

rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4480, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

# CALLING ON HAMAS TO IMMEDIATELY RELEASE HOSTAGES TAKEN DURING OCTOBER 2023 ATTACK ON ISRAEL

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 793) calling on Hamas to immediately release hostages taken during October 2023 attack on Israel.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

## H. RES. 793

Whereas, on October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a brutal terrorist attack from Gaza into Israel and against the Israeli people;

Whereas, on October 16, 2023, the Israeli military confirmed that Hamas killed more than 1,400 people in the attack;

Whereas, on October 15, 2023, the United States Department of State confirmed that at least 30 Americans were killed in the attack;

Whereas, on October 16, 2023, the Israeli military confirmed that Hamas was holding 199 hostages in Gaza who were abducted during the attack;

Whereas Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions states that the taking of hostages is and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever;

Whereas, on October 10, 2023, President Joe Biden confirmed that Americans are known to be among the hostages;

Whereas it is reported that children and senior citizens are among the hostages; and

Whereas Hamas has threatened to execute hostages and videotape the killings: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns Hamas for its brutal attack on Israel;

(2) condemns Hamas for the taking of hostages;

(3) condemns Hamas for threats made against hostages;

(4) demands that Hamas immediately release all hostages and return them to safety;

(5) recognizes that the taking of hostages is a violation of international humanitarian law; and

(6) expresses sympathy to the hostages, wounded, deceased, and their families for this travesty to justice and personal hardship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, on October 7, Israel suffered one of the worst days in its history as it came under attack by the Hamas terror group. These terrorists stormed across the border at Gaza and murdered 1,200 people and took 240 innocent people hostage, dragging them against their will into Gaza.

From elderly Holocaust survivors to young babies, Hamas did not discriminate in its cruelty.

Mr. Speaker, American citizens are still among the hostages. Many of us in this House have met with these hostage families. The pain and suffering that these families are enduring is beyond what any human should have to go through.

Young children forced to be witness to their parents' murder right in front of them, babies ripped from their mothers arms, teenagers at a music festival gunned down.

The atrocities that were committed that day and the glee with which the terrorists acted is unimaginable, Mr. Speaker, and it is the height of human depravity.

Hamas filmed and broadcast these atrocities. This savage, sick terrorist group wanted to brag to the world about the massacre at their hands.

These terrorists, Mr. Speaker, are monsters, and we have not seen this type of violence and cruelty since ISIS was running rampant in the Levant. The Jewish people have not witnessed this much diabolical death in one day since the Holocaust.

After holding these hostages for 7 long weeks, Hamas has agreed to release some of these innocent women and children in an exchange for Israel temporarily pausing its military campaign and releasing Palestinians in jail.

All of us on this House floor are grateful for those hostage releases, and we are grateful for the leadership of the United States, Qatar, and the Government of Israel to achieve that modicum of peace and help for those families.

However, listen to the deal, Mr. Speaker. It was three jailed criminals for each innocent person captured and drug across the Gaza fence line on October 7. Despite the good news that we have witnessed in the last few days, Hamas is still holding over 150 innocent people.

Hamas must release all the remaining hostages. The United States continues to stand alongside our ally Israel in their fight to secure that safe release of all the hostages unconditionally and safely.

It was an honor and privilege working together with Congresswoman HALEY STEVENS, and I am so proud to be on the House floor tonight alongside Congresswoman HALEY STEVENS to introduce this resolution.

With this resolution, the House of Representatives strongly condemns Hamas' attack. It calls on Hamas to immediately and unconditionally release all the hostages taken on October 7.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee has marked up this legislation earlier in the month, and it received unanimous support. I expect it will receive that today on this House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to stand with the hostages, with their families, and support this measure.

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

□ 1730

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 793, calling on Hamas to immediately release hostages taken during the October 7 gruesome and savage attack on Israel. I am grateful for my dear friend and colleague from Michigan, Representative HALEY STEVENS, for introducing the resolution together with my friend, Representative FRENCH HILL.

