

The focus on anti-Christian persecution was not meant to minimize the suffering of other religious minorities who are imprisoned or killed for their beliefs: as the poet John Donne wrote, “Any man’s death doth diminish me.”

We stand for human dignity and respect for life from the womb to the tomb, and the subcommittee has and will continue to highlight the suffering of religious minorities around the globe, be they Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, Ba’hai in Iran, Buddhists in occupied Tibet, Yazidis in Iraq or the Muslim Rohingya people in Burma.

Christians, however, remain the most persecuted religious group the world over, and thus deserve the special attention that the hearing gave them. As one of the hearing witnesses, the distinguished journalist John Allen has written: “Christians today indisputably are the most persecuted religious body on the planet, and too often their martyrs suffer in silence.”

Researchers from the Pew Center have documented incidents of harassment of religious groups worldwide—a term defined as including “physical assaults; arrests and detentions; desecration of holy sites; and discrimination against religious groups in employment, education and housing”—and has concluded that Christians are the single most harassed group today. In the year 2012, Pew reports, Christians were harassed in 110 countries around the world.

This is particularly true in the Middle East where, as one of those heard from, Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, has said, “flagrant and widespread persecution of Christians rages. . . even as we meet.”

Archbishop Chullikatt was the papal nuncio to Iraq, where we have seen repeated violent assaults on Christians, such as the October 31, 2010 assault upon Our Lady of Deliverance Syrian Catholic Cathedral in Baghdad in which 58 people were killed and another 70 wounded. Attacks such as this have led the Christian population of Iraq—whose roots date back to the time of the Apostles—to dwindle from 1.4 million in 1987 prior to the first Gulf War, to as little as 150,000 today, according to some estimates. Much of this exodus has occurred during a time in which our country invested heavily in blood and treasure in seeking to help Iraqis build a democracy. As we witness the black flag of al-Qaeda again fly over cities such as Fallujah, which we had won at the cost of so much American blood, we wonder how it is that for Christians in Iraq, life appears to be worse now than it was under the vicious dictator Saddam Hussein.

If we turn to Egypt, we see a Christian population which dates back to the Apostle St. Mark also being oppressed. At a hearing we had last December 10—Human Rights Day—we heard how churches have been subjected to mob attacks and burned. For example, in April of 2012, St. Mark’s Cathedral, seat of the Coptic Pope, was attacked by 30–40 Muslim youths. While dozens of Copts were sheltering inside, security forces joined the mob. Rather than dispersing the crowd, they participated in the all-night attack or stood idly by as rocks, gasoline bombs, and gas canisters were lobbed into the iconic cathedral.

Likewise, last year the subcommittee held a hearing on persecution of religious minorities in Syria. Syria had been a place of relative tolerance for religious minorities in the Middle East, including groups like the Mandeans, who

trace their roots to the time of John the Baptist and whom they still revere.

It is this connection with the past which has helped bring radical Islamists to Syria, where not only do they seek to overthrow a violent dictator—Bashar al-Assad, but also seek to eradicate Christianity from the land.

Last September, members of al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda linked group, attacked the town of Malula. Why this is significant is because Malula is a living link with the time of Christ, a Christian village in Syria where Aramaic, the language of Jesus, is still spoken. It is for this reason that Malula was targeted—in the words of one of those attacking this small village whose way of life had remained largely unchanged over the centuries, the Mujahadeen are seeking to “conquer the capital of the Crusaders.” Such is the perspective of one whose vision has been distorted by hatred.

But it is not just in the Middle East where we see the persecution of Christians.

I would like to recall one story of one man I met, first in Jos, Nigeria, and then in Washington when we held a hearing on the terror group, Boko Haram last October. It was in the face of this one man that I was able to witness the face of the persecuted Church, which indeed is also the face of Christ.

Habila Adamu is a businessman from Yobe State in northern Nigeria. On the night of November 28, 2012, masked gunmen armed with AK-47 entered his home. They told his wife to leave, as they were here to “do the work of Allah.”

The questioning began.

“Are you a policeman?”

“No.”

“Are you a Nigerian soldier?”

“No.”

“Are you a Christian?”

“Yes.”

They then asked him why he has not accepted Islam, when he has heard the message of Muhammad.

He replied that “I am a Christian. We are also preaching the gospel of the true God to you and to other people who do not yet know God.”

They then asked, “Habla, Are you ready to die as a Christian?”

“I am ready to die as a Christian.”

They asked him again, “Are you ready to die as a Christian?”

He replied, “I am ready. . .” And before he had closed his mouth, a bullet ripped through him.

You can see the exit point of the wound in the photo before you. . .

How many of us, who profess Christ, would have been able to stare martyrdom in the face and refuse to renounce Christ?

Habila Adamu, by the grace of God, survived. The term “hero” is one thrown around loosely these days, but he is a hero of his faith.

