



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 156

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2010

No. 5

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 19, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RICK LARSEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have met many strong and courageous women in my lifetime, both here and abroad. But I rise today to recognize Mariamu Stanford, a young woman from Tanzania, who epitomizes the essence of bravery. I rise to shine a light on the untold horrors she and others with albinism faced, and continue to face, in East Africa.

I rise to highlight an ongoing, but little known, crime against humanity in East Africa, particularly in rural

Tanzania, where human beings with albinism are butchered and their body parts sold for profit. These horrific acts are perpetuated by witch doctors who believe the body parts of people with albinism have magical powers, and can be mixed in potions to bring the buyer good luck. Rural villages strong incentive to harvest the limbs of their neighbors with albinism, because a single limb can sell for as much as \$2,000, a king's ransom in rural Tanzania.

Mariamamu, who has albinism, is one of the few survivors of these horrific attacks. Her story is one of fear, horror, and unbelievable courage. She told me her story, through an interpreter, when we met recently. One night in October of 2008, when she was asleep with her toddler son, a group of machete-wielding young men from her village broke into her home and attacked her. They cut off both of her arms while she struggled, screamed, and shielded her young son from the blows.

It was six long hours after the attack before she, 5 months pregnant, was able to receive medical treatment. In the end, she also lost her unborn child. But she survived, and she is now relaying her story here in America in the hopes that these brutal crimes against people with albinism will come to an end.

Mariamamu came to the United States for a visit thanks to the generosity of many, including many of my constituents from Northern Virginia with albinism, and some who are parents of children with albinism. While she was here for nearly 2 weeks in December, Mariamamu was fitted with prosthetic arms donated by the Orthotic Prosthetic Center in Fairfax, Virginia, and she underwent intensive physical therapy.

She is a rare survivor of a horrible and inhumane crime that is a growing concern in East Africa. More than 54 people with albinism have been butchered in the region, most of them women and children. In November of

2008 a 6-year-old girl was shot dead in Burundi's eastern province of Ruyigi, close to the border with Tanzania. Her attackers removed her head and limbs, leaving only her dismembered torso.

In January of 2009, three men armed with machetes killed an 8-year-old boy in Burundi and smuggled his limbs into Tanzania. Every one of these stories border on the unbelievable, and quite frankly, turn my stomach, as I hope they do yours.

Not only do people with albinism face violence in various parts of the world, but they also are at higher risk for medical complications from their condition. In East Africa's harsh sun, for example, skin cancer is very prevalent. But oftentimes, people with albinism have no choice but to expose themselves to the sun with little protection, as they must be outside to work, go to school, or attend to everyday business.

Unfortunately, the medical issues the people with albinism face are the least of their worries in rural East Africa. The threat of brutal violence looms over them at all times. Tanzanian Prime Minister Mizengo Peter Pinda has condemned these violent crimes, as he should, against people with albinism, but judicial and enforcement barriers remain.

My meeting with Mariamamu and local families concerned about her plight has moved me to take action. I am contacting President Obama and the State Department to urge them to place diplomatic pressure on Tanzania to end these crimes against humanity and to provide education to dispel this myth that body parts of those with albinism have any supernatural properties.

I also believe we must look at providing humanitarian and medical assistance to people with albinism in East Africa, with a focus particularly in Tanzania, where most of these brutal crimes have occurred. To this end, I plan to introduce a House Resolution recognizing the plight of people with

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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