Representative STEVENS' extraordinary leadership on hostage and wrongful detention issues has given a voice to families of hostages and detainees and helped ensure that we never relent in our pursuit of bringing wrongfully detained Americans home.

The Hamas terror attack on October 7 resulted in the abduction of more than 240 innocent civilians and the heinous murder of more than 1,200 people.

In specifically targeting a civilian population, Hamas' abductions are among the greatest crimes against humanity. The sheer scale of the casualties and murder is the greatest attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Hamas has compounded the unimaginable human suffering it has caused through the use of its own people and the hostages as human shields, something we should never forget.

The hostages abducted by Hamas include civilians, soldiers, women, children, grandparents, and Holocaust survivors. Many are Israeli. Some are foreign or dual nationals, including American citizens.

Dozens of hostages have finally been released, thanks to the painstaking, difficult, and necessary negotiations assisted by the United States, including President Biden, and Qatar. I hope that, after this latest round of releases, we will continue to work to bring home all the remaining hostages.

This resolution calls attention to these abductions perpetrated by Hamas. Hamas specifically captured these innocent people so they could be used as bargaining chips and human shields while Hamas attempts to wipe Israel off the map.

Yet, while the situation is dire, there is hope. There are experienced public servants across the United States Government who have already helped secure the release of some Americans and dozens of other hostages from Hamas'



clutches. These dedicated officials in the White House, the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, and elsewhere across our government continue their tireless work to bring all the remaining American hostages and all the hostages home.

This resolution is simple and straightforward. It condemns the horrific actions of Hamas, correctly notes that hostage taking is a violation of international humanitarian law, expresses solidarity with the victims, and demands Hamas release all hostages immediately.

It is incredibly important that we give it our full support to send a clear message about the need to bring them home. We must stand with the hostages and their families in Israel and all over the world until they come home.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues and, in particular, Representative STEVENS for her tireless efforts on behalf of these Americans and their families and all Americans taken hostage or wrongfully detained overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER), a very passionate supporter of our ally Israel and a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I was in Israel with Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, and a bipartisan delegation. We met with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and we watched 21 minutes of unedited, raw footage of the October 7 terrorist attack. We watched Hamas terrorists indiscriminately kill women, children, and babies. We watched them take innocent civilians hostage, including Doron Katz Asher and her two daughters, Raz and Aviv. Doron's uncle is a constituent of mine in the 17th Congressional District of New York.

We met with families of the hostages, including the brother of Emily Hand. I sat next to him as he tearfully told his sister's story, bringing the rest of us to tears as he talked about the fact that his 8-year-old sister would spend her ninth birthday—the Friday after our meeting—alone, held captive by Hamas terrorists.

A few weeks ago, in New York City, I met with the mother of Or Yaakov and Yagil Yaakov, 13- and 16-year-old young men who were held captive. All of them have since been released.

I thank the administration for negotiating to get their release, but let's be clear: Hamas is a vile, barbaric terrorist organization.

We hear Members calling for a cease-fire. There was a cease-fire on October 6. In fact, there have been eight cease-fires in 15 years, each time violated by Hamas. In this most recent one, the biggest slaughtering of Jews since the Holocaust, 240 innocents were taken away from their families.

While they are releasing hostages, it is not enough. I have a simple way for this to end. If people want a cease-fire, Hamas must surrender. It is that simple. We want these hostages home, and we want to make sure that the innocent lives lost are not in vain.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, we saw news reports that Hamas would not release a 10-month-old baby and, in fact, was turning that baby over to another terrorist organization. That is the type of people, if you can even call them that, who you are dealing with.

The United States must do everything it can to stand by its greatest ally in the Middle East and, indeed, across the world, the State of Israel. We will vote on a resolution that makes it clear that not only does Israel have a right to exist, but they have a right to defend themselves, and the only way that this ends peacefully is for Hamas to surrender.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from the great State of Michigan (Ms. STEVENS).

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for yielding. She is a true leader in this country on Middle East issues. I also thank the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. MCCAUL, for his steady hand and dedication to leading the Foreign Affairs Committee during this pivotal moment in world history and for moving this resolution forward alongside the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the indefatigable former Chairman MEEKS.

