

York. I am grateful for his leadership as well and the words he has just spoken.

On October 7, the world watched Hamas terrorists invade Israel and brutally kidnap, torture, rape, burn alive, and murder innocent babies, children, women, men, and the elderly, including dozens of Americans. Americans remain hostage to this day.

This unprovoked war has underscored why I will always stand with Israel and support our key democratic ally's right to defend herself from those who seek her destruction.

This bipartisan legislation is a key step to counter anti-Israel bias and anti-Semitic BDS movements strung along by enemies of our Nation. As my colleagues have said, the BDS movement is anti-Semitic. We must move quickly to stop international governmental organizations from unfairly and unjustly alienating Israel. It is unacceptable.

Speaking, as my colleague did, about the United Nations and UNRWA, in particular, and what has come out even in the last days about UNRWA—which is, again, part of the United Nations playing host to a Hamas data center—we know that a significant number of Hamas fighters are employees at UNRWA. I just want people to understand that funding from the United States of America should not be supporting any terrorist fighters like those in Hamas. It is totally unacceptable, and that is not where dollars from the United States should be going.

Right now, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric has spread across the country and the world. According to the ADL, between October 7 and January 7, there were more than 1,300 instances of anti-Semitic acts and expressions of support for terrorism against the State of Israel.

Today, we have a chance to stand up for our ally, Israel, and to stand up against anti-Semitism and all of the disinformation which continues to spread around the world on sources like TikTok.

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

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. We know that on TikTok, which is supported by the Chinese Government, the CCP is continuing to spread disinformation. Disinformation is also coming out from many of these organizations. We must stand up against it.

This legislation does nothing to violate the First Amendment. In fact, the importance of being able to stand strong with the First Amendment is what allows legislation like this to make it to the floor in Congress. Leadership from Mr. LAWLER and others and the excellent work here of Ms. MANNING is the kind of leadership that is critical.

So, Madam Speaker, I, once again, urge my colleagues to vote for and help

pass the Anti-Boycott Act. We must stand strong up against Hamas.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I support this bill and the underlying provision of law it seeks to amend which works to protect U.S. businesses from being targeted by foreign boycotts, particularly against nations friendly to the United States like Israel.

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 3016, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I thank my Democratic co-lead, Congressman JOSH GOTTHEIMER of New Jersey, who is the co-chair of the Problem Solvers Caucus, and all of our bipartisan cosponsors for working with me on this important bill to update our anti-boycott laws and to respond to potential threats facing the United States and our ally, Israel. We must stand with our ally Israel and not allow rampant, institutionalized anti-Israel bias and bigotry at the United Nations to delegitimize the State of Israel.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of our Members to vote in favor of H.R. 3016, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my good friend Mr. LAWLER for authoring the IGO Anti-Boycott Act, which amends the Anti-Boycott Act of 2018 to apply its provisions also to international governmental organizations.

When this bill becomes law, it will prevent U.S. companies from supporting boycotts of U.S. allies if those boycotts are promoted or imposed by intergovernmental organizations.

What is at issue here are boycotts of Israel organized by the antisemitic Boycott, Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement, has enlisted the United Nations and European Union into its attempt to blacklist Israel—really to make Israel into a pariah state.

I thank Mr. LAWLER as this bill will be a very effective tool in the global fight against anti-Semitism.

As to the UN's blacklist, meant to be an authoritative guide to anti-Israel boycotters, it lists companies operating inside disputed territories—but the UN provides no similar list for any other disputed territory in the world. This is a clear double standard against Israel—it fails Natan Sharansky's "3Ds" test according to which we can see the antisemitism of actions toward Israel that apply a double standard against Israel, seek to delegitimize it, or demonize it.

In the last 9 months I have chaired or co-chaired three hearings on the United Nations and its pervasive antisemitism. We have heard the testimony and seen the documentation. Make no mistake, antisemitic bigotry is at the root of the UN's hostility to Israel, which is ugly, evil, and manifests in almost every UN entity.

The United Nations is unquestionably the world's foremost legitimizer of antisemitism, in-

cluding in its most virulent and violent forms. The monstrous and genocidal atrocities we have seen pouring out of Gaza since October 7 are antisemitic hate crimes, the logical consequence of the unbridled antisemitism fomented and enabled by the United Nations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3016, 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.

#### IGO ANTI-BOYCOTT ACT

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3202) to prohibit any official action to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3202

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023".

#### SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT.

(a) CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT.—Section 7412 of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (title LXXIV of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020; 22 U.S.C. 8791 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "the President shall impose" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "the President—"

"(A) shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to a foreign person that the President determines—

"(i) knowingly engages, on or after such date of enactment, in an activity described in paragraph (2);

"(ii) is an adult family member of a foreign person described in clause (i), unless the President determines there is clear and convincing evidence that such adult family member has disassociated themselves from the foreign person described in such clause and has no history of helping such foreign person conceal assets; or

"(iii) is owned or controlled by a foreign person described in clause (i) or (ii); and

"(B) may impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to a foreign person that the President determines knowingly provides, on or after such date of enactment, significant financial, material, or technological support to a foreign person engaging in an activity described in any of subparagraphs (B) through (H) of paragraph (2);"

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

"(i) the Government of Syria (including any entity owned or controlled by the Government of Syria), a senior political figure of the Government of Syria, a member of the People's Assembly of Syria, or a senior foreign political figure (as such term is defined

in section 101.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations) of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party of Syria, including any such senior foreign political figure who is—

“(I) a member of the Central Command, Central Committee, or Auditing and Inspection Committee of such Party; or

“(II) a leader of a local branch of such Party.”;

(II) in clause (ii), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(III) in clause (iii), by striking the semicolon and inserting “; or”; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iv) Syria Arab Airlines, Cham Wings, or any foreign person owned or controlled by Syria Arab Airlines or Cham Wings.”;

(ii) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) knowingly sells or provides aircraft or spare aircraft parts—

“(i) to the Government of Syria; or

“(ii) for or on behalf of the Government of Syria to any foreign person operating in an area directly or indirectly controlled by the Government of Syria or foreign forces associated with the Government of Syria.”;

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) by striking “construction or engineering services” and inserting “construction, engineering, or commercial financial services”; and

(II) by striking the closing period and inserting a semicolon; and

(v) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(F) purposefully engages in or directs—

“(i) the diversion of goods (including agricultural commodities, food, medicine, and medical devices), or any international humanitarian assistance, intended for the people of Syria; or

“(ii) the dealing in proceeds from the sale or resale of such diverted goods or international humanitarian assistance, as the case may be;

“(G) knowingly, directly or indirectly, engages in or attempts to engage in, the seizure, confiscation, theft, or expropriation for personal gain or political purposes of property, including real property, in Syria or owned by a citizen of Syria;

“(H) knowingly, directly or indirectly, engages in or attempts to engage in a transaction or transactions for or with such seized, confiscated, stolen, or expropriated property described in subparagraph (G); or

“(I) knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support to a foreign person engaging in an activity described in subparagraph (A).”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(4) TRANSACTION DEFINED.—For purposes of the determination required by subparagraph (a)(2)(A), the term ‘transaction’ includes in-kind transactions.

“(5) ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(A) COMMERCIAL FINANCIAL SERVICES.—The term ‘commercial financial services’ means any transaction between the Government of Syria and a foreign bank or foreign financial institution operating in an area under the control of the Government of Syria that has a valuation of more than \$5,000,000.

“(B) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ‘financial institution’ means a financial institution specified in any of subparagraphs (A) through (K), (M), (N), (P), (R), (T), (Y), or (Z) of section 5312(a)(2) of title 31, United States Code.

“(6) SIGNIFICANT TRANSACTION CLARIFIED.—In this section, the term ‘significant trans-

action’ includes any natural gas, electricity, or other energy-related transaction.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) CONGRESSIONAL REQUESTS.—Not later than 120 days after receiving a request from the chairman and ranking member of one of the appropriate congressional committees with respect to whether a foreign person knowingly engages in an activity described in subsection (a)(2) the President shall—

“(1) make the determination specified in subsection (a)(1) with respect to that foreign person; and

“(2) submit to such chairman and ranking member that submitted the request a report with respect to such determination that includes a statement of whether the President has imposed or intends to impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to that foreign person.”.

(b) EXTENSION OF SUNSET.—Section 7438 of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 is amended by striking “the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “December 31, 2032”.

(c) DETERMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA TRUST FOR DEVELOPMENT.—

(1) DETERMINATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the enactment of this Act, the President shall—

(A) determine whether the nonprofit organization chaired by Asma Al-Assad, the First Lady of Syria, known as the “Syria Trust for Development” meets the criteria for the imposition of sanctions—

(i) under section 7412(a) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, as amended by subsection (a);

(ii) under Executive Order 13894 (84 Fed. Reg. 55851; relating to blocking property and suspending entry of certain persons contributing to the situation in Syria); or

(iii) by nature of being owned or controlled by a person designated under any executive order or regulation administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control; and

(B) submit to the appropriate congressional committees each such determination, including a justification for the determination.

