

the Ritz, slapped, blindfolded, stripped to his underwear, bound to a chair, shocked with electricity and whipped so severely that he could not sleep on his back for days. The Times said his lawyer has written to the State Department that the doctor “is in fear for his life, that he cannot take his situation any longer, and that he desires all possible help.” The Associated Press quoted the lawyer as saying Mr. Fitaïhi is now in a prison hospital after suffering “an emotional breakdown.” Mr. Fitaïhi earned his medical degree from George Washington University and holds a master’s degree in public health from Harvard University.

On another front in Mohammed bin Salman’s drive to crush critical voices, Saudi Arabia’s public prosecutor announced charges Friday against a group of female activists who campaigned to give women the right to drive—a right that Mohammed bin Salman conferred after they sought it. The activists have been jailed for nearly a year, during which Amnesty International says they have been tortured and sexually abused. They did nothing wrong and should be released unconditionally and immediately.

In the New York Times Magazine on Sunday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, asked about the crown prince’s role in the Khashoggi murder, declared that the United States would “hold everyone that we determine is responsible for this accountable in an appropriate way, a way that reflects the best of the United States of America.”

A doctor with U.S. citizenship was tortured and held without charge. Women who stood for human dignity and equality were jailed and tortured. A journalist was killed. Yet President Trump and his administration—including his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who last week met with the crown prince—are loath to act. That does not reflect the best of the United States of America.

AMENDMENT NO. 193 TO S.J. RES. 7

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I oppose amendment No. 193 to S.J. Res. 7, as I believe it is an unnecessary measure that too broadly narrows the President’s role in international affairs. I would have voted no if the amendment had been called for a roll-call vote.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate International Women’s Day, which occurred this past Friday, March 8, 2019. On this day each year, we recognize and celebrate women’s incredible achievements and double down on our commitment to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, both at home and abroad.

The theme of International Women’s Day this year is “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change,” which highlights the importance of finding new ways to advance gender equality, especially by utilizing technology. In January of this year, President Trump signed a bill Senator BOOZMAN and I sponsored, the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, WEEE Act, into law. This important, bipartisan legislation allows women around the world, including those living in poverty, to access critical tools to start and grow their businesses. It

requires that 50 percent of U.S. Agency for International Development’s micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise resources are targeted to activities that reach the very poor, as well as enterprises women own, manage, and control. The WEEE Act empowers women to invest in themselves, their families, and their communities.

A McKinsey Global Institute report estimates that achieving global gender parity in economic activity could add as much as \$28 trillion to annual global gross domestic product by 2025. The WEEE Act will help women overcome the critical barriers they face when seeking economic opportunity and the legislation will open doors for children, families, and communities to benefit, too.

This year’s theme of “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change” also provides the opportunity to celebrate some of the incredible and life-changing innovations being launched around the world. In Cambodia, for example, CARE has developed a gamified mobile app called “Chat!” to provide cost-effective and high-impact reproductive health education to its young, female population working in the garment industry. Cambodia has the largest youth and adolescent population in Southeast Asia; two-thirds of the population are under the age of 29. Increasing numbers of Cambodians, especially young women, are migrating to urban areas to support its garment industry.

According to CARE, 85 percent of Cambodia’s garment factory workers are women, who are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. According to the United Nations’ research on women, one in three women are likely to face violence in her lifetime. Therefore, applications like Chat! are critical to reach this population and provide reproductive health information and services, helping these women make informed and healthy choices and prevent unplanned pregnancies.

While International Women’s Day provides the opportunity to celebrate such successes, it is also critically important to recognize the work that lies ahead in the fight for gender equality, and especially the challenges that female human rights defenders face in this fight. A recent United Nations report on human rights defenders describes increased resistance to the work of female human rights defenders at multiple levels, linked to the rise of populism, fundamentalism, and violent extremism around the world.

The report highlights the increasing number of countries that are actively restricting fundamental human rights, including the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly, and specifically notes the enforced disappearances of female defenders in Saudi Arabia. Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sadah, for example, were arrested last summer for advocating to lift the ban on female drivers and end the guardianship system that prevents women from legal and social independence. Amal al-Harbi

was also arrested last summer for advocating for the release of her husband, Fowzan al-Harbi, a human rights defender. These female human rights defenders remain detained to this day, and several of these activists are due to appear in Saudi court this week. With no access to legal representation, I and many of my colleagues fear that these activists will be charged and tried for crimes they did not commit, as a result of engaging in peaceful activities to advance human rights in Saudi Arabia, which are protected under international law.

The reduction in funding for women’s rights in recent years is also an immense challenge to future progress, a challenge exasperated by the Trump administration’s actions, particularly in the realm of women’s health. The Trump administration’s reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico City policy, often referred to as the Global Gag Rule, for example, has closed the door on some of the most effective, life-saving family planning programs by disqualifying international organizations from receiving U.S. family planning assistance if any non-U.S. funds are used to provide abortion services or counseling. The implementation of this expanded policy, as the aforementioned UN report notes, has “threatened the integration of health services and created division in civil society around the world.” As underscored by the example of Chat!, we know that family planning tools are critical to providing the education, information, and services that help prevent unplanned pregnancies and abortions.

As I have stated in the past, America’s global leadership begins with our progress here in the United States. This also extends into the realm of gender equality. A critical challenge to progress here at home is the fact that our own Constitution does not already guarantee women the same rights and protections as men. The Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution guarantees “equal protection of the laws,” and the Supreme Court, so far, has held that most sex or gender classifications are subject to only “intermediate scrutiny” when analyzing laws that may have a discriminatory impact. Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, ERA, by State legislatures would provide the courts with clearer guidance in holding gender or sex classifications to the “strict scrutiny” standard. That is why on January 25, 2019, Senator MURKOWSKI and I introduced a resolution to immediately remove the ratification deadline and reopen consideration of the ERA for ratification by the States and finally guarantee full and equal protections to women in the Constitution.

While we have much to celebrate on this day, I want to take this opportunity to remind my colleagues in the U.S. Senate that we must continue to use our leadership positions to shine a spotlight on human rights violations, wherever they occur, and push for the