

a way that will allow operations to resume as soon as possible.”

The deputy health director, Dr. Soe Lwin Nyein, said the government would accept supplies of medicine for tuberculosis and H.I.V. from Doctors Without Borders. But how these supplies will be distributed remains unclear. Negotiations are underway with the government over the distribution, Western officials said.

Other international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, which supports government health centers around the towns of Sittwe and Mrauk U, have been allowed to continue operations in Rakhine. But Doctors Without Borders was by far the largest health provider.

The government targeted the group after its rural clinics provided treatment to 22 Muslims in the aftermath of a rampage by Rakhine security officers and civilians in the village of Du Chee Yar Tan in January. The United Nations says 40 people were killed in the violence that night.

The government has denied that the deaths occurred, and on Tuesday, a presidential commission sent to the village to conduct an inquiry reported that it could find no evidence of the killings. The commission was the third investigative group sent by the government, and its findings matched those of the previous inquiries.

After the killings in January, the government criticized Doctors Without Borders for hiring Rohingya and said the group was giving disproportionate attention to Rohingya patients. Under state regulations in Rakhine, Rohingya are prevented from visiting many of the state-run clinics.

Doctors Without Borders says it has treated patients in Rakhine since 1994 regardless of ethnicity, and foreign aid workers point out that the Rakhine Buddhist ethnic group has access to government health facilities that are generally denied to the Rohingya.

A radical Buddhist leader in Myanmar, Ashin Wirathu, who has compared Muslims to dogs, arrived in Sittwe on Wednesday for a five-day visit that was likely to stir anti-Muslim sentiments further. In a sermon at the main Buddhist temple Wednesday night, he said that if Western democracies were allowed to have influence in Myanmar, the Rakhine people would be overwhelmed by increasing numbers of Muslims, and would eventually disappear.

The monk's visit appeared to be timed ahead of a national census—the first in Myanmar in more than 30 years—that is due to take place March 30 to April 10 across Myanmar. Tensions during the census, funded in part by the United Nations and the British government, are expected to be high in Rakhine.

Rakhine politicians have said they oppose allowing the Rohingya to identify themselves as Rohingya when they fill out the census forms. If they did, the census would probably show that their numbers are greater than the current estimate of 1.3 million. The overall population is estimated at 60 million.

By shutting down Doctors Without Borders, the government is ensuring that there will be fewer foreigners to witness any outbreaks of violence during the census process, aid workers said.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, when Doctors Without Borders was able to work in Rakhine, they sent approximately 400 emergency cases every month to local hospitals, but according to the World Health Organization, fewer than 20 people received referrals by the government for emergency care

in March. Such a difference suggests that the Rohingya who are in desperate need of emergency care are left to suffer or to die.

In light of these disturbing events, it is important that the House speaks with one voice today and calls on the Government of Burma to end all forms of persecution and discrimination of the Rohingya people and to ensure respect for internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma.

The Burmese Government needs to recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group indigenous to Burma and work with the Rohingya to resolve their citizenship status.

Finally, the U.S. Government needs to make the removal of state-sanctioned discriminatory policies a priority in their engagement with the Government of Burma.

□ 2000

Let me be clear: the situation is dire and rapidly deteriorating. Multiple recognized independent human rights NGOs, as well as the U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma, have stated that the series of actions directed at the Rohingyas in Burma could amount to crimes against humanity.

Further, a recent report by the U.S. NGO, United to End Genocide, states that nowhere in the world are there more precursors to genocide than in Burma right now.

In the past few weeks, we have all taken time to remember and commemorate the victims of the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the genocide in Rwanda. We saw the same disturbing signs in other moments of history, and we know what the consequences are of not paying attention. Showing support for this bill is one step that we can take today to fulfilling the solemn pledge of “never again.”

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I would like to thank Congressman MCGOVERN, the gentleman from Massachusetts, for drafting this important legislation. Once again, I thank Chairman ROYCE for his continued bipartisan leadership.

As has been said, this resolution calls upon the Burmese government to end the persecution of the Rohingya people and to respect the human rights of all ethnic and religious minority groups.

Until now, the treatment of the Rohingya has been largely ignored by the international community. That is the purpose of this resolution—so they cannot be ignored any longer.

It is time for the United States to send a clear and strong message to the government of Burma that we will not tolerate the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, and that it must

abide by human rights principles of equality and dignity if it is to rejoin the international community.

So I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), for his support of the Rohingya people, but also for his dedication to human rights. I have had an opportunity to work with Mr. MCGOVERN on a number of different human rights bills. I think he eloquently explained tonight the challenge that we face here. I was proud to join him as a cosponsor of this measure and work with him.

I also, of course, want to thank the gentleman from New York, ELIOT ENGEL, for his continued focus on human rights around the world.

On this issue, it is true that the Burmese government has recently taken steps to open its closed society, but the reality is that the recent events here are deeply, deeply troubling to anyone who is watching. As I indicated, 48 Rohingya were murdered, aid workers trying to care for thousands of displaced have been attacked in the country, and Doctors Without Borders was kicked out of Burma.

This resolution calls on the government of Burma to immediately recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic minority and to grant them citizenship, a step that is long overdue, as Mr. MCGOVERN pointed out.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution. Let's all send a message that the current state of human rights in Burma is unacceptable.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 418, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2155

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 9 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.