(2) FORM.—The determination under paragraph (1)(B) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but the justification specified in such paragraph may be included in a classified annex. The unclassified determination shall be made available on a publicly available website of the Federal government.

(3) SANCTIONS RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS UNCHANGED.—Paragraph (1) may not be construed to create any new authorities or requirements to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(4) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(d) FINDINGS ON APPLICABILITY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES, CHAM WINGS AIRLINES, AND RELATED ENTITIES.—Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2013, the President identified Syrian Arab Airlines as a blocked instrumentality or controlled entity of the Government of Syria and concurrently sanctioned Syrian Arab Airlines pursuant to Executive Order 13224 for acting for or on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force of Iran.

(2) In 2016, the President sanctioned Syria-based Cham Wings Airlines pursuant to Executive Order 13582 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, the Government of Syria and Syrian Arab Airlines.

(3) Section 7412(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note) mandates the application of sanctions against any foreign person that “knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support to, or knowingly engages in a significant transaction with . . . a foreign person subject to sanctions pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) with respect to Syria or any other provision of law that imposes sanctions with respect to Syria.”, which applies to airport service providers outside of Syria.

(e) SEVERABILITY.—If any provision of this Act, or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is found to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, or the application of that provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected.

### SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF RECOGNITION OF ASSAD REGIME.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) not to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad due to the Assad regime's ongoing crimes against the Syrian people, including failure to meet the criteria outlined in section 7431(a) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019;

(2) to actively oppose recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar Al-Assad, including by fully implementing the mandatory primary and secondary sanctions in the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894; and

(3) to use the full range of authorities, including those provided under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894, to deter reconstruction activities in areas under the control of Bashar al-Assad.

(b) PROHIBITION.—In accordance with subsection (a), no Federal official or employee may take any action, and no Federal funds may be made available, to recognize or otherwise imply, in any manner, United States recognition of Bashar al-Assad or any Government in Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad.

### SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY STRATEGY TO COUNTER NORMALIZATION WITH ASSAD REGIME.

(a) REPORT AND STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of State (in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies) shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report and strategy to describe and counter actions taken or planned by foreign governments to normalize, engage with, or upgrade political, diplomatic, or economic ties with the regime led by Bashar al-Assad in Syria (in this section referred to as the “Assad regime”).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The elements of the report under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a description of violations of international law and human rights abuses committed by Bashar al-Assad, the Government

of the Russian Federation, or the Government of Iran and progress towards justice and accountability for the Syrian people;

(B) a full list of diplomatic meetings at the Ambassador level or above, between the Syrian regime and any representative of the Governments of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, or Lebanon, respectively;

(C) a list including an identification of—

(i) any single covered transaction exceeding \$500,000; and

(ii) any combination of covered transactions by the same source that, in aggregate, exceed \$500,000 and occur within a single year;

(D) for each identified single transaction or aggregate transactions, as the case may be, included in the list described in subparagraph (C), a determination of whether such transaction subjects any of the parties to the transaction to sanctions under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, as amended by section 2;

(E) a description of the steps the United States is taking to actively deter recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with the Assad regime, including specific diplomatic engagements and use of economic sanctions authorized by statutes or implemented through Executive Orders, including—

(i) the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note);

(ii) the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (22 U.S.C. 2151 note);

(iii) the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8501 et seq.);

(iv) Executive Order 13894 (84 Fed. Reg. 55851; relating to blocking property and suspending entry of certain persons contributing to the situation in Syria);

(v) the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.);

(vi) the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9401 et seq.); and

(vii) the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (21 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and

(F) an assessment of how recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with the Assad regime impacts the national security of the United States, prospects for implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, prospects for justice and accountability for war crimes in Syria, and the benefits derived by the Government of the Russian Federation or the Government of Iran.

(b) **SCOPE.**—The initial report required by subsection (a) shall address the period beginning on January 1, 2021, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, and each subsequent report shall address the one-year period following the conclusion of the scope of the prior report.

(c) **FORM.**—Each report under subsection (a) shall be submitted in an unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex. The unclassified section of such a report shall be made publicly available on a website of the United States Federal Government.

(d) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Af-

fairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

(e) **COVERED TRANSACTION DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “covered transaction” means a transaction, including an investment, grant, contract, or donation (including a loan or other extension of credit)—

(1) by a foreign person located in Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, or Lebanon; to

(2) a recipient in any area of Syria held by the Assad regime.