And there are many more like him. We heard stories from around the world, where Christians are under attack simply for the beliefs they profess. We heard witnesses discuss persecution in places such as Burma, Vietnam, Eritrea, even in this hemisphere.

According to some estimates, China is on track to become the largest Christian nation in the world, though numbers are hard to pin down, because most of these Christians remain underground and cannot worship freely.

As US Commission on International Freedom Commissioner Elliott Abrams points out,

independent Protestants and Catholics continue to face persecution for refusing to affiliate with government-approved religious groups. Protestant “house church” groups that refuse to join the state-approved Protestant religious organization are deemed illegal and experience harassment, fines, detentions, and imprisonment. Approximately 900 Protestants were detained in the past year for conducting public worship activities. Seven Protestant leaders also were imprisoned for terms exceeding one year. The Chinese Government issued a directive to “eradicate” unregistered Protestant churches over the next ten years, including through force. Police have embraced the plan, raiding meetings, seeking to break up large churches that previously operated openly, and detaining religious leaders.

The Chinese Government continues to appoint Bishops without Vatican approval and place them in leadership positions, setting back Vatican-Beijing relations. Dozens of Catholic clergy, including three Bishops, remain in detention, in home confinement, under surveillance, or disappeared. Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin, the Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai, has been missing since he publicly announced his resignation from the state-approved Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association in June 2012. Bishop James Su Zhimin, arrested in 1996 while participating in a religious procession and convicted of QUOTE “unregistered religious activity”—in other words for remaining loyal to the Catholic Church, and not the State-authorized Church. Bishop Su has not been heard of since his arrest, and the Chinese government has repeatedly rebuffed inquiries as to his condition.

In Vietnam, to name one of these countries, churches are forced to register, and worship outside of State-authorized churches is forbidden. Christian ethnic minorities, such as the Hmong and Montagnard, are allowed to exist in uneasy tension with the governing authorities, knowing that the heavy hand of the state could stop their worship at any time. Vietnam’s Catholics, both clergy and laity, fill Vietnam’s jails as prisoners of conscience, for calling the government to account to a higher law than that of arbitrary dictates. The attack on a Catholic funeral procession in the village of Con Dau in 2010 resulted in more than 100 villagers injured, 62 arrested, five tortured, and at least three deaths; this should remind one of the brutality that Christians in Vietnam face.

And I mention Vietnam because now, in secrecy, negotiations are being held over the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Vietnam seeks entry, and if we focus on the utility and profits of increased trade without holding Vietnam to account for its human rights record, we miss an opportunity to better the lives of those who are beaten, imprisoned and even killed for their faith.

HONORING BROWNSVILLE LEADERS BOB AND RACHEL TORRES

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend two outstanding individuals who have dedicated more than 50 years to the communities of Brownsville, Texas and

Matamoros, Tamaulipas, in Mexico through their work with the Mr. Amigo Association.

Since the founding of the Mr. Amigo Association in 1963, Bob and Rachel Torres have both pledged time and effort to strengthen the relationship and promote the rich culture between these bordering cities.

Mr. Torres began his work in Mr. Amigo Association in 1964 as a member of the Board of Directors and went on to serve as the vice-president, and president of the entire organization in addition to chairing the Mr. Amigo Selection Committee. He stayed involved, serving as a master of ceremonies, consultant, and liaison between the association and its activities in Mexico for the last 40 years. Apart from his work with Mr. Amigo, Mr. Torres has been a chairman and member of the International Committee of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce for over 20 years and helped establish the Junior Chamber of Commerce chapters in Mexico in Matamoros and Valle Hermoso.

Mrs. Torres, in addition to her accomplishments through the Mr. Amigo Association, created the event that now kicks off every Charro Days celebration since 1987. This event known as "Hands Across the Border," includes the exchange of national flags by schoolchildren from both Brownsville and Matamoros and the international greetings by their respective mayors. Her involvement in the community goes beyond the Mr. Amigo Association, as she played crucial roles in the establishment of magnet schools in Brownsville, the Gladys Porter Zoo, Brownsville Crime Stoppers, and the Palo Alto Visitors Center. She is also a supporter of the arts and an advocate for healthcare access, and her faith continues to drive her work for her community and its people.

As a couple, Bob and Rachel Torres have worked with the American Consul in Matamoros and the Mexican Consul in Brownsville. Additionally, their work translating countless contracts for labor unions, articles of incorporation, and official meeting minutes has been essential to the success of maquiladoras in Brownsville and Matamoros. All of their accomplishments mentioned here today do not come close to fully describing their unwavering commitment to the welfare of these two vibrant communities.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to honor these outstanding citizens who have not only fostered a strong relationship between Brownsville and Matamoros, but between the United States and Mexico as well.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON JOHNSON
AND HONORING THE SERVICE OF
MR. KEVIN JOHNSON**

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of CPL. Thomas Jefferson Johnson and also honor the service of his son, Kevin Johnson. In 1944, Cpl. Johnson was killed in action during the invasion of Guam. Two years after his passing, Cpl. Johnson was buried by his loved ones, but it was without all the honors he deserved. On Janu-

ary 20, 2014, Kevin Johnson along with the Am Vets in Tulare, California gave Cpl. Johnson the funeral ceremony he rightly deserves. Cpl. Johnson was a source of pride for our Nation, and his service to our country must be honored.

Kevin Johnson was born in Oklahoma, but when the family farm was wiped out in a flood, the entire Johnson family moved to Chowchilla, California, where his father bought a small farm. The last time Mr. Johnson saw his father was in Oklahoma while they were visiting family before he left to the Pacific Theater. Without a father, Mr. Johnson was raised by his mother and grandparents.

After graduating from Tulare Union High, Mr. Johnson joined the military as his father did decades before. He was assigned to an Army Special Forces unit sent into the Vietnam jungle.

Mr. Johnson is a proud member of Am Vets in Tulare. They have been performing the military ceremony at veterans' funerals since 1963. The volunteer honor guard includes 13 men, and they perform 120 graveside services a year. Mr. Johnson and the men he serves with have the privilege to honor hundreds of brave men and women who fought for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life of CPL. Thomas Jefferson Johnson as he is remembered and honored during the funeral ceremony that is long overdue. We also must recognize the bravery and service of his son, Mr. Kevin Johnson.

**IN RECOGNITION OF DAVID
LACHMANN AND HIS CAREER IN
SERVICE**

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I, along with House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member JOHN CONYERS, Jr., would like to take this opportunity to thank David Lachmann for his service to Congress and congratulate him on his retirement. David has worked in the House of Representatives for the past twenty-five years, many of those with the House Committee on the Judiciary.

David began serving as Legislative Director for Congressman NADLER's office in January 1993. He joined the staff of the House Committee on the Judiciary in 1998 as minority staff for the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law. In 2001, David moved with Representative NADLER to the Constitution Subcommittee and became its Chief of Staff in 2006.

David has spent nearly thirty years in public service. Prior to joining Representative NADLER when he became a Congressman in 1993, David served as Legislative Assistant to Representative Stephen J. Solarz from 1989–1992. From 1985 to 1989, David was the Chief of Staff to Eileen C. Dugan, a member of the New York State Assembly, representing part of Brooklyn. A native of New York City, David is a graduate of Boston University and holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Political Science.

David's ability to work well with his colleagues, especially across the aisle and

across the Capitol, made him a valuable staff asset to passing many key pieces of legislation. He had the lead staff responsibility in the House for several significant bills that were enacted into law including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (Public Law 103–141), the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (Public Law 106–274). He was the lead Democratic staffer during the debate over the Bankruptcy Abuse and Consumer Protection Act of 2005, and has been a key resource to Members, various Administrations, and colleagues on and off the Hill during the Subcommittee's consideration of critical constitutional, civil rights, and civil liberties issues.

We are deeply appreciative of the service and contributions that David has provided the Judiciary Committee and the Congress for the past twenty-five years. Over this time, many people on and off Capitol Hill have been fortunate to call him a colleague and friend. He will be missed. We wish him the best of fortunes and fulfillment in his future endeavors.

**HONORING THE SERVICE ACADEMY
NOMINEES OF THE 4TH
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA**

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor thirty-three exceptional young men and women from the 4th Congressional District of Pennsylvania who have been nominated to attend a United States Service Academy. I submit with great pride the following nominations:

Nominated to the United States Military Academy—Matthew Benjamin, Jacob Jenkins, Chance King, Sabrina Mortell, Josh Mueller, Graeme Nelson, Zachary Schaeffer, and Tom Snell;

Nominated to the United States Naval Academy—Reed Alioth, Dom Antonelli, Bonaire Berry, Tyler Dolmetsch, Joe Fletcher, Matthew Gregoire, Liam Handley, Jacob Jenkins, Ian Johnson, Noah Krechel, Madi Luckenbaugh, Evan Miller, Logan Morris, Josh Mueller, Hayley Mardouh, Seth Murphy-Sweet, Graeme Nelson, Briannah Rohrbach, Sarah Sheerin, and Billy Stolkovich;

Nominated to the United States Air Force Academy—Hank Anderson, Donny Crabill, Matt Dieffenbach, Steven Foster, Noah Krechel, Marlaina McConville, Darren Miller, Evan Miller, and Natalie Seitz; and

Nominated to the United States Merchant Marine Academy—Jon Tarbox.

These individuals have distinguished themselves among their peers as leaders who are committed to serving their country in uniform. As these highly motivated and talented young men and women progress through the academy selection process, let us remember and be grateful for the sacrifice they are preparing to make in the name of our country and our citizens. I commend each, and wish them Godspeed in their future endeavors.