

able to see what is going on in this building. So I knocked. There was a sign up here. This is probably what appears in this picture. It says: If you want to go inside, call this number. I asked people coming out: Can I come in and talk to a supervisor? They pointed to this sign. I called up, and they said they would send out a supervisor to talk to me. I waited 10 minutes and called again. They again said a supervisor would come out. I waited, and a supervisor did come out, but he didn't want to talk to me, he wanted to talk to the policemen he called.

Cop cars pulled up. He explained to the cops that he didn't want me on the property. I explained that when I had called, they said the supervisor would be happy to talk to me. I had been waiting for him, and in that sense, it was an invitation to be there. I pointed out that nobody asked me to leave the property, but that invitation to leave the property came soon enough thereafter.

Clearly the supervisor is under instructions not to share anything about how many children there are or about what is going on inside or any kind of activity. This is coming from the highest levels. When I was at the processing center, they told me that they were simply doing what they are being ordered to do from DC.

So there it is. The Attorney General and the President have created a new policy—a policy we have never seen in the United States of America of abusing children, causing trauma to children as a way to dissuade people from actually exercising their rights under our laws and under international laws to present their case for asylum.

Here are the policemen coming to talk to me. Here is the supervisor suggesting to them that perhaps he didn't want to have a conversation with a Senator trying to understand what was going on inside.

We have had various cases in our history of child-snatching. There was an article today in the New York Times that was about child-snatching during slavery, where children were ripped out of the arms of their parents and sold to far-away plantations, never to be seen again. The article went on to talk about child-snatching with Native American Tribes, where children were ripped out of the arms of their parents to be sent off to who-knows-where.

It is not an acceptable practice of any kind. It is morally bankrupt. It is harmful. We do not harm children in the United States of America in order to increase our leverage, to dissuade people from asserting their asylum rights and getting an asylum hearing. We do not do this—until now. It is morally bankrupt. It is so beyond wrong that the administration is wrapping it in secrecy, not allowing the press to see it. I am talking about without cameras—not something to violate the children's rights but to see what is going on inside. And they will not allow policymakers to see it. When

something is wrapped in secrecy like that, you know it is wrong. The administration knows it is wrong.

I call on my fellow Members here in the Senate to make it very clear to the administration that this is unacceptable. Every Member of this body and the House has every right to visit detention centers or any other immigration facility to see what is happening so that we can debate it here. We should hold a hearing in our HELP Committee—Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee—about what is going on with the organization for refugee resettlement and what they are doing detaining these thousands of children.

The reported numbers of children detained by our government—ripped out of the arms of families seeking asylum—have gone up 20 percent in 1 month. Some 10,000-plus children are being held at centers like this, foster homes, other halfway houses, and so forth around this country.

We have a responsibility in this Chamber to get to the bottom of what is going on and to put an end to it.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, June 5, all postcloture time on the Wier nomination be considered expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ZEID RA'AD AL HUSSEIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who some here also know from his service as Jordan's Permanent Rep-

resentative to the United Nations and as Jordan's Ambassador to the United States.

The High Commissioner has held his post since September 1, 2014, and his term will end on August 31, 2018. He has carried out his responsibilities with exceptional courage, compassion, commitment, and even humor, qualities that are indispensable for any successful U.N. High Commissioner. In so doing, he has been the target of relentless attacks by government officials who abuse their authority by manipulating their countries' electoral processes and security forces to arrest, imprison, abuse, and even assassinate their critics, whether independent journalists, members of political opposition parties, or civil society activists.

In a speech delivered Tuesday at an international conference marking the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on June 25, 2003, in response to the atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia, the High Commissioner warned that human rights are under siege in many parts of the world, including Europe.

He said, "This anniversary could be the occasion for a polite celebration of the achievements of my Office over the past two and a half decades—and they are many. But today is not a time for soporific complacency. Human rights are sorely under pressure around the world—no longer a priority; a pariah. The legitimacy of human rights principles is attacked. The practice of human rights norms is in retreat. Here in Europe, ethno-populist parties are in the ascendant in many countries—fueling hatred and scarring their societies with deepening divisions."

No one should be surprised by this. We see the consequences every day, including in countries that are friends and allies of the United States. Legitimate dissent is labeled "terrorism." Those who defend human rights are themselves maligned and targeted. Dictators are feted, and their crimes are ignored. Xenophobia and racism are treated as legitimate responses to domestic problems.

As the High Commissioner noted, it is incumbent on each of us to defend human rights and to counter those who promote hatred and intolerance. What is the alternative? Despotism. Fascism. Isolationism. Forces and ideologies we have resisted and fought against for generations. We owe it to past and future generations, as the High Commissioner said, "to stand by our achievements and the advances which have been made." This is not only a moral imperative for upholding the values our country stands for and preserving our international reputation, but a pragmatic necessity for protecting our interests at home and abroad.

I want to thank the High Commissioner for his extraordinary efforts during the past 4 extremely challenging years. He has been a tireless, principled defender of universal human rights,

and in doing so, he has set a high bar for those who follow in his footsteps.

I ask unanimous consent that the High Commissioner's remarks be printed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT BY UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ZEID RA'AD AL HUSSEIN ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIENNA DECLARATION

MINISTER KNEISSL.

EXCELLENCIES, COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS.

Twenty five years ago, it was here, in this city of confluence and cultural connection that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted—and with its crucial description of human rights as “universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related”, cut through the artificial division of civil and political rights from rights that are cultural, economic and social.

The Cold War had ended, and the first words of the preamble marked a great hope for a new era, with interdependent countries engaging in a common approach to the causes of human suffering:

“Considering that the promotion and protection of human rights is a matter of priority for the international community.”

It was here that the world unanimously reaffirmed that every refugee from persecution is entitled to asylum, and called for effective protection for all those who are compelled to become migrants.

It was here that States urged immediate and strong measures to combat racism, xenophobia and religious hatred, and to ensure participation by the poorest people in decision-making.

It was here in Vienna that States recommended the creation of the mandate which I am honoured to occupy: the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

But today we seem to be headed in another direction.

Backwards. To a landscape of increasingly strident, zero-sum nationalism, where the jealously guarded short-term interests of individual leaders outweigh the search for solutions to our common ills. Backwards, to an era of contempt for the rights of people who have been forced to flee their homes, because the threats they face there are more dangerous even than the perils of their voyage.

Backwards, to a time of proxy regional and global warfare—a time when military operations could deliberately target civilians and civilian sites such as hospitals, and chemical gases were openly used for military purposes.

Backwards, to an era when racists and xenophobes deliberately enflamed hatred and discrimination among the public, while carefully cloaking themselves in the guise of democracy and the rule of law.

Backwards, to an era when women were not permitted to control their own choices and their own bodies. An era when criticism was criminalised, and human rights activism brought jail—or worse.

So this anniversary could be the occasion for a polite celebration of the achievements of my Office over the past two and a half decades—and they are many. But today is not a time for soporific complacency. Human rights are sorely under pressure around the world—no longer a priority; a pariah. The legitimacy of human rights principles is attacked. The practise of human rights norms is in retreat. Here in Europe, ethno-populist parties are in the ascendant in many countries—fuelling hatred and scarring their societies with deepening divisions.

Where these parties have achieved power, they have sought to undermine the independ-

ence of the judiciary and silence many critical voices in the independent media and civil society. They have propagated distorted and false views of migrants and human rights activists. Almost everywhere, across Europe the hatred they direct at migrants has infiltrated the mainstream parties and skewed the political landscape towards greater violence and suffering.

In this country—which more than most should be aware of the dangers of ethnically divisive rhetoric, given the historical role of Karl Lueger—false and incendiary statements have been recently made which are fundamentally at odds with the Vienna Declaration.