#### **SEC. 5. REPORTS ON MANIPULATION OF UNITED NATIONS BY ASSAD REGIME IN SYRIA.**

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of State, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the manipulation of the United Nations by the regime led by Bashar al-Assad in Syria (in this section referred to as the “Assad regime”), including—

(1) a description of conditions, both explicit and implicit, set by the Assad regime with respect to United Nations operations in Syria including with respect to implementing partners, hiring practices, allocation of grants and contracts, and procurement of goods and services;

(2) a description of the extent to which the United Nations has rejected or otherwise opposed any of the conditions described in paragraph (1);

(3) an identification of officials or employees of the United Nations (including funds, programs and specialized agencies of the United Nations) with ties to the Assad regime, including family ties, or persons designated for sanctions by United Nations donor countries;

(4) a full account of access restrictions imposed by the Assad regime and the overall impact on the ability of the United Nations to deliver international assistance to target beneficiaries in areas outside regime control;

(5) a description of ways in which United Nations aid improperly benefits the Assad regime and its associates in defiance of basic humanitarian principles;

(6) a description of the due diligence mechanisms and vetting procedures in place to ensure entities contracted by the United Nations to ensure goods, supplies, or services provided to Syria do not have links to the Assad regime, known human rights abusers, or persons designated for sanctions by United Nations donor countries;

(7) an identification of entities affiliated with the Assad regime, including the Syria Trust for Development and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, foreign government ministries, and private corporations owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the Assad regime, that have received United Nations funding, contracts, or grants or have otherwise entered into a formalized partnership with the United Nations;

(8) an assessment of how the Assad regime sets arbitrary or punitive exchange rates to extract funding from the United Nations, as well as the total amount extracted by such means;

(9) an assessment of the degree to which the various forms of manipulation described in this section has resulted in compromises of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence of the United Nations; and

(10) a strategy to reduce the ability of the Assad regime to manipulate or otherwise influence the United Nations and other aid op-

erations in Syria and ensure United States and international aid is delivered in a neutral and impartial manner consistent with basic humanitarian principles.

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

The **SPEAKER pro tempore**. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. **LAWLER**. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3202, the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023. I want to begin by thanking my colleague and friend, **JOE WILSON** of South Carolina, who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.

This legislation is critically important. It has been almost 13 years since Bashar al-Assad unleashed his brutal war on the Syrian people. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people have died because of the Assad regime's unrelenting brutality. This is a regime that, with support from Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, tortures men, women, and children at an unthinkable scale.

These crimes are undeniable. We have eyewitnesses, survivor testimony of Assad's cruelty through Caesar, who was forced to photograph dead bodies from the Gravedigger, who was forced to dig mass graves for those who were brutally murdered.

□ 1700

The Assad regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons against the Syrian people. Just this past November, a court in France found sufficient evidence to issue an international arrest warrant for Assad's complicity in war crimes specifically linked to his use of chemical weapons.

Assad is a murderer, a war criminal, and the head of a narco-state now that Syria is a hub for illicit Captagon production and trafficking. Yet, shockingly, we have seen some countries downplay these abhorrent crimes against humanity and welcome Assad's Syria back into the community of nations.

Let me be clear. There can be no normalization with the Assad regime. This regime will never change, and Assad and his backers' hands are soaked with the blood of the Syrian people. That is why, today, we are considering this bill to ensure there is justice for the Syrian people who continue to suffer under the

Assad regime and his Russian and Iranian backers.

This legislation amends the Caesar Act to ensure full and robust implementation by the executive branch of mandatory sanctions targeting the Assad regime and its backers. It also expands the scope of sanctionable activity to cover more crimes, including stealing humanitarian aid and property. Further, it codifies United States policy to oppose recognition of Assad, and it requires a strategy to counter creeping normalization with Assad by other countries.

This bill also increases transparency around the Assad regime's manipulation of the U.N. system and theft of U.N. aid meant for the Syrian people. Also, crucially, this bill reauthorizes the Caesar Act ahead of that foundational legislative statutory expiration later this year.

The Syrian people have suffered the brutality of this criminal regime and its backers for far too long. The world cannot simply excuse Assad or his backers' crimes because it is convenient. We have seen the consequences of this play out in Ukraine at devastating cost. We must hold the regime and its Russian and Iranian backers accountable, and that is exactly what this bill will do.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

JANUARY 30, 2024.

Hon. JIM JORDAN,  
*Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3202, the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on this bill into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. McCAUL,  
*Chairman.*

JANUARY 11, 2024.

