeared.

It does make a difference. The U.S. is a thought leader, and when we speak, people do pay attention.

Mr. DONOVAN. That is good to know.

Thank you all for your answers.

Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Donovan.

We go to Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Farr, I wanted to follow up on Mr. Sires' earlier question about Egypt and the state of affairs there for Coptic Christians, in particular, but religious minorities overall. I wondered if you could just expand on your statement a little bit.

I had a chance to visit there probably a little less than a year ago, met with some Coptic Christian leaders and families who felt that the situation has improved dramatically. But I just wonder if you could qualify your comments and expand on that a little.

Mr. FARR. Sure. I was in Egypt under the regime of Mubarak and met with a number of Egyptian Coptics and others, including Muslims at the Al Azhar University. At the time the Coptic Christians were saying pretty much the same thing. "We're doing okay. We have to keep our heads down. We have periodic problems. But please don't come in and make trouble for us."

That was followed, of course, by the so-called Arab Spring, where things were completely turned upside down for Coptic Christians and other minorities. Now they do seem to have stabilized.

My only point is that I think it is a mistake to be too short-sighted or at least look at a short horizon. We don't know what is going to happen in Egypt. I don't think we should be turning it upside down ourselves, but I do believe we should be planning for the future and planting more seeds than we are for the idea that, whatever happens in Egypt, you have to have religious freedom for all these citizens. You have to allow everyone to participate in this country.

Egypt fancies itself an emerging democracy, I believe, not a dictatorship. So, I think we could be doing more to play into that over the long-term.

I hope that answers your question.

Ms. GABBARD. Yes. Thank you.

And forgive me if you have already covered Bangladesh. I was not here earlier. But I wanted to bring up the recent hackings, attacks, and other horrific violence that has occurred, in particular, amongst the Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, atheist, LGBT, secularist communities. You know, these attacks have been highlighted more in the news recently, but, in fact, in 2013, Hindu temples, 700 to 1500 homes were vandalized or burned, 47 temples destroyed. We are seeing similar trends in the years since and, of course, most recently, different seculars, bloggers, and others have been attacked in the street. Clearly, the Government of Bangladesh is not in control of the situation there. It continues to get worse.

For whomever would like to comment, what can be done to get the Government of Bangladesh to take the necessary action to quell these attacks that are creating such a terror-like atmosphere for the citizens there?

Ambassador LAGON. If I may, I think there is a problem throughout South Asia, not only in Bangladesh, of religious groups or people because of their gender identity being targeted.

Freedom House, in assessing human rights in countries around the world, not only looks at how governments act and how they treat or persecute groups, but how freedom is felt in societies. In places like Bangladesh, you are in danger, under threat, or vulnerable.

We must not only insist that governments not repress the voice of opposition or minorities, but, in fact, that they implement justice. Laws on paper or treaties that have been ratified are meaningless if governments do not make sure that people are not subject to violence or that people have true access to justice.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

Mr. FARR. If I might just add to that?

Ms. GABBARD. Please.

Mr. FARR. When people abuse others for religious reasons, that is religious persecution. So, it is very important to understand why this is happening. Often, it is because of an extremist interpretation of Islam.

Sometimes it is governments are complicit; sometimes they are not. And so, sorting this out is very important in constructing a response.

I would mention again that H.R. 1150, which this committee has passed out and the House has passed, creates something called an entity of particular concern, which is added to the countries of particular concern list, which would identify entities within country, terrorist groups or otherwise, who are responsible for this kind of abuse.

It also calls upon the State Department to construct a list of foreign individuals who engage in gross violations. So, this is refining the stick, if you will.

But, at the end of the day when people are abusing others for religious reasons, one of the answers has to be to free, if you like—I don't particularly like this word—but the moderates within that tradition, wherever it is. They cannot speak out in most of these countries because of the laws and practices.



So, promoting religious freedom is focusing on that problem as well, and we don't do a very good job of it. We need to do better.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you very much, Tulsi.