Minister Kneissl, Excellencies,

As Viktor Frankl so often wrote, it is compassion, and contribution to the lives of others, which form the anchor of an honourable life. And the way to honour the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action is to act on it. Human rights are not just words to be nodded at sagely at anniversaries. They are meant, above all, to be put into practice, and anchored especially in the daily experiences of the poorest and most marginalised people—such as those who flee the destruction of their hopes by conflict and deprivation.

There will be no peace for any country until there is respect, and justice. There will be no sustainable prosperity unless all can benefit. Human equality and dignity are the path towards peace in the world: the path of real patriotism, building societies grounded in harmony, not divisiveness and hate.

So it is time to stand up for what the Vienna Declaration truly represents.

We need to use this anniversary to begin to mobilize a much broader community to defend human rights with our fierce, and passionate commitment. We need to make clear the vital, life-saving importance of human rights for the daily lives and global future of our fellow human beings.

Many of us do still have space to voice our concerns. We need to stand by our achievements and the advances which have been made.

We need to push back against the haters, the destroyers, the isolationists and ethno-nationalists.

We need to move forward, defiantly, to ensure that those indivisible, universal, interdependent and interrelated rights are able to build on each other to shape a world of well-being and safety.

There is no time to lose. Let this be a turning point, so that the Vienna Declaration can stand proud—not as a decaying museum piece, but as the flag-bearer for a resurgent movement to build peace and progress.

Thank you.

INDIGENOUS ACTIVISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak about a subject that other Senators should be aware of.

Many Members of Congress have visited the Philippines, a country with which we share a long history of strategic, economic, cultural, and other interests. We also know that, for many years, the Philippine Government has been fighting an extremist insurgency in Mindanao. The United States has been supporting the Philippine Government in that effort.

According to information I have received, on February 21, 2018, the Philippines State Prosecutor filed a legal petition to declare over 600 persons as “terrorists,” alleging that they are

members of the Communist party of the Philippines, CPP, and the New Peoples Army, NPA, two groups designated by the United States as foreign terrorist organizations. The list was published after the collapse of the peace negotiations between CPP-NPA and the Philippine Government last year.

By itself, that might not be objectionable. There are terrorists in the Philippines. The problem with this “terrorist list” is that the government is apparently using it to persecute people who have nothing to do with terrorism, but who have engaged in legitimate, peaceful dissent and protests in opposition to government policies that threaten their way of life.

The list includes a number of indigenous rights defenders who, as far as I am aware, are not at all affiliated with the CPP-NPA. These individuals are known and respected nationally and internationally for their consistent, lawful efforts to protect human rights for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Philippines. By criminalizing their work and including these activists on an official terrorist list, the administration of President Duterte is endangering the lives of these and other human rights defenders and community leaders. It is a misuse of the justice system to deny their rights to free expression, association, and assembly—rights we take for granted and that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The affected individuals are now subject to warrantless arrests, surveillance, and freezing of assets. Their lives and the lives of their families are in danger. Human Rights Watch has described the petition as “a virtual government hit list,” noting the “long history in the Philippines of state security forces and pro-government militias assassinating those labeled as NPA members or supporters.” In March 2018 alone, there were reportedly at least three cases of extrajudicial killings of indigenous leaders, all known for their work to organize communities for the protection of indigenous lands.

Two of the more high-profile targeted activists, Joan Carling and Victoria Tauli Corpuz, were fortunate to have been out of the country when the list was published. Carling is an indigenous activist from the Cordillera region in the Philippines. She has been working on indigenous issues at the grassroots and international levels for more than 20 years. Ms. Carling has been elected twice as the Secretary General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, AIPP, representing AIPP's 47 member-organizations in 14 countries. She was appointed by the U.N. Economic and Social Council as an indigenous expert-member of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for 2014-16.

Victoria Tauli Corpuz was appointed as the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples by the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2014. She is an indigenous leader from the