Hon. MICHAEL McCAUL,  
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,*  
*House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN McCAUL: I write regarding H.R. 3202, the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023. Provisions of this bill fall within the Judiciary Committee's Rule X jurisdiction, and I appreciate that you consulted with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee agrees that it shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that forgoing further consideration of this measure does not in any way

alter the Committee's jurisdiction or waive any future jurisdictional claim over these provisions or their subject matter. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees in the event of a conference with the Senate involving this measure or similar legislation.

I ask that you please include this letter in your committee's report to accompany this legislation or insert this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 3202 on the House floor. I appreciate the cooperative manner in which our committees have worked on this matter, and I look forward to working collaboratively in the future on matters of shared jurisdiction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JIM JORDAN,  
*Chairman.*

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of H.R. 3202, the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to support this bipartisan legislation introduced by my dear friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, Representative JOE WILSON of South Carolina.

First, it is with deep sadness that I note that it has been over 13 years since the Syrian people first rose up for their basic rights and have subsequently endured brutal assaults by Assad's Russian- and Iranian-backed military year after year. The Assad regime has unceasingly engaged in a campaign of violence against the Syrian people, committing what has amounted to countless war crimes and the most egregious violations of international humanitarian law.

As we consider this bill today, it is critical we acknowledge that the war has resulted in the deaths of over 600,000 Syrians and more than 8 million displaced. The regime continues to regularly target hospitals, schools, and neighborhoods. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians face bleak prospects for the future.

It is in this context we consider this bill, which responds to moves by some governments to look past these atrocities and re-admit the Assad regime into international institutions. The Biden administration has opposed efforts to reengage with the Assad regime and continues to highlight ongoing crimes against the Syrian people.

I stand with the administration and those who believe Assad must be held accountable. I am glad that members of both parties have stood together to publicly condemn the welcoming of the Assad regime back into the Arab League.

As we condemn such actions and stand with the Syrian people, I also support the Biden administration's efforts to provide the Syrian people with vital, lifesaving humanitarian assistance to assist in the recovery from multiple earthquakes last year and Assad's continued military assaults.

Therefore, I support this measure, which I hope will discourage other

states from overlooking Assad's crimes, and which makes it U.S. policy not to recognize an Assad-led Syrian Government.

This bill also expands targeted sanctions against the Assad regime while preserving important humanitarian exemptions and provisions.

The bill includes a bipartisan amendment, which passed unopposed in the committee, that refines the sanctions provisions so as not to impinge on legitimate humanitarian aid efforts to the Syrian people.

Finally, this bill mandates greater scrutiny of the Assad regime's diversion of international aid for its own benefit and at the expense of the Syrian people.

I thank my friend, Representative WILSON, as well as Chairman McCAUL and Ranking Member MEEKS for their work on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, and the author of this bill.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, distinguished graduate of Columbia College, I am very grateful to be here with Congressman MIKE LAWLER.

It has been 13 years since the Syrian revolution, where pro-democracy demonstrators peacefully gathered to express against the corrupt and murderous regime of dictator Bashar al-Assad. People carrying roses and shouting "peaceful, peaceful" were met with unspeakable atrocities. There was merciless scale slaughter, systematic rape, ultimately chemical warfare used against the people of Syria, as we saw when President Donald Trump acted so quickly to try to address the atrocities of chemical warfare. We had the devastating bombardment and the killing of so many civilians that the United Nations had stopped counting at over half a million innocent civilians.

Assad did not act alone. His ability to kill opposition and regain territory was made possible by the support of like-minded war criminals and kleptocrats like war criminal Putin and the Iranian regime, both of which benefit from their alliance with Assad.

Assad has displaced over half the population of Syria. That is nearly 10 million people in a country of 20 million. Sadly, families have been living in refugee camps for over a decade. They have lost their homes, their businesses, their religious institutions, their schools—multiple generations had worked together to build such a successful country, as was Syria.

I am grateful that this bipartisan bill affirms the United States' policy of non-normalization of the brutal Assad regime. It holds those seeking to do

business with the unrepentant, mass murderer and drug trafficker, Bashar al-Assad, accountable.

It also includes comprehensive transparency mechanisms to prevent U.N. funding from being diverted or stolen to the regime while including robust protections of humanitarian assistance.

Assad continues his reign of terror against the people of Syria, with help from war criminal Putin and the regime in Tehran, while destabilizing the region and trafficking the destructive Captagon drug, which is now reaching Europe, and with Chinese providing drugs to Africa to destroy families.