Thank you to our witnesses here, to Ambassador Lagon and Amanda Schnetzer and Dr. Farr and Mark Bromley. We very much appreciate the work, also, that you have done, Ambassador, that your organization has documented that this is the 10th year of decline of global freedom.

This committee has moved legislation to try to address some of these issues. The Global Magnitsky Act was one that we recently passed out of committee. We also, on the subject of human rights in North Korea, passed the legislation here that we feel helped create that environment in which the administration, complying with that law, spoke out on North Korean human rights and worked with the United Nations in order to try to take action there.

But there is so much work to be done here. And so, we want to continue to encourage each of you. You have given us a lot to consider. And I also appreciate the insights that came from many of our members here testifying and in their cross-examination with you witnesses here today. So, thank you very much.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]



# APPENDIX

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman**

July 12, 2016

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Tuesday, July 12, 2016

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide

**WITNESSES:** The Honorable Mark Lagon  
President  
Freedom House

Thomas Farr, Ph.D.  
President  
Religious Freedom Institute

Ms. Amanda Schnetzer  
Director  
Human Freedom Initiative  
The George W. Bush Institute

Mr. Mark Bromley  
Chair  
The Council for Global Equality

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 7/12/2016 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:06 Ending Time 11:58

Recesses 0 ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Edward R. Royce, Rep. Heana Ros-Lehtinen*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Executive (closed) Session

Televised

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Stenographic Record

TITLE OF HEARING:

*Human Rights Under Seige Worldwide*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*See attached.*

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*none*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No

*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

*IFR - Chairman Edward Royce*

*IFR - Rep. Eliot Engel*

*SFR - Rep. David Cicilline*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 11:58

  
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
*FULL COMMITTEE HEARING*

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
	Steve Chabot, OH
	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
	Ted Poe, TX
	Matt Salmon, AZ
	Darrell Issa, CA
	Tom Marino, PA
	Jeff Duncan, SC
	Mo Brooks, AL
	Paul Cook, CA
X	Randy Weber, TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
	Curt Clawson, FL
	Scott DesJarlais, TN
X	Reid Ribble, WI
	Dave Trott, MI
X	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	Dan Donovan, NY

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
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X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
	Karen Bass, CA
	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
	Alan Grayson, FL
	Ami Bera, CA
X	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
X	Brendan Boyle, PA



Today, ADL carries out its mission through a network of 27 Regional and Satellite Offices in the United States and abroad.

#### **Anti-Semitic Harassment and Violence**

Anti-Semitism is a form of hatred, mistrust, and contempt for Jews based on a variety of stereotypes and myths, and often invokes the belief that Jews have extraordinary influence with which they conspire to harm or control society. It can target Jews as individuals, as a group or as a people, or it can target the State of Israel as a Jewish entity. Criticism of Israel or Zionism is anti-Semitic when it uses anti-Jewish stereotypes or invokes anti-Semitic symbols and images, denies the Jewish right to self-determination, or holds Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.

Today, overt anti-Jewish discrimination is not state-sponsored as it once was in many countries and it does not bar Jews from full participation in their society. Instead, in many regions, a Jew's right to live in security and to express his/her identity with dignity is threatened by an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment and violence against Jews and Jewish sites like schools, synagogues, shops and cemeteries. It is this everyday fear that prevents Jews in many places from being able to express who they are, to freely wear yarmulkes, Stars of David, or even T-shirts bearing Hebrew lettering or slogans.

Several factors affect the confidence level of Jews to live openly and freely as Jews, and those factors differ in emphasis in different communities. The Jewish communities in France and Hungary are both under significant threat, for instance, but the threats themselves differ significantly. These differ from, for example, South Africa or Argentina.

Key indicators of rising anti-Semitism are: (1) the degree of anti-Semitic attitudes held by the general population; (2) the number and nature of anti-Semitic incidents; (3) anti-Semitism in politics and media; and (4) the reaction of governments and civil society to these incidents.

