

disagreement with his government that is illustrated, most recently, by the passage without opposition of S. Res. 142, which condemns the imprisonment of Senator Leila De Lima and calls for her immediate release. It also calls on the Government of the Philippines to guarantee freedom of the press and to drop charges against Maria Ressa and the online news network Rappler.

As said by Senator DURBIN who, like I, cosponsored that resolution, “[i]n the end, [De Lima’s] freedom and the end of government harassment against journalists like Maria Ressa will be important tests of whether cherished democratic norms we share with our long-standing Filipino allies will be respected by President Duterte.”

The response of the Duterte government was regrettable, albeit not uncharacteristic. Like Senator DURBIN, I have become accustomed to being on the receiving end of baseless personal attacks by President Duterte’s spokesman, as if those attacks might intimidate us or boost domestic support for his government. Rather than respond substantively to legitimate concerns about extrajudicial killings, impunity, and freedom of expression that I, Senator DURBIN, Senator MARKEY, our Democratic and Republican colleagues, the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and respected human rights organizations have raised over the years, we are told that S. Res. 142 is based on “bogus narratives . . . promoted by Duterte’s usual antagonists.” We are accused of being “prejudiced” and “misguided,” our support for Senator De Lima “a direct and shameless affront to the Republic of the Philippines, which has long ceased to be a colony of the United States.” Our actions are called “brazen and intrusive to the dignity of an independent, democratic and sovereign state” which would “not be bullied by any foreign country or by its officials, especially by misinformed and gullible politicians who grandstand at our expense.” Going a step further, the Duterte government inexplicably threatened to deny visas to Americans who seek to visit the Philippines and who have nothing to do with these concerns.

Such vitriolic hyperbole is barely deserving of a response, but suffice it to say that none of us remotely regards the Philippines as a colony of the United States, nor are our concerns about the treatment of Senator De Lima and Maria Ressa an intrusion of the Philippines’ sovereignty, which we respect. S. Res. 142 is based on consistent reporting by the Trump administration’s State Department, the United Nations, and other credible observers, including in the Philippines, who share the conviction that defending freedom of expression has nothing to do with sovereignty. To the contrary, it is everyone’s responsibility, wherever it is denied. If there is any “intrusion of dignity” or “shameless affront” in this instance, it is the harassment, threats, false charges, and

imprisonment of those who have dared to criticize the Duterte government’s lawless counter-drug strategy.

None of us here, nor in the Philippines, has an interest in prolonging this dispute. To the contrary, we want to enhance our cooperation in a multitude of areas of common interest—from maritime security to human trafficking to climate change. What 100 U.S. Senators—Republicans and Democrats—have urged is succinctly spelled out in the resolution. Rather than deny visas to Americans, many of whom have family in the Philippines, and rather than resort to ad hominem attacks, there is, as Senator DURBIN has said, “an easy and honorable way forward.” As I have said for months, we are not aware of any credible evidence that Senator De Lima, who has been detained for nearly 3 years, is guilty of the crimes she has been accused of. If such evidence exists, it should be promptly produced in a public trial, and she should be provided the opportunity to refute it. Otherwise she should be released. As a former prosecutor, I know that is the minimum to which anyone accused of a crime is entitled.

And respected, courageous investigative journalists like Maria Ressa should be able to publish without fear of retaliation. There is no surer way to destroy the underpinnings of democracy than by using threats and unlawful arrest to silence the press.

IMPRISONMENT OF LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken repeatedly about the unlawful imprisonment and abuse of human rights activists by the Saudi Government, which continue despite promises of reform by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. In fact, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the botched coverup and sham investigation, and the ongoing, systematic repression of Saudi activists have only served to confirm what we already knew, which is that the Crown Prince is no reformer but, instead, a ruthless autocrat intimidated by non-violent dissent from his own people.

One such activist being unlawfully detained by the Saudi royal family—which for all intents and purposes is the government—is Loujain al-Hathloul, a prominent and outspoken women’s rights defender known for her activism against the women’s driving ban and the male guardianship system. In 2014, Ms. al-Hathloul, who had a driver’s license from the United Arab Emirates, UAE, was detained for 73 days after attempting to drive into Saudi Arabia from the UAE.

She was arrested again in May 2018 along with several other women’s rights activists, weeks before the Saudi Government lifted the ban on female drivers. She was detained and forcibly deported via private Saudi jet from the UAE and remains in a Saudi prison

today. According to Ms. al-Hathloul’s family and several human rights organizations, she has been tortured, sexually harassed, and threatened with rape and murder by Saudi officials.

For the first 10 months of her detention, Ms. al-Hathloul was held without charges or trial and for the first 3 months, without access to her family or lawyer. In her first trial session on March 13, 2019, she was charged with promoting women’s rights; calling for an end to the male guardianship system; and contacting international organizations, foreign media, and other activists. It is hard to believe that in the year 2020, advocacy that has been protected under international law for nearly half a century is grounds for imprisonment and prosecution in Saudi Arabia, a country whose leaders enjoy the best of what oil revenues can buy while subjecting their critics to treatment reminiscent of the 1800s.

Imprisoned, tortured, and charged with multiple “crimes,” Ms. al-Hathloul’s last court appearance was on April 3, 2019, more than 250 days ago. She remains in prison without any information regarding when her next court session will take place. The right of due process simply does not exist in Saudi Arabia.

This is typical of how Saudi Arabia treats those who dare to exercise their rights to free expression, association, and assembly. We should all be outraged, and in fact Republicans and Democrats in Congress as well as dozens of foreign governments have called for Ms. al-Hathloul’s release and the release of others facing politically motivated charges in Saudi Arabia. Until there are consequences for these violations of human rights and misuse of the judicial process, nothing will change.

Fortunately, our hands are not tied. The United States can do more than simply call for Ms. al-Hathloul’s release. Section 7031(c) of division G of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, which applies to all foreign countries, states that “[o]fficials of foreign governments and their immediate family members about whom the Secretary of State has credible information have been involved, directly or indirectly, in . . . a gross violation of human rights shall be ineligible for entry into the United States.”

Secretary of State Pompeo unquestionably has such information. Ms. al-Hathloul’s prolonged, arbitrary detention and abuse in custody are gross violations of human rights. Secretary Pompeo should apply section 7031(c) and immediately impose visa restrictions on all Saudi Government officials involved, directly or indirectly, in her detention and abuse. That is our law.

It is as ironic as it is unconscionable that the Crown Prince has been praised for ending the ban on a woman’s ability to drive a car in Saudi Arabia, at the same time that his government is unjustly and cruelly imprisoning a courageous woman for advocating for that

very right. The Trump administration should apply the law as required in this case.

U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, for myself as chairman of the Select Committee on Ethics and for Senator CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, vice chairman of the committee, that the Annual Report for the Select Committee on Ethics for calendar year 2019 be printed in the RECORD. The Committee issues this report today, January 28, 2020, as required by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007.

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

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

116TH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 28, 2020

The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (the Act) calls for the Select Committee on Ethics of the United States Senate to issue an annual report no later than January 31st of each year providing information in certain categories describing its activities for the preceding year. Reported below is the information describing the Committee's activities in 2019 in the categories set forth in the Act:

(1) The number of alleged violations of Senate rules received from any source, including the number raised by a Senator or staff of the Committee: 251. (In addition, 16 alleged violations from previous years were carried into 2019.)

(2) The number of alleged violations that were dismissed—

(A) For lack of subject matter jurisdiction or in which, even if the allegations in the complaint are true, no violation of Senate rules would exist: 135. (This figure includes 4 matters from the previous year carried into 2019.)

(B) Because they failed to provide sufficient facts as to any material violation of the Senate rules beyond mere allegation or assertion: 118. (This figure includes 5 matters from previous years carried into 2019.)

(3) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry: 16. (This figure includes 8 matters from previous years carried into 2019.)

(4) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry that resulted in an adjudicatory review: 0.

(5) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry and the Committee dismissed the matter for lack of substantial merit or because it was inadvertent, technical or otherwise of a de minimis nature: 11.

(6) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry and the Committee issued private or public letters of admonition: 0.

(7) The number of matters resulting in a disciplinary sanction: 0.

(8) Any other information deemed by the Committee to be appropriate to describe its activities in the previous year:

In 2019, the Committee staff conducted 36 Member and committee office campaign briefings (includes 6 remedial training sessions); 21 employee code of conduct training sessions; 11 public financial disclosure clin-

ics, seminars, and webinars; 19 ethics seminars and customized briefings for Member DC offices, state offices, and Senate committees; 4 private sector ethics briefings; and 3 international briefings.