The unconditional welcoming of mass murderer Assad into the Arab League, which we so appreciate the Arab League itself, was disgraceful. To do business with Assad is a normalization of death and depravity, in contrast to the moral standards of American allies who are members of the Arab League.

The passage of this bill is a testament to the work of the Syrian Americans, many of whom are survivors of torture at the hands of the regime. All of them have lost a loved one.

I am grateful to Speaker MIKE JOHNSON, Chairman MIKE MCCAUL, Ranking Member GREG MEEKS, as well as staff, Gabriella Zach, Omar Hossino, and Stephanie Pendarvis, along with the Syrian-American patriots who are in the gallery today, who have worked to bring this bipartisan bill to the floor.

I am also grateful to be working with my good friend, Congresswoman KATHY MANNING of my sister State of North Carolina, and also Congressman MIKE LAWLER of New York.

To the Syrian people: You are not forgotten and you will never be forgotten. Your country has a rich history of democracy. We will continue to stand for a free and democratic Syria against the dictators with rule of gun who are invading democracies with rule of law.

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and vice chairman of the Committee on Financial Services.

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding, and I thank my good friend from South Carolina.

Madam Speaker, I stand in full support of JOE WILSON's good bill to counter the butcher, Assad. The gentleman from South Carolina and I spent a great deal in 2023 traveling the Middle Eastern region talking to our partners in the Arab world, warning them of the consequences of readmitting Assad back into the Arab League.

While official U.S. policy does not support normalization with Assad, we have U.S. Government officials, like Brett McGurk and Assistant Secretary Barbara Leaf, watering down that position of U.S. policy, encouraging Arab countries to "get what you can for normalization."

What did we get?

Madam Speaker, we got more war. The Arab countries said: Let's cut out Captagon trade and drugs. Let's return refugees from Jordan and Turkiye and Lebanon back to Syria. Let's eliminate Iranian influence in Syria.

Madam Speaker, did we get those things?

No.

That is why this bill to counter normalization is so important, because Syria, for the American people, is a giant aircraft carrier for terrorism—Israel being attacked from Syria, Iraq being attacked from Syria, Americans killed because of attacks from Syria.

Madam Speaker, I support Mr. WILSON's bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY).

Mr. MOONEY. Madam Speaker, 13 years ago, the Syrian people took to the streets demanding basic rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of democratic elections, things which many Americans, frankly, take for granted these days.

They also demanded an end to the Assad dictatorship. Assad responded with extreme brutality, including use of chemical weapons, such as sarin gas.

I am honored to represent the proud and patriotic Syrian-American community in West Virginia. I rise today to support this bipartisan legislation which will hold the Assad regime accountable for its crimes against the Syrian people.

Unlike President Trump, President Biden has refused to enforce the congressionally mandated sanctions. For example, President Biden has allowed countries in the Middle East to normalize relations, such as waiving sanctions for countries in the region to make energy agreements with Syria. The Assad regime should not be allowed to normalize, and it should not be recognized by the United States.

Syrian Americans, like many immigrants, work hard. They come here and defend their communities. They want peace and freedom around the world, things we all support. It is important for America to take leadership in this regard.

My mother fled a Communist country, Cuba, and that country, to this day, is still oppressed by the Communist brutal dictator there, who will just beat you up if they disagree with you. This is a good time to stand in support of the people and freedom and stand up against the brutal Assad dictatorship.

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

We cannot overlook the Assad regime's atrocities against the Syrian

people. Allowing the regime back into international organizations would do just that.

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I support the administration's work to hold the Assad regime accountable and believe this bill reinforces the administration's efforts by making it U.S. policy not to recognize an Assad-led Syrian Government, discourages other nations from doing so, and expands targeted sanctions on the regime.

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 3202, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I thank JOE WILSON of South Carolina, the chairman of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee for his leadership on this bill.

When the Assad regime's war against the Syrian people began, the American people saw daily images of the regime's cruel abuses. As often happens, the news cycles change and stories slip from the front page, and then are rarely covered at all; however, it does not mean that the regime has changed or reformed or ceased.

The same butchers who gassed and tortured children are still running Syria, and they are continuing their brutality. It is vital that the United States maintain its policy of no normalization or we will be giving a green light to dictators around the world that they can wait out accountability for their crimes. Attention will shift, and they can stay in power, and that would be a death knell for human rights and international norms and standards.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in voting for H.R. 3202, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3202, as amended.

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. LAWLER. Madam 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.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.