In 2014, ADL released a groundbreaking survey to establish for the first time comprehensive, data-based research of the level and intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment around the world. [The ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism](#) surveyed 53,100 adults in 102 countries and territories and found that more than one-in-four adults, 26 percent of those surveyed, hold anti-Semitic attitudes. A [follow-up to this survey was done in 2015](#) and found that although anti-Semitic attitudes dropped slightly in European countries such as France, Belgium, and Germany, concern about violence directed against Jews in those countries increased dramatically.

Even in the U.S., despite efforts to educate, raise awareness, and advocate, anti-Jewish attitudes and incidents remain a disturbing part of the American Jewish experience. The latest [ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents](#) found that in 2015, there were 941 anti-Semitic incidents, a three percent increase over the 912 incidents reported in 2014. The *Audit* included 56 cases of anti-Semitic assaults, a dramatic increase from the 36 reported in 2014; 508 anti-Semitic incidents of harassment, threats



and events, a slight decrease from the 513 in 2014; and 377 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism, an increase from 363 in 2014.

Fringe anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists rarely miss an opportunity to exploit tragedies to promote their hatred of Jews, as they did blaming Jews for events ranging from coordinated terror attacks across Paris in November 2015 to the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in December 2012 to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Some social media users responded by posting vehemently anti-Semitic messages on Twitter, making accusations similar to those of David Duke or Veterans Today, either blaming Jews themselves for perpetrating the attacks or Jewish control of a number of sectors in the U.S. for inspiring the attacks. And during this presidential election campaign season, white supremacists and anti-Semites have been bombarding Jewish journalists with anti-Semitic tweets.

#### **Anti-Semitism Doesn't Exist, or Grow, in a Vacuum**

Anti-Semitism flourishes in the context of, and often in conjunction with, persecution of other groups on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or ethnicity.

For example, in some countries, the rise of far-right groups, who may use the refugee crisis or economic distress to foment fear, scapegoating and bigotry, contributed to a wave of xenophobic violence. Openly anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, racist, and homophobic far-right political parties have gained strength in local and national elections, particularly in Greece, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, and France. Disturbingly, their involvement in racist violence has not stopped their ascendance. Perhaps most stunning is the case of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party in Greece, which polled third in national elections in September 2015 even though its entire leadership is on trial for its role in dozens of violent attacks—including murders—targeting migrants and others.<sup>1</sup>

Broad-based concerns of human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to grow, including against vulnerable communities, including LGBT and religious minorities, namely the Baha'i population. We urge Congress to send a strong signal to the Iranian regime that the United States stands with the Iranian people in support of their dignity and freedom by passing House Resolution 220 condemning the Iranian regime's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights. There are also state-sponsored expressions of anti-Semitism, including this month we saw in the Al Quds (Jerusalem) Day demonstrations as well as in a [recent contest for Holocaust denial cartoons](#).

Violent expressions of anti-Semitism, including encouragement of attacks against Jews and Jewish or Israeli institutions, have been at the core of propaganda distributed by Al Qaeda, ISIS, and other Islamic extremist terrorist groups for decades. Last year, the ADL released a report, "[Anti-](#)

<sup>1</sup> *Scorecard on Hate Crime Response in the OSCE Region*, Anti-Defamation League and Human Rights First (2015). available at <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/press-center/ADL-HRF-HateCrimes-Scorecard.pdf>

Semitism: A Pillar of Islamic Extremist Ideology,” which describes the way in which terrorist organizations rely on depictions of a Jewish enemy to recruit followers, motivate adherents and draw attention to their cause.