In 2019, the Committee staff handled approximately 10,998 inquiries (via telephone and email) for ethics advice and guidance.

In 2019, the Committee wrote approximately 784 ethics advisory letters and responses including, but not limited to, 581 travel and gifts matters (Senate Rule 35) and 133 conflict of interest matters (Senate Rule 37).

In 2019, the Committee received 3,586 public financial disclosure and periodic disclosure of financial transactions reports.

TRIAL OF PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, the impeachment trial of President Trump has devolved into a parade of last-minute red herrings meant to distract this body from the issue at hand. The near-hysteria over books, boredom, and beef jerky has provided a convenient vehicle for the House managers, who are trying their best to peddle outrage as evidence.

We learned nothing new from the House managers' presentations, but outside the Senate Chamber, they have been doing their best to convince us that we are one "bombshell" away from, at last, having all the elements needed for a speedy conviction. These efforts to keep unfounded allegations in the limelight have not gone unnoticed by those who should be commanding our attention: the American people.

Outside the beltway, Americans have grown weary of trials and talking points. They have heard enough, and they have had enough.

Taking that feedback into consideration, I thought it might be helpful to offer an update on what we could be focusing on instead of this farcical partisan grudge match.

Behind the scenes, we are limping along as best we can, but our focus is necessarily distracted from regular business. Before our time was monopolized by impeachment, the Senate was making wonderful progress on filling the Federal bench with well-qualified, constitutionalist judges.

When we weren't interviewing those nominees, members of the Judiciary Committee spent time hearing testimony on privacy, competition, and the crisis on our southern border.

Before impeachment, Senators serving on the Veterans' Affairs Committee were hard at work considering a comprehensive mental health bill that would strengthen veteran mental health and suicide prevention programs. My own IMPROVE Act is part of this effort. We were also working on the IT Reform Act, which would improve information technology projects at the VA, and the Network of Support Act, which would help VA officials guide veterans through the emotional upheaval of transitioning between Active Duty and civilian life. We were

doing all of this in addition to our continued oversight of the VA MISSION Act, and check-ins on struggling clinics such as the one in Murfreesboro, TN, which just reduced bed space for veterans struggling with opiate addiction and thoughts of suicide.

This Thursday, we have an Armed Services Committee hearing on the U.S.' role in AFRICOM. When I visited with our troops in Djibouti and Somalia at the end of last year, I saw firsthand the importance of our advisory support on the African continent. Drawing down resources or personnel in AFRICOM would harm our position as we compete with Russia and China—but we won't have much time to discuss this potentially disastrous change. Every day, work grinds to a halt at 1:00 p.m., so that we can sit in our seats in the Senate Chamber and focus on the impeachment trial.

We could be paying attention to the full-blown health crisis plaguing our rural communities. Since 2010, 118 rural hospitals have shut their doors. Fourteen of those facilities were in my home State of Tennessee. Between these hospital closures, and high drug prices, there is enough work to be done in the health care sector alone to keep us busy through Christmas.

Mister President, if Tennessee is a good test group for the rest of the Nation—and it usually is—I can tell you that when asked to choose between discussing impeachment politics and real world problems, the American people are much more worried about trade, transportation, and manufacturing, and how evolving policy initiatives will affect prices at the grocery store.

I would encourage my colleagues to remember the cost of indulging these proceedings and to listen to their constituents back home and not the breathless coverage that dominates the 24 hour news cycle.

H. CON. RES. 83

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, H. Con. Res. 83 directs the President to terminate the use of U.S. Armed Forces to engage in hostilities against Iran, unless Congress has authorized the use of military force against Iran or such use is necessary to defend against an imminent armed attack. H. Con. Res. 83 was agreed to in the House of Representatives on January 9, 2020 and received in the Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on January 13, 2020.

The War Powers Resolution, PL 93-148, has special procedures underscoring the privileged nature of a concurrent resolution like H. Con. Res. 83. Section 1546(c) of the War Powers Resolution requires that once a privileged concurrent resolution such as H. Con. Res. 83 has been passed by the House, it must be referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and "shall be reported out by such committee together with its recommendations within fifteen calendar days." Fifteen calendar