Congressman FRENCH HILL and I chair the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad, and I thank him for being my lead sponsor on this bill. It is an honor to work with him in that capacity. This resolution speaks to our collaboration and dedication to the hostages taken by Hamas on October 7.

On October 7, a day that will live in infamy, 1,200 were killed in a surprise attack during a Jewish holiday. The attack didn't stop there because over 200 were taken hostage in one of the greatest hostage takings in world history.

We are now in a moment when the House of Representatives is called to speak, to demand on behalf of our government the return of all the hostages held in Gaza.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the hundreds of cosponsors and supporters of this resolution. It is worth noting that fellow Members of Congress who span the country and the political spectrum have joined together to call out Hamas.

Mr. Speaker, the time is more than now. We have seen some hostages in the last handful of days being returned, and now we have learned of their

harrowing time held in tunnels, nearly starved, with no beds. Right now, too many are left in those tunnels injured, uncared for, and victimized at the hands of those who killed their fellow countrymen and -women.

Introduced on October 17, a week-and-a-half into this hostage nightmare, this resolution, H. Res. 793, called out Hamas and demanded the return of the innocents—women, elderly, children, infants. Over the weekend, Israel and her allies secured the release of 58 hostages at 7 weeks into captivity. On Monday, 11 more hostages were released. Just moments ago, we have learned of more, for a total of 85. Among those are Aviv Asher, age 2; her sister Raz, age 4; Emma Cunio, age 3; Yuli Cunio, age 3; Avigail Idan, age 4; and Oria Brodutch, age 4—toddlers, children, preschoolers, the most innocent people on planet Earth. Those freed also included senior citizens: Yafa Adar, age 85; Elma Avraham, age 84; and Channa Peri, age 79.

Why on Earth did Hamas take these people? Why did they force them to watch the murder of their loved ones? This is absolutely unconscionable, and it is an attack on all humanity.

These people have been used as pawns. We are relieved that some are home, but we must condemn those who have kidnapped. We must condemn the terrorists who seek to attack the Jewish state. They have brutally killed relatives, neighbors, and fellow Israelis. We must continue to push to return the remaining hostages.

Let us not forget that over 150 remain in Gaza, and many of those released still have family members held—nearly 200 people held for 52 days at gunpoint. Nine Americans continue to be held.

Hundreds of families are waiting with bated breath for the return of their precious loved ones, waiting for relief and joy or the worst pain known to humankind. We cannot even imagine their anguish. It is unfathomable. What Hamas did was evil, and it was an attack on the Jewish state.

□ 1745

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS).

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I cannot in my allotted time name those who are remaining in Gaza, but we are making progress, and we will come together united as a House of Representatives to condemn this evil.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her passionate words and her outstanding work in crafting this H. Res. 793, which calls on Hamas to release everyone unconditionally to return to their families.

Ms. STEVENS has done a great thing. Between us, we come to this House



floor with some 236 cosponsors for this resolution, Mr. Speaker.

I would certainly hope that on both sides of this aisle that we have a unanimous vote on this important statement of the American people, representing the American people, calling out against the atrocities that have been committed against the innocent people in Israel.

I thank my friend from Michigan, too, for our work together and partnership and co-chairing the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongly Detained Abroad.

This is important work. It has been truly tested in these past 7 weeks. Our congressional family is grieving with our Israeli families and other nationalities who have someone as a murder victim of these terrorists or someone who remains a hostage of these terrorists.

It is our goal to be a resource to our fellow Members through that task force to try to help them work with our State Department and make sure those families understand what information they can have and how they can be helped through this challenge. We want to bring all these Americans home.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I just would say we were all on the front steps of the Capitol together, Democrats and Republicans, and we stood as Americans that night with our new Speaker, MIKE JOHNSON; our minority leader, HAKEEM JEFFRIES; Ms. STEVENS, myself, our colleagues; our committee chairs, Mr. MEEKS of New York as our ranking member of Foreign Affairs; and our committee chairman, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, in solidarity against the atrocities in Gaza and in Israel.