These groups also traffic in bigotry and hatred of other groups. We have seen the members of the Islamic State terrorist group (ISIS) carry out targeted mass killing of Yazidis, Christians, and other minorities, which the State Department and the House in House Concurrent Resolution 75 have recognized as genocide. We have also seen the members of ISIS literally throw individuals from rooftops, simply for being suspected of the “crime” of being gay. Hamas executes individuals without trial for the same “offense.” The Islamic Republic of Iran also has been known to hang young men suspected of homosexuality. A recent case in point is when Al Malahem media, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)’s propaganda wing, released a pamphlet on June 23 that praised the Orlando shooting and provided suggestions for copying it and making additional attacks both more lethal and better suited to AQAP’s propaganda aims.

#### **Recommendations for Action**

Governments bear the primary responsibility to ensure that Jews are afforded the same rights as others to live in security and with dignity in their communities. Whether it is espoused by hate groups on the margins or political parties garnering support in elections, governments and civic leaders can mobilize political will to reject anti-Semitism and its messengers and to use human rights and anti-discrimination instruments related to anti-Semitism and intolerance.

Below are recommendations for Congress to institutionalize a systemic, comprehensive strategy against anti-Semitism and other forms of violent bigotry.

#### **What the United States Can Do:**

1. **Start by using our government’s own bully pulpit to speak out.** Political leaders have the most immediate and significant opportunity to set the tone of a national response to an anti-Semitic incident, an anti-Semitic party or an anti-Semitic parliamentarian. Nothing gives a greater sense of security than seeing anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry publicly rejected. This signals that the government takes seriously the impact of this climate on the community.
2. **Prioritize combating anti-Semitism and hate crimes on bilateral and multilateral organization agendas.** The U.S. should let our allies know that addressing anti-Semitism and hate crime is a core part of our bilateral agenda and within multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. Congress has a central role to play in promoting this emphasis both within the State Department and in your own bilateral contacts and outreach to foreign officials.

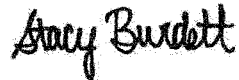
3. **Monitor and Spotlight the Problem: Sunlight is the best disinfectant.** U.S. reporting on anti-Semitism as a human rights and religious freedom issue is an indispensable tool in spotlighting the problem and a tool for U.S. diplomacy. Congress has been a vital driver of expanding and improving U.S. reporting on anti-Semitism and other human rights violations.
4. **Continue to support a strong Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism and Support Robust Work of the Special Envoy's Office.** This will ensure that the U.S. maintains a specialized focus on anti-Semitism and a dedicated effort to mobilize the arsenal of U.S. diplomatic tools to respond. As this testimony has set out, it sometimes must be addressed in unique ways and it requires the attention of someone experienced to have a particular focus on crafting a strategy to address it.
5. **Equip U.S. Diplomats with Training to Sustain Improvement in U.S. Reporting and Response.** Anti-Semitism is a continuously mutating phenomenon that is not always easy to discern. The Special Envoy expanded training on anti-Semitism in the State Department's Foreign Service Institute to give diplomats the understanding and tools to recognize anti-Semitism and the contemporary forms it takes. The Foreign Service Institute course on "Promoting Human Rights and Democracy" should consistently include such training.
6. **Congress and the Administration should have visible contact with Jewish and other communities that feel under siege.** While many U.S. embassies have deep and longstanding relationships with Jewish and other community activists, there are many communities which have never had contact with their local U.S. mission. Members of Congress should reach out to those communities during country visits to affirm and encourage U.S. outreach.
7. **Combating anti-Semitism and hate crimes should be part of the full array of human rights and democracy programming, funding, and public diplomacy efforts.** For example, the State Department's International Visitor Programs and other U.S.-funded exchange and public diplomacy programs should reflect the growing U.S. and international recognition of anti-Semitism and of the problem of hate crime broadly. U.S. assistance programs should fund prevention as well as response efforts. The U.S. should also provide targeted international support for countries promoting good governance and human rights.
8. **U.S. training and assistance programs should include a focus on improving the policing and prosecution of anti-Semitism and hate crimes.** Much more can be done to leverage existing international training programs, particularly those geared toward law enforcement such as the Department of Justice OPDAT and ICITAP programs or training

delivered through U.S. International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA), that reach governmental and law enforcement audiences around the world.

9. **Lead by Example: Strengthen the fight against anti-Semitism and intolerance at home.** Congress has been instrumental in advancing the fight against global anti-Semitism on the international stage. Legislators also have the ability to strengthen America's efforts to address and prevent anti-Semitism and hate crime here at home. The federal government has an essential role to play in helping law enforcement, communities, and schools implement effective hate crimes prevention programs and activities. We know of no federal anti-bias or hate crimes education and prevention programming that is currently addressing youth hate violence. Members of Congress should authorize federal anti-bias and hate crimes education programs to help schools and communities address violent bigotry.
10. **Civility: What you say matters.** Members of Congress can lead by example by rejecting the kind of divisive appeals that demonize parts of our community whether based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or religion. Political leaders have opportunities every day to reach across political divides to demonstrate that bigotry is simply beyond the pale. Never lose sight of the power that words have to shape, not just our political debate, but the environment in which targeted communities live.
11. **Don't Let Fear Govern U.S. Policy: Uphold America's commitment to victims of persecution and welcome refugees.** Proposed measures to rollback America's refugee resettlement program that are created out of fear and anxiety of a future attack are impractical and undermine the U.S. as a global human rights leader. The U.S. can continue to welcome refugees while also ensuring national security. We must do both.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our views on this issue of great concern. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information or if we can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely,



Stacy Burdett  
Vice President, Government Relations & Advocacy  
Anti-Defamation League



Statement submitted to the record by  
Rep. Eliot Engel on the behalf of:  
David Stacy, Government Affairs Director  
Human Rights Campaign  
July 12, 2016  
House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Hearing: Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide

Thank you, Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for holding this important hearing on "Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide." On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's more than one and a half million members and supporters nationwide, the nation's largest organization working to achieve equal rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community, HRC strongly supports the committee's efforts to engage this issue and to provide a space for examining the human rights of LGBTQ people around the world.

The attention this committee gives to human rights is always important and useful, and I am particularly gratified that the committee has included a witness who is testifying specifically on issues related to the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. This is the first time that has happened in a full Congressional committee and I urge you to make sure it won't be the last.

It is important that this committee focus on LGBTQ human rights for a number of reasons, not least of which is that it is in our national interest.

For a number of years, the treatment of LGBTQ people in places around the globe has been a leading indicator of a country's dedication to human rights and good governance. Countries that respect LGBTQ rights have also by and large demonstrated strong support for civil society as a whole.

In far too many countries where we have seen unfortunate rollbacks in freedoms of expression, we have often seen a simultaneous crackdown on the LGBTQ community. From Nigeria, which passed the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act in 2014, to Russia, which has led the globe in clamping down on so-called "homosexual propaganda," we have seen civil society space narrowing at the same time that LGBTQ people have seen their own human rights threatened. In Turkey, a country that once seemed to be on the cusp of joining the community of European democracies, now seems headed in the opposite direction, with arrests of journalists, and now repeated crackdowns on what was once the largest LGBTQ pride parade in the Muslim world.

These setbacks have real consequences for the U.S. and our national interests. A world that is more free and tolerant is one that will lead to more stability and more peace, since countries that respect human rights and freedoms have a proven track record of greater stability and peace. It is therefore in the U.S. interest to promote all freedoms around the world, especially for LGBTQ people, who act as a sort of "canary in the coal mine": when their freedoms are abrogated it usually sends a signal of the general decline in the freedoms and stability of the country in which they live. As President Obama said in his 2015 State of the Union address, the United States must "defend free speech, and advocate for political prisoners, and condemn the persecution of women, or religious minorities, or people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender...not only because they are the right thing to do, but because ultimately they will make us safer."

