

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To require the Secretary of State to submit to Congress an annual report regarding instances of Arab government retribution toward citizens and residents who engage in people-to-people relations with Israelis.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require the Secretary of State to submit to Congress an annual report regarding instances of Arab government retribution toward citizens and residents who engage in people-to-people relations with Israelis.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Strengthening Report-
5 ing of Actions Taken Against the Normalization of Rela-
6 tions with Israel Act of 2020”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Arab League, an organization com-
2 prising 22 Middle Eastern and African countries
3 and entities, has maintained an official boycott of
4 Israeli companies and Israeli-made goods since the
5 founding of Israel in 1948.

6 (2) Longstanding United States policy has en-
7 couraged Arab League states to normalize their rela-
8 tions with Israel and has long prioritized funding co-
9 operative programs that promote normalization be-
10 tween Arab League States and Israel, including the
11 Middle East Regional Cooperation program, which
12 promotes Arab-Israeli scientific cooperation.

13 (3) While some Arab League governments are
14 signaling enhanced cooperation with the state of
15 Israel on the government-to-government level, most
16 continue to persecute their own citizens who estab-
17 lish people-to-people relations with Israelis in non-
18 governmental fora, through a combination of judicial
19 and extrajudicial retribution.

20 (4) Some Arab League states maintain draco-
21 nian anti-normalization laws that punish their citi-
22 zens for people-to-people relations with Israelis, with
23 punishments, including imprisonment, revocation of
24 citizenship, and execution. Extrajudicial punish-
25 ments by these and other Arab states include sum-

1 mary imprisonment, accusations of “treason” in gov-
2 ernment-controlled media, and professional black-
3 listing.

4 (5) Anti-normalization laws, together with the
5 other forms of retribution, effectively condemn these
6 societies to mutual estrangement and, by extension,
7 reduce the possibility of conciliation and com-
8 promise.

9 (6) Despite the risk of retaliatory action, a ris-
10 ing tide of Arab civic actors advocate direct engage-
11 ment with Israeli citizens and residents. These in-
12 clude the Arab Council for Regional Integration, a
13 group of 32 public figures from 15 Arab countries
14 who oppose the boycott of Israel on the grounds that
15 the boycott has denied Arabs the benefits of partner-
16 ship with Israelis, has blocked Arabs from helping to
17 bridge the Israeli-Palestinian divide, and inspired di-
18 visive intra-Arab boycotts among diverse sects and
19 ethnic groups.

20 (7) On February 11, 2020, a delegation of the
21 Arab Council to the French National Assembly in
22 Paris testified to the harmful effects of “anti-nor-
23 malization laws”, called on the Assembly to enact a
24 law instructing the relevant French authorities to
25 issue an annual report on instances of Arab govern-

1 ment retribution for any of their citizens or resi-
2 dents who call for peace with Israel or engage in di-
3 rect civil relations with Israeli citizens, and re-
4 quested democratic legislatures to help defend the
5 region’s civil peacemakers.

6 (8) On May 11, 2020, 85 leaders in France
7 published an endorsement of the Arab Council’s pro-
8 posal, calling on France and other democratic gov-
9 ernments to “protect Arabs who engage in dialogue
10 with Israeli citizens” and proposing “the creation of
11 a study group in the National Assembly as well as
12 in the Senate whose mission would be to ensure a
13 legal and technical monitoring of the obstacles which
14 Arab proponents of dialogue with Israelis face”.

15 (9) Arab-Israeli cooperation provides significant
16 symbiotic benefit to the security and economic pros-
17 perity of the region.

18 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL REPORTING IN THE ANNUAL HUMAN**
19 **RIGHTS REPORT.**

20 The Secretary of State shall include in the Country
21 Report on Human Rights Practices submitted annually for
22 each of 2021 through 2026 under section 116(d) of the
23 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d)) the
24 following information:

1 (1) The status of “anti-normalization laws” in
2 each country within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of
3 Near Eastern Affairs, including indigenous efforts to
4 sharpen existing laws, enact new or additional “anti-
5 normalization legislation”, or repeal such laws.

6 (2) Instances of prosecution of citizens or resi-
7 dents of Arab countries for calling for peace with
8 Israel, visiting the state of Israel, or in any way en-
9 gaging Israeli citizens in any country.

10 (3) Instances of extrajudicial retribution by
11 Arab governments or government-controlled institu-
12 tions against citizens or residents of Arab countries
13 for any of the same actions.

14 (4) Evidence of steps taken by Arab govern-
15 