

Whereas the Secretary of State designated Goran Radosavljevic of Serbia under section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2018 as ineligible for entry into the United States due to his involvement in gross violations of human rights;

Whereas two Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs officers, Sretan Popovic and Milos Stojanovic, were charged in 2006 for crimes associated with their involvement in the detention and transport of the Bytyqi brothers from Prokuplje to Petrovo Selo, but acquitted in May 2012 with an appeals court confirming the verdict in March 2013;

Whereas the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic promised several high ranking United States officials to deliver justice in the cases of the deaths of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi;

Whereas no individual has ever been found guilty for the murders of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi or of any other crimes associated with their deaths; and

Whereas no individual is currently facing criminal charges regarding the murder of the Bytyqi brothers despite many promises by Serbian officials to resolve the case: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) those individuals responsible for the murders in July 1999 of United States citizens Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi in Serbia should be brought to justice;

(2) it is reprehensible that no individual has ever been found guilty for executing the Bytyqi brothers, or of any other crimes associated with their deaths, and that no individual is even facing charges for these horrible crimes;

(3) the Government of Serbia and its relevant ministries and offices, including the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor's Office, should make it a priority to investigate and prosecute as soon as possible those current or former officials believed to be responsible for their deaths, directly or indirectly;

(4) the United States should devote sufficient resources to fully assist and properly monitor efforts by the Government of Serbia and its relevant ministries and offices to investigate and prosecute as soon as possible those individuals believed to be responsible for their deaths, directly or indirectly; and

(5) progress in resolving this case, or the lack thereof, should remain a significant factor determining the further development of relations between the United States and the Republic of Serbia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 45.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 45, a resolution condemning the execution-style murders of the U.S.

citizen Bytyqi brothers in the Republic of Serbia in July 1999.

Let me start by thanking Representative LEE ZELDIN for his bipartisan work in bringing their murderers to justice.

These three brave brothers, whose family hails from what is now Kosovo, were simply trying to help a Romanian family find safety outside Kosovo when they were trapped at an unmarked administrative border. After 15 days of jail, the brothers were taken by a special operations unit of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, where they lost their lives at the hands of Serbian officials.

The brothers were in their early twenties. Their bodies were not found until 2 years later, buried atop a mass grave of Kosovo civilians. In the 23 years since, the United States has been promised that justice will be delivered, yet not one person has been found guilty of their murder.

This measure would call on the Serbian Government to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of their murders, and on the United States to devote the resources necessary to assist in bringing them to justice.

The 116th Congress passed this resolution, and it is my hope that this Congress does the same. These three young men deserve justice and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 45. I thank Representative ZELDIN for championing this important resolution.

As the world focuses on the horrors of the war crimes being committed by Vladimir Putin's invading forces in Ukraine, we must not forget the victims of the past war crimes still awaiting justice.

Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi were three American brothers from New York State who are suspected of having been killed in July 1999 by Serbian authorities. After disappearing while in the custody of Serbian special police, they were executed, shot in the head with their hands tied behind their backs. Their bodies were later discovered in a mass grave at a training compound of the Serbian secret police.

Tragically, nearly 23 years later, there has still not been a full investigation into their deaths, and the Bytyqi brothers' murderers have yet to be brought to justice. This is unacceptable.

This case, among others, illustrates the continued need for Serbia to resolve outstanding war crimes investigations. Holding accountable those who committed and covered up the murder of the Bytyqi brothers is critical to continuing bilateral relations between the United States and Belgrade.

Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolu-

tion. Congress must be on the record calling on Serbian authorities to once and for all deliver justice for the Bytyqi brothers and their family.

Mr. Speaker, 23 years is too long for the Bytyqi brothers and their family to go without justice.

Seriously dealing with the past and bringing justice to all victims of war crimes committed in the wars that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia is needed to ensure reconciliation and peace throughout the region.

Mr. ZELDIN reintroduced this bipartisan resolution last year. I urge Belgrade to commit to a proper investigation and full accountability for these three Americans so this resolution does not have to be reintroduced once again next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 45 will ensure that the United States is doing everything in our power to bring the murderers of United States citizens Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi to justice.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LEE ZELDIN for his leadership on this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to join us by voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 45.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO RELEASE PAUL RUSESABAGINA ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 892) calling on the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to release Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 892

Whereas, in August 2020, Rwandan political activist Paul Rusesabagina, a United States lawful permanent resident and a Presidential Medal of Freedom Honoree, was extrajudicially transferred from Texas to Kigali, Rwanda, by way of the United Arab

Emirates, and subjected to an enforced disappearance for three days before the Government of the Republic of Rwanda acknowledged his detention, during which time he was reportedly tortured;

Whereas, in December 2020, more than 36 Members of Congress wrote to President Paul Kagame to urge him to return Paul Rusesabagina to the United States and expressed grave concern with the manner in which the Government of Rwanda extrajudicially transferred Mr. Rusesabagina from the United Arab Emirates to Rwanda and then immediately placed him in solitary confinement and charged him with multiple crimes;