Nowhere have we seen this more acutely in recent years than in areas controlled by the Islamic State (ISIL). ISIL has accused dozens of men of having same-sex relations and then thrown them off of buildings, stoned them or even worse, while videotaping their crimes as a "warning" to others. LGBTQ people living in and around those areas have rightly felt themselves under extreme threat and have fled to Turkey, Jordan, and other countries, seeking refuge from the persecution and violence. HRC has therefore produced a [paper](#) that outlines the challenges facing LGBTQ people in and around ISIL-controlled territory and lays out some of the ways that the U.S. can help to move them to safety.

And yet at the same time, the threat from ISIL has spread, as we have seen people who claim allegiance to ISIL killing LGBTQ people in Bangladesh, and of course in Orlando. As we saw exactly one month ago today, virulent anti-LGBTQ hatred, a hatred that can kill more than four dozen innocent men and women, some as young as 18 years old, can reach our shores and kill American citizens. As with so many other problems, we do better if we fight this problem abroad, to stop its metastasization there, before it kills our citizens once again.

It is therefore critically important that the committee is holding this hearing and focusing on this issue, and there are also a number of other ways that this committee to use its powers to assist LGBTQ people around the world.

First, this committee should consider two important pieces of legislation pending before it: the Global Respect Act and the International Human Rights Defense Act.

- The Global Respect Act (H.R. 2368) was introduced by a member of this committee, Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI) in May 2015 and has 46 cosponsors. It would require the administration to submit a list to Congress of foreign persons who are "responsible, or acted as an agent, for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against an individual in a foreign country based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity." People on that list would be ineligible for entry to the U.S.
- The International Human Rights Defense Act (H.R. 590), was introduced by another member of this committee, Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) in January 2015 and has 63 cosponsors. That bill would make it U.S. policy "to take effective action to prevent and respond to discrimination and violence against all people on any basis internationally, including sexual orientation and gender identity." As part of that, it would codify the State Department position of Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons and authorize the State Department and USAID to provide assistance to prevent and respond to discrimination and violence against LGBT people.

Congress should also ensure that this country remains a place that welcomes refugees. LGBTQ people in particular view the U.S. as a beacon of hope, a place where they can flee to in order to live out their lives free from fear and the specter of death looming over them. In the wake of attacks in Paris and San Bernadino, there has been an impulse in some quarters to shut our doors to refugees who are fleeing the very same kind of violence that was perpetrated in France and California. But not only would that be inhumane, it would also send the wrong signal to those who are threatened by, or standing up to, ISIL. The United States must not surrender to nativist instincts when so many people need our help and need to flee to safety.

Leaders and members of this committee can also use their influence when meeting with foreign leaders to impress upon them the support of the U.S. Congress for LGBTQ human rights at

home and abroad. As has been evident in far too many cases, there are many global leaders who do not consider the basic human rights and dignity of LGBTQ people to be worthy of their attention. They believe that LGBTQ people are "deviant" and therefore deserving of scorn, or worse.

Members of this committee should also avail themselves of opportunities to meet with LGBTQ advocates and activists around the globe who are making incredible strides in expanding their human rights and protections, often against seemingly-insurmountable odds. The Human Rights Campaign has been honored to work with many of them, and to host them here in Washington, and they are truly an inspiration for what a group of dedicated, passionate and well-organized people can achieve. In Uganda, for example, the notorious Anti-Homosexuality Act was overturned by the Supreme Court on a technicality, and the bill has not yet returned to parliament, largely due to the advocacy of local Ugandan LGBTQ people.

However, they still face enormous obstacles in their countries, not least of which is funding. While the State Department and USAID have made some grants to LGBTQ groups through the Global Equality Fund and other mechanisms, Congress could help by allocating higher sums through the annual appropriations process. I urge this committee to work with colleagues in the House Appropriations Committee to increase funding for LGBTQ groups abroad who are fending off legislation, policies and rhetoric that place a target on their backs.

Thank you again for holding this important hearing. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to continue raising this important issue and bring it more attention and focus.



