

halting copper concentrate exports, and banning imports of coal and gypsum. Prior to planned antigovernment demonstrations on April 26, a senior law enforcement official stated that “Those who plan to demonstrate tomorrow will seriously suffer . . . they will be beaten like stray dogs.” Because the Tanzanian authorities deployed a heavy police presence and threatened to use force, the protests failed to move forward.

Magufuli’s repression extends to sexual orientation and HIV policies. Homosexuality is illegal in Tanzania, and homosexuals and transgender persons have repeatedly faced threatening comments by government officials, as well as police harassment. Under previous Tanzanian governments, the country’s HIV policies called for dedicated outreach to key populations. Such efforts have been halted under Magufuli’s government. In 2016, the government raided and closed drop-in centers and private clinics that provide services to those in the LGBTI community, sex workers, and people who use drugs. Several organizations reported that the crackdown has resulted in HIV-positive men failing to access their antiretroviral treatment, while others no longer access testing and preventive services.

Young women also find themselves under attack, for reasons which remain unclear. President Magufuli forcefully endorsed a law dating back to the 1960s that allows all state schools in Tanzania to ban young mothers from attending, saying in June 2017, “As long as I am president . . . no pregnant student will be allowed to return to school . . . After getting pregnant, you are done.” He said that young mothers could opt for vocational training or become entrepreneurs, but should not be permitted to pursue formal education in public schools. Critics say the ban lacks public support, is misogynistic, and breaks international human rights conventions. It also contradicts a promise set out in the ruling party’s 2015 election manifesto, which pledged to allow pregnant school girls to continue with their studies. According to the Tanzania Bureau of Statistics, about 21 percent of Tanzanian girls aged 15 to 19 have given birth. This troubling pattern of discouraging women from completing their education inhibits Tanzania’s potential for economic growth and undermines women’s potential to contribute to Tanzania’s workforce. It also is counter to Tanzania’s commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Finally, Tanzania has, for decades, hosted refugees from various conflicts and political crises in the conflict-afflicted and densely inhabited countries in the Great Lakes region of central Africa—some for extended periods—and has played a mediating role in attempts to resolve such crises. In 2014, Tanzania also naturalized a large num-

ber of long-term Burundian refugees. Instability in Burundi has led to hundreds of thousands of Burundians to seek refuge and safety in Tanzania. In fact, Tanzania very generously hosts 245,584 Burundian refugees and asylum seekers, more than any other country, according to the latest statistics from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

In July of 2017, however, President Magufuli ordered the suspension of the registration and naturalization of thousands of Burundian refugees. He said, “It’s not that I am expelling Burundian refugees. I am just advising them to voluntarily return home . . . I urge Burundians to remain in their country, I have been assured, the place is now calm.” During the same month, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, deployed by the U.N. Human Rights Council, reported the “persistence of serious human rights violations in a climate of widespread fear.” Such violations included “extrajudicial executions, acts of torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests and detention and enforced disappearances.” With peace talks stalled in Burundi—and the May 2018 constitutional referendum accompanied by widespread violence and intimidation, including 15 killings—Tanzania risks pushing refugees back to unstable and unsafe communities.

The pattern of crackdowns on civil society, media, refugee, and public health providers under the Magufuli administration are contrary to the values that the United States has long supported both at home and abroad and are cause for concern. It is essential that the United States take a strong and proactive stance on these matters. Toward that end, I recommend that the administration take several actions.

Immediately nominate an ambassador to lead our diplomatic efforts to push back against the tide of anti-democratic actions. The post has been vacant for well over a year.

Conduct a review of assistance aimed at ensuring that the democracy, human rights and governance components of our bilateral assistance programs, which are an essential complement to sustainability in other areas of development that we support, are robustly funded and adequately address current challenges.

Increase assistance to build the capacity of civil society and media stakeholders in Tanzania.

Join with likeminded partners in the diplomatic community in Tanzania and in multilateral fora to jointly condemn President Magufuli’s war on democratic freedoms and civil liberties and urge the Tanzanian Government to take concerted action to ensure that all political and civic rights guaranteed under the Tanzanian Constitution are fully respected.

It seems to me that, at the same time President Magufuli is waging a war against poor governance, there is

in fact another more pernicious effort being undertaken to roll back democratic freedoms and civil liberties. It is imperative that the United States, as a champion of democracy and freedom, raise its voice in support of Tanzanians who are pushing back against growing oppression. The Tanzanian Constitution states that “the civic rights, duties and interests of every person and community shall be protected.” Let us stand with those who are fighting to see that those guarantees are protected.

FAYETTEVILLE VETERAN AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to highlight an incident that occurred in my home State of Arkansas that has negatively impacted veterans and their families. A former pathologist at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center was found to be impaired, was immediately removed from clinical care, and has since been terminated. A thorough independent review of all cases read by this pathologist is currently underway. This review will be handled by entities outside of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center to include other VA facilities and academic affiliates. At this time, a small percentage of cases have been found to be misdiagnosed. In total, 33,000 samples will be reviewed using a tiered risk prioritization.

In response, I have submitted an amendment cosponsored by the entire Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma delegation. This amendment would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to the congressional committees of jurisdiction a Departmental response plan that can be applied in Fayetteville and in all future incidents and for recommendations about changes necessary to prevent such incidents in the future.

I am very concerned with the procedures and policies that allowed this situation to occur. As the chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee and member of the Senate VA Committee, I am intent on working with the VA to ensure that we enact policies and put in places procedures to prevent such misconduct in the future, both here in Fayetteville and around the country. It is clear that our veterans deserve the best care available, and it is our duty to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs is providing that service. This is an issue that I will continue to monitor, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages