



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Film Screening & Discussion

Syria's Disappeared: The Case Against Assad

Panelists



Mazen Alhummada is the youngest of 17 children from a middle class family from Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria. Prior to the Syrian revolution, he was employed as a field specialist with an international oil and gas company operating in his home town. Soon after the start of the revolution, Mazen was taken in by the Assad regime on fabricated charges of terrorism and detained and tortured for 15 months. He was arrested in March 2012 and held at Mazzeh, with a brief stint at Hospital 601, until June 2013 when he was transferred to Adra prison. Mazen endured electric shock, beatings, genital mutilation, broken bones and burns during his atrocious ordeal. After a brief trial before a judge in a terrorism court in September 2013, his case was dismissed and he was released. He returned to Deir Ezzor, then fled through Turkey to join his sister in the Netherlands. Mazen is now a recognized advocate on behalf of peace, justice, dignity and freedom in Syria.



Stephen J. Rapp is a Visiting Fellow at the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. He formerly served as U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice from 2009 to 2015. In that role he coordinated U.S. government support to international criminal tribunals, including the International Criminal Court, as well as to hybrid and national courts responsible for prosecuting persons charged with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. He was credited with arranging for the United Nations Commission of Inquiry and other prosecutorial authorities to gain access to a cache of 55,000 photos documenting torture by the Assad regime. From 2007 to 2009, Ambassador Rapp served as prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he led the prosecution of former Liberian

President Charles Taylor. His office achieved the first convictions in history on crimes against humanity charges for sexual slavery and forced marriage and for attacks on peacekeepers and recruitment and use of child soldiers as violations of international humanitarian law. From 2001 to 2007, he served as senior trial attorney and chief of prosecutions at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where he led the trial team that achieved the first convictions in history against leaders of the mass media for the crime of direct and public incitement to commit genocide. He received a BA from Harvard College and a JD from Drake University Law School.

Moderator



Janelle Johnson is the policy assistant for the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. She previously served as a legislative and research assistant with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where she advised Committee leadership as part of the African Affairs team. Janelle also served as the inaugural Donald M. Payne Foreign Policy Fellow with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. In that capacity she advised Members in the House and Senate on national security and foreign policy, with particular focus on the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. She holds a BA in international affairs from Transylvania University where she studied and conducted research in Jordan as a Boren Scholar. She earned an MPP from the University of Chicago.