Statement submitted to the record by  
Rep. Eliot Engel on the behalf of:  
Judy Shepard, President and Co-Founder  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
July 12, 2016  
House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Hearing: Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide

Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel:

Please accept my thanks for providing the opportunity to discuss "Human Rights Under Siege Worldwide." I am the mother of Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old University of Wyoming student murdered in 1998 in what became one of our country's most notorious hate crimes. On behalf of our family and the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which we founded 18 years ago in Matt's memory to advance acceptance of human diversity and dignity, we strongly support your committee's exploration of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people around the world.

Indeed, today's topic covers the exact work my son Matt dreamed of doing before his untimely death. He possessed a distinct passion for human and civil rights and was pursuing political science and language studies until his last day. But when he first told me his dream to do this work, I was heartbroken. I knew then that his being gay would prevent that career from being achievable. Had the events that took our son away never occurred, there still would have been endless discriminatory hurdles and boundaries for Matt to overcome in order to achieve his ambition of contributing toward real, lasting human rights advances around the world.

The most honest and straightforward reasoning for why an LGBTI-inclusive notion of human rights should be pioneered by the United States today is because we finally live in a world where it can be accomplished, by those who have dedicated their lives and sacrificed their safety to ensure a better future. My husband Dennis and I have been honored and humbled to visit more than a dozen countries on behalf of the State Department to spread a message of understanding, compassion and respect for all people regardless of what makes them different. We are very encouraged that there are now seven openly gay ambassadors among of the U.S. Diplomatic Corps, an opportunity we had never imagined could have been available to Matt were he still alive.

There are people all around the world already doing the necessary work to promote diversity and inclusion for LGBTI people. It is clear to me that the support and encouragement of our foreign service professionals is critical to their success. Dennis and I have had the fortune of meeting with these brave activists, one-on-one in their home towns and communities, and we hear first-hand about the need for more reform and more support. Very often they know Matt's story, and of our family's personal pain and struggle to inspire the change Matt would have wanted to see. We continue to do whatever we can to turn our loss into other people's opportunity.

In nearly 20 years of doing this work, specifically with our partnership with the U.S. State Department working in such places as Jamaica, Russia and Lithuania, Dennis and I know a few things to be basic truths. One of them is that sometimes all it takes to spark these movements for equality and civil rights is a designated time and space to talk about it. To lend a voice to those who normally feel silenced by fear is a critical step in



preventing what happened with our son. We need to promote human rights and civil rights for LGBTI people around the world before another family loses a child. We cannot wait for tragedy to inspire good intentions. These civic leaders, citizens and communities across the globe are demanding action, and it is our responsibility to meet their call with our own mission of equality and acceptance. We have the means and the expertise to do so successfully in a way that is in concert with our national values. To fall short of answering their call, by contrast, would be to walk away from one of the most important roles the United States plays in the global community.

After Matt's murder, it wasn't just the LGBTI community in the United States who called for us to do the work we do; it was the world. And without this worldwide support and that of U.S. embassies and consulates around the world we would have no way of knowing just how far this movement has reached, and more importantly, how far this movement has yet to go.

The appointment of the Special Envoy for LGBTI rights has been vital for the advancement of the existing position of the US State Department. The message conveyed by this appointment has been critical in emphasizing how important human rights should be in all situations - whether it is to advance protections for all of a nation's citizens under the law or merely the sincere attempt to change hearts and minds.

We know others look to the America for guidance and hope in achieving equality for their LGBTI communities. In some cases, it is not even the overriding goal of equality - it is the most basic goal of safety. The U.S. government sometimes sends mixed messages about how we ourselves regard citizens of our own LGBTI family. We think the greatest message we - our government - could send would be one of 100% equality for all our US citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views and experience as part of your commendable, and timely, hearing. Our family's best wishes are with you in any effort you undertake to bring into the fold of human rights every single person wherever they live, and whomever they love.



