

Whereas the talent, energy, and creativity of the Romanian people have nurtured a vibrant society, embracing innovation and entrepreneurship, and inspiring new generations of young Romanian leaders in business, technology and advanced sciences;

Whereas the Government of Romania is setting a positive example through its continued efforts to defend the rule of law, to strengthen judicial independence, and to fight against corruption, notably through the work of Romania's National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA);

Whereas the rich heritage of many generations of Romanian-Americans have made indelible contributions to America's cultural tapestry; and

Whereas 2018 will mark the Centennial Anniversary of Romanian unification, a milestone to be lauded and celebrated: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates 20 years of close, strategic partnership between the United States and Romania and applauds Romania's significant contributions and commitment to transatlantic security and prosperity;

(2) commends the Government of Romania for its advancements in democratic governance, the rule of law, and a principled and inclusive society which provides opportunities for development and growth, and urges continued progress in these areas; and

(3) affirms the desire of the Senate to continue strengthening the strategic partnership between the United States and Romania and to inspire future generations of young leaders to cherish, preserve, and develop the friendship between our two nations.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 256. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 256. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title XII, insert the following:

Subtitle—Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act of 2017

SEC. 12 1. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the "Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act of 2017".

SEC. 12 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) March 2017 marks the sixth year of the ongoing conflict in Syria.

(2) As of February 2017—

(A) more than 600,000 people are living under siege in Syria;

(B) approximately 6,300,000 people are displaced from their homes inside Syria; and

(C) approximately 4,900,000 Syrians have fled to neighboring countries as refugees.

(3) Since the conflict in Syria began, the United States has provided more than \$5,900,000,000 to meet humanitarian needs in Syria, making the United States the world's single largest donor by far to the Syrian humanitarian response.

(4) In response to growing concerns over systemic human rights violations in Syria, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (referred to in this section as "COI") was established on August 22, 2011. The purpose of COI is to "investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, to establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable".

(5) On December 21, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to establish the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

(6) The 2016 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report states that in Syria "[r]eports have emerged from all groups, including Muslims, Christians, Ismailis, and others, of gross human rights violations, including beheading, rape, murder, torture of civilians and religious figures, and the destruction of mosques and churches."

(7) On February 7, 2017, Amnesty International reported that between 5,000 and 13,000 people were extrajudicially executed in the Saydnaya Military Prison between September 2011 and December 2015.

(8) In February 2017, COI released a report—

(A) stating that a joint United Nations-Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy in Orum al-Kubra, Syria, was attacked by air on September 19, 2016;

(B) explaining that the attack killed at least 14 civilian aid workers, injured at least 15 others, and destroyed trucks, food, medicine, clothes, and other supplies; and

(C) concluding that "the attack was meticulously planned and ruthlessly carried out by the Syrian air force to purposefully hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid and target aid workers, constituting the war crimes of deliberately attacking humanitarian relief personnel, denial of humanitarian aid and targeting civilians."

(9) On October 21, 2016, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism transmitted its fourth report, which concluded that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have both used chemical weapons against villages in Syria.

(10) On August 11, 2016, COI released a report stating that certain offenses, including deliberately attacking hospitals, executions without due process, and the massive and systematized nature of deaths in state-controlled detention facilities in Syria, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

(11) Physicians for Human Rights reported that, between March 2011 and the end of December 2016, Syrian government and allied forces—

(A) had committed 412 attacks on medical facilities (including through the use of indiscriminate barrel bombs on at least 80 occasions); and

(B) had killed 735 medical personnel.

(12) The Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—

(A) details President Bashar al-Assad's use of "indiscriminate and deadly force against civilians, conducting air and ground-based military assaults on cities, residential areas, and civilian infrastructure";

(B) explains that "these attacks included bombardment with improvised explosive devices, commonly referred to as 'barrel bombs' . . ."; and

(C) reports that "[t]he government [of Syria] continued the use of torture and rape, including of children".

(13) On March 17, 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry stated: "In my judgment, Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims. . . . The United States will strongly support efforts to collect, document, preserve, and analyze the evidence of atrocities, and we will do all we can to see that the perpetrators are held accountable."

(14) In February 2016, COI reported that—

(A) "crimes against humanity continue to be committed by [Syrian] Government forces and by ISIS";

(B) the Syrian government has "committed the crimes against humanity of extermination, murder, rape or other forms of sexual violence, torture, imprisonment, enforce disappearance and other inhuman acts"; and

(C) "[a]ccountability for these and other crimes must form part of any political solution".

(15) Credible civil society organizations collecting evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria report that at least 12 countries in western Europe and North America have requested assistance on investigating such crimes.

SEC. 12 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) strongly condemns—

(A) the ongoing violence, use of chemical weapons, targeting of civilian populations with barrel, incendiary, and cluster bombs and SCUD missiles, and systematic gross human rights violations carried out by the Government of Syria and pro-government forces under the direction of President Bashar al-Assad; and

(B) all abuses committed by violent extremist groups and other combatants involved in the civil war in Syria;

(2) expresses its support for the people of Syria seeking democratic change;

(3) urges all parties to the conflict—

(A) to immediately halt indiscriminate attacks on civilians;

(B) to allow for the delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance; and

(C) to end sieges of civilian populations;

(4) calls on the President to support efforts in Syria, and on the part of the international community, to ensure accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed during the conflict; and

(5) supports the request in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), and 2191 (2014) for the Secretary-General to regularly report to the Security Council on implementation of the resolutions, including of paragraph 2 of Resolution 2139, which "demands that all parties immediately put an end to all forms of violence [and] cease and desist from all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights".

SEC. 12 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;