That night, I had the opportunity to have the most wonderful visit with the most hopeful mother, Adi Marciano—a beautiful woman.

We hugged and talked, and we had in the candlelight of that moment on the House steps a moment of hope, but just a few hours later, she learned that her daughter, Noa, 19 years old, Mr. Speaker, a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces, was among the murdered, not among the hostages.

We don't want to forget those who have been killed in this process as we pray for the release of the hostages, and we call politically on this House floor for the release of the hostages.

We lift up these families, and we lift up all those who are grieving over the loss and tragedy on both sides of the fence in Gaza.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H. Res. 793. I reserve the balance of my time, and I have no additional speakers.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent the past 6 weeks meeting with families of innocent civilians who were taken hostage by Hamas.

Just like the stories of Holocaust survivors, each story is unique. Each

story is heartbreaking because each of these hostages has loving family members whose lives have been torn apart, who are living with the agony of not knowing what has become of their loved ones. Are they okay? Are they healthy? Are they injured? Are they alive? Will they ever see them again?

I have heard stories that have brought me to tears, that haunt my dreams, that should make all of us redouble our efforts to bring those hostages home.

Mr. Speaker, the past few days have seen significant breakthroughs in attempts to bring the hostages held by Hamas home to their families. Dozens of hostages, including a few Americans, have been released, especially over the past few days.

I applaud the efforts of this administration, Israel, Qatar, and others who have worked to ensure that the temporary cease-fire holds and that the agreed-upon hostages are released, but there is much more work to be done.

Even after these last rounds of releases, dozens of hostages still remain imprisoned by Hamas. This is unacceptable.

We cannot afford to go back to the status quo. It is imperative that the United States, Israel, and our other allies and partners continue to press forward with efforts to secure the release of all the remaining hostages, including Keith Siegel from my State of North Carolina, including Yarden Roman who made the excruciating decision to hand her daughter, Geffen, to her husband, Alon, because he could run faster to escape the terrorists and save their daughter.

Yarden herself is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor whose great-grandparents made the same excruciating decision to sacrifice themselves for their daughter.

There are more than 150 more young people, mothers, fathers, civilians, soldiers, Americans, Israelis, Thai, and others. We must continue to work so that they can be brought home and reunited with their families.

I strongly support this resolution. Again, I thank Representative STEVENS for all her work on this issue and on this resolution, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for leading the discussion on our House floor today on the gentlewoman from Michigan's excellent resolution, H. Res. 793.

I am proud to be a cosponsor, proud to stand with 236 Members on both sides of the aisle to demand an unconditional release of those still held hostage by the terrorists in Gaza and their coconspirators.

I urge a "yes" vote, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr.

HILL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 793.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### REAFFIRMING THE STATE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 888) reaffirming the State of Israel's right to exist.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 888

Whereas the Jewish people are native to the Land of Israel;

Whereas throughout history and across the reign of multiple kingdoms, the Jewish people were persecuted and expelled from the Land of Israel, forced to live as minority diaspora communities in other lands;

Whereas Jewish diaspora communities were historically violently persecuted in, and in some cases expelled from, other countries throughout the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia due to their religion;

Whereas the Nazis attempted to annihilate the entire Jewish population of Europe during the Holocaust, murdering 6,000,000 Jews during this time;

Whereas this genocide provided new urgency to re-establish a Jewish homeland for the Jewish people following the Holocaust, where they would not be a vulnerable minority, where they could freely practice their faith, and where something like the Holocaust could never happen again;

Whereas the modern State of Israel was established on May 14, 1948;

Whereas even after the establishment of the State of Israel, other countries and terrorist entities continued to attack Israel, reject its right to exist, and call for its destruction; and

Whereas Israel is the only Jewish State, and therefore, despite persistent external threats, the existence of Israel provides Jews a place to live free from persecution and discrimination: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms the State of Israel's right to exist;

(2) recognizes that denying Israel's right to exist is a form of antisemitism;

(3) rejects calls for Israel's destruction and the elimination of the only Jewish State; and

(4) condemns the Hamas-led terrorist attack on Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members