**David N. Cicilline  
Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing  
July 12, 2016  
Opening Statement**

Thank you Ranking Member Engel for yielding me the time to make a brief opening statement. I also want to thank you and Chairman Royce for holding this important hearing.

Human rights form the most fundamental basis of our democracy. What has set us apart from other nations for more than 200 years is our dedication to fundamental freedoms, equality, and universal values.

It is especially poignant that this hearing is being held on the one-month anniversary of the massacre of 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, which underscores the great importance of this hearing.

If the basic human rights of people for simply being who they are makes them targets here in the United States, sadly serious and sometimes deadly human rights abuses exist in nations all over the world.

According to Freedom House, freedom around the world has been in steady decline for ten years, and 2015 had the steepest decline yet. The war in Syria, the resulting refugee crisis, the rise of extremism, have all contributed to crackdowns in the name of so-called security and a general decline of human rights in every region of the world.

I am especially concerned by the uptick in abuses against vulnerable populations, who are already at grave risk in many countries, especially religious and sexual minorities. In particular, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities around the world have experienced horrific violence and violations of basic human rights that puts individuals in these categories at grave risk for injury or death, simply because of who they are.

LGBT people abroad face horrific persecution, threats, constant harassment, lack of access to healthcare, marginalization, violence, and death, because of their status or perceived status of being gay, lesbian, or transgender.

There is also an important national security angle to this issue – anti-LGBT rhetoric and violence that spreads around the world can also come home to harm American citizens. It is crucial that we fight this rhetoric and violence abroad not only because it is the right thing to do, but also to ensure the safety of American citizens again.

Countries that are attacking LGBT people are also the ones most likely to crack down on human rights and civil society generally. Nowhere have we seen this most violently than in ISIL-controlled territories, where men have been accused of same-sex activity and publicly executed in horrifying ways.

In light of the ongoing discrimination and violence faced by LGBT people around the world, their struggle for equality and justice abroad remains significant.

There are still many countries in which homosexuality is illegal, LGBT persons are persecuted, and public support for the LGBT community is prohibited.

Over 75 countries have anti-LGBT laws. There were nearly 300 reported cases of transgender people murdered in 29 different countries last year, with countless unreported cases around the globe.

According to the Trans Murder Monitoring Project, which documents cases of violence against transgender individuals, there have been more than 2,100 reported killings of trans and gender diverse people in 65 countries worldwide between January 1, 2008 and April 30, 2016.

What may be most disturbing is that the highest numbers of murders have been in countries with strong trans movements and civil society organizations that carry out forms of professional monitoring, such as Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Honduras in Central and South America; the United States in North America; Turkey and Italy in Europe; and India, the Philippines, and Pakistan in Asia.

Because of the particularly heinous nature of the violations routinely committed against LGBT communities around the world, this hearing is particularly important. We know U.S. government attention and engagement on human rights makes a difference.

In 2011, President Obama addressed the United Nations General Assembly and stated that “no country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere.”

Soon thereafter, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum entitled “International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons” to address the global challenges of the LGBT community.

In the following years, we saw the creation of the Office of the Special Envoy for Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Persons at the Department of State and the Senior LGBT Coordinator at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Our commitment to promoting the human rights of the LGBT community is clear, and we must ensure it continues.

Less than two weeks ago the 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council voted to create the first-ever UN position dedicated to combating violence and discrimination against LGBT people worldwide.

This envoy will assess the state of LGBT human rights, engage with LGBT advocates and allies around the world, and work with governments and civil society to make recommendations for combating violence and discrimination against LGBT people.

Although these examples of U.S. government and UN support for LGBT human rights are positive steps, the violence and rights abuses faced by the LGBT community worldwide is unacceptable, and we need to do more.

A great man (Elie Wiesel) once told us, “We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

It's on all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, to ensure that we continue working long after today to defend and protect human rights of all people around the world. I hope this hearing will help to bring greater attention to these issues and motivate this committee to take action to protect the human rights of all people.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses.