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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 16, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ANDY HARRIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION WORLDWIDE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, soon Pope Francis will deliver a historical address to this Congress. During this year, he has addressed a form of genocide happening in the world.

Globally, Christians are being imprisoned, tortured, and killed because they are Christians. In 2013, Christians faced persecution in 102 out of 190-plus countries. In Iran, American Christian pastor Saeed Abedini has been languishing

in jail for the last 2½ years because he is a Christian.

According to the 2015 Open Doors' World Watch List, North Korea is the worst persecutor of Christians in the whole world. There, Christians are often sent to prison camps for possession of Bibles, sometimes even executed because they are Christians. The State Department estimates that 80,000 to 120,000 North Koreans are imprisoned in labor camps because of their religious beliefs. In November of 2013, 80 North Korean Christians were reportedly executed for possession of Bibles and possessing South Korean religious films.

In Pakistan, in one city, Christian churches have been bombed. A 14-year-old Christian boy was beaten and set on fire because he was a Christian. Burns now cover more than 55 percent of his body.

In Egypt, over a 3-day period in 2013, Coptic Christians experienced the worst single attack against their churches in 700 years, with 40 Christian churches destroyed and over 100 others severely damaged. Thousands of Coptic Christians have fled Egypt to other countries.

In Libya, ISIS captured and beheaded 21 people because they were Christians. When the victims' families tried to build a church in their honor, they were attacked by a Muslim mob and beaten.

It is not just Assad's thugs in Syria killing Christians; religious cleansing takes place in other places. In Syria, militants expelled 90 percent of the Christians in the city of Homs. Patriarch Gregorios III of Antioch says, out of a population of 1.75 million, 450,000 Syrian Christians have fled in fear.

Mr. Speaker, no Christian anywhere on Earth should have to leave their homeland because of their faith.

In Iraq, where Christians have been calling home since the time of Christ, the story is just as dark. Its Christian

population has almost entirely disappeared—dropping 90 percent since the first gulf war. The number of churches has declined from 300 in 2003 to 57.

In Africa, the terrorist group al Shabaab attacked a university in Kenya, going door-to-door to find and execute Christians. Al Shabaab attacked a shopping mall in Kenya in 2013 and took shoppers captive. One of them was Joshua Hakim. When Joshua got close to his attackers, he showed them his ID, and he covered up his Christian name with his thumb. "They told me to go," Joshua recalled later. "Then another man came forward, and they said, what is the name of Muhammad's mother?" The individual couldn't answer; so they shot him.

Mr. Speaker, history tells us that the persecution of Christians has been going on since the day Stephen was stoned for his faith in Acts 7.

As a country, the United States needs to reexamine its relationship with countries and states that persecute or tolerate the persecution of Christians. Countries should get no U.S. foreign aid until they start protecting Christians instead of persecuting them. And let's call groups like ISIS what they truly are: a radical and dangerous Islamic extremist terrorist group.

Religious liberty is a basic civil right, a humanitarian right, and an inalienable right. Since Pilgrims came to America to escape religious persecution in their homeland, our Nation has stood as a bright beacon to the world for religious freedom for everyone—Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and others.

It is written in the Good Book that a man was traveling on the Jericho road and fell among robbers. The man was beaten, his property was stolen, and he was left for dead. Other people traveled down the same road, saw him in the ditch, but passed on by him on the

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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