Whereas, on February 11, 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on “Rwanda, the case of Paul Rusesabagina”, which in part “[e]xpresses deep concern about the violations of Mr. Rusesabagina’s rights; urges the Rwandan authorities to allow Mr. Rusesabagina to undergo a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal applying international human rights standards . . .”;

Whereas the American Bar Association’s Center for Human Rights’ June 2021 report “The Case of Paul Rusesabagina” concluded that, “it is clear that Mr. Rusesabagina’s fair trial rights – in particular his right to confidential communication, his right to the presumption of innocence, and his right to prepare his defense – have been violated, potentially to the irreparable prejudice of the defense, calling into question the fairness of any potential convicting verdict”;

Whereas, on September 20, 2021, the High Court of Rwanda convicted Paul Rusesabagina of terrorism-related offences and he was sentenced to 25 years in prison;

Whereas United States Department of State Spokesman Ned Price announced on September 20, 2021, that the United States Government is “concerned by the Government of Rwanda’s conviction of U.S. lawful permanent resident Paul Rusesabagina” and stated that the “reported lack of fair trial guarantees calls into question the fairness of the verdict”;

Whereas, on October 7, 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on “The case of Paul Rusesabagina in Rwanda”, which “[c]alls for the immediate release of Mr. Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds and for his repatriation without prejudice to his guilt or innocence; demands that the EU Delegation to Rwanda and the diplomatic representations of the Member States strongly convey this request in their exchanges with the Rwandan authorities”;

Whereas on May 19, 2022, the Department of State determined that Paul Rusesabagina was “wrongfully detained”, and that “the determination took into account the totality of the circumstances, notably the lack of fair trial guarantees during his trial”, pursuant to the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (Public Law 116-260); and

Whereas Paul Rusesabagina is a cancer survivor and suffers from a cardiovascular disorder and his family states that he has missed multiple medical appointments, including cancer screenings: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the Government of Rwanda to immediately release Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds and permit him to return safely to the United States;

(2) calls on the Government of Rwanda to ensure Paul Rusesabagina receives access to appropriate, qualified medical professionals and all medical care necessary to guarantee his physical integrity and psychological well-being;

(3) urges the United States Government in all interactions with the Government of Rwanda to raise the case of Paul Rusesabagina and to press for his immediate release on humanitarian grounds; and

(4) expresses support to the family of Paul Rusesabagina and their commitment to bringing Paul Rusesabagina home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 892, as amended, calling on the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to release Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 892, which calls for the release of Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Chairman CASTRO, for drafting this important measure.

Nearly 30 years ago, Paul Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and permanent resident of the United States, risked his life to protect more than a thousand people during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In honor of his singular and valiant actions during one of the worst human rights crises and mass murders in history, he was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In August 2020, Paul Rusesabagina boarded a plane in the UAE that he believed was headed to Burundi only to arrive in the capital of Rwanda and be arrested by Rwandan authorities under dubious terrorism-related charges.

In September, despite a lack of due process and fair trial, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He has been placed in solitary confinement and charged with numerous crimes of no credence.

The Rwandan Government’s unlawful actions, including the extrajudicial transfer of Mr. Rusesabagina from the UAE to Rwanda and his deteriorating medical condition while detained, are of great concern.

The Department of State has now determined that he was wrongfully detained pursuant to the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. As such, this resolution calls for the immediate release and return of Mr. Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the administration to raise the case of Mr. Rusesabagina in all interactions with

the Rwandan Government and continue to press for his immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 892, calling for the release of Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds. I am proud to co-lead this resolution alongside Representative CASTRO. I thank him for his leadership.

Paul Rusesabagina is a legal permanent resident of the United States who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his heroic actions during the Rwandan genocide.

In August 2020, he was extrajudicially transferred from Texas to Kigali, Rwanda, by way of the United Arab Emirates, and subjected to an enforced disappearance for 3 days before the Government of the Republic of Rwanda acknowledged his detention.

He underwent trial proceedings for terrorism-related charges, and the American Bar Association has subsequently determined that his fair trial rights have been violated.

Pursuant to the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Act, the Department of State has determined that Mr. Rusesabagina was wrongfully detained.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Rwandan Government to urgently work with the State Department and authorities in Europe to secure a path forward for his release and return to the United States.

It is also critically important that the Government of Rwanda grant access to his U.S.-based doctor to assess his health and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution and efforts to bring Paul Rusesabagina home to his family.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1645

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), who is the chair of the Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations, and Global Corporate Social Impact.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 892, calling on the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to release Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds.

Paul is a hero of the Rwandan genocide and a permanent resident of San Antonio, Texas, my hometown where his family also lives today.

Last year, a Rwandan court sentenced Paul to 25 years in prison on politically motivated charges. Paul is 68 years old, and for him that is a life sentence.

Congresswoman YOUNG KIM and I have been closely following his case for several years, and we were proud to introduce H. Res. 892 in February of this year.

Paul's story begins in Rwanda, the country of his birth. Nearly three decades ago, he was serving as assistant general manager of a luxury hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, when the Rwandan genocide began.

The genocide, which led to the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people over a 3-month period, targeted mostly members of the ethnic Tutsi minority. Paul is a member of the Hutu majority, but he was determined not to see his Tutsi countrymen die on his watch.

As genocidal killing squads roamed through Rwanda, Paul sheltered more than 1,200 people in his hotel, saving their lives.

In the aftermath of the genocide, Paul and his family received asylum in Belgium and later moved to San Antonio with the help of the late Texas Senator Bob Krueger, an international leader in the fight against genocide. In 2005, President George W. Bush presented Paul with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our Nation's highest civilian honor.

Since the 1994 genocide, the Government of Rwanda has made tremendous strides in economic development and stability. However, the country's government is still plagued by corruption, abuse of power, and human rights issues that amount to violations of international law—including enforced disappearances.

At home and abroad Paul Rusesabagina has used his voice and elevated platform to call attention to the need for change in Rwanda. In response, the Rwandan Government launched an extraordinary campaign of persecution against him.

In August 2020, Paul was extrajudicially transferred from Texas to Rwanda by way of the United Arab Emirates and arrested on trumped-up charges.

The Rwandan Government did not acknowledge his detention for 3 days, during which he was reportedly subject to torture. In September 2021, Paul was found guilty and sentenced in a trial that the European Union described as "marred by numerous violations of his fair trial rights."

He is a cancer survivor who lives with serious cardiovascular issues, and Rwandan authorities have not provided him with the care he needs in prison.

I have my children here on the floor with me, and my heart breaks for Paul's family who can only speak to him once a week for 5 minutes. It is long past time for Rwanda to release Paul and allow him to come home to San Antonio.

My colleagues and I on both sides of the aisle have raised our concerns previously. In December 2020, we sent a bipartisan, bicameral letter to Rwandan President Paul Kagame urging him to release Paul on humanitarian grounds. We spoke out about the way Paul was taken against his will to Rwanda, which for all intents and purposes was a kidnapping by the Kagame regime.

In June 2021, my colleagues and I wrote to Secretary of State Antony

Blinken urging him to use all diplomatic means at his disposal to ensure Paul's safe return to the United States.

We are not the only ones who are concerned.

Last year, the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights issued a report that found Paul's right to confidential communication, his right to the presumption of innocence, and his right to prepare his defense have all been violated.

In October 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution denouncing Paul's illegal arrest. The resolution strongly condemns the conviction, which it said was "exemplary of the human rights violations in Rwanda."

Paul is a permanent resident of the United States, and we must work just as hard as our European allies to bring him home.

In May, the State Department announced its determination that Paul was "wrongfully detained," noting that "The determination took into account the totality of the circumstances, notably the lack of fair trial guarantees during his trial."

I appreciate the support of the State Department, which has been working with Paul's family and the Congress on this issue. I am especially pleased that Paul's case is now under the purview of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, Ambassador Roger Carstens.

Rwanda's President Kagame wants to be seen as a global leader and a reliable partner to the United States, including on issues including climate change. But Paul's unlawful detention is a blight on Rwanda's international reputation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, to support this resolution.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution offered by Representative CASTRO and myself. I want to recognize Paul's family, especially his wife and children, who have tirelessly advocated for his release.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Rusesabagina's history and circumstances as a war hero wrongfully detained and denied adequate medical care is one that we cannot ignore. Congress must stand with Paul Rusesabagina's family who have not wavered in championing his legacy and calling attention to his plight to call for his immediate release and return to the United States on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank Chairman CASTRO for his leadership on this resolution. I urge all my colleagues to join us by voting in the affirmative, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 892, a reso-

lution calling on the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to release Paul Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds.

The Rwandan genocide is considered one of the deadliest and most brutal tragedies in the history of humankind. In just 100 days, more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were systematically assaulted, raped, and slaughtered by the Rwandan and Interahamwe militias. And except for a few peacekeeping forces, the international community at large refused to get involved—leaving any resistance efforts to come from within the country.

That's when Paul Rusesabagina stepped in. As the manager at a hotel in the capital city of Kigali at the time, he was credited for housing and feeding more than 1,200 Tutsi and Hutu refugees during the genocide. He knew that the consequences of his efforts would put both himself and his family in danger, but he still chose to help his people in their greatest hour of need.

Now, the Rwandan government has convicted, detained, and reportedly tortured Mr. Rusesabagina on charges stemming from a trial that the State Department and American Bar Association considered unfair and irreparable. He has also been denied the medical attention required as a cancer survivor and individual suffering from a cardiovascular disorder.

By passing this resolution, the House of Representatives will join several other international democratic bodies to express concern over his conviction and call for his immediate release. We will also urge the United States Government to continue to raise awareness about Mr. Rusesabagina's case and convey our support to his friends, family, and loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Rusesabagina's story reminds us that hope can be found even during our darkest days. I would urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 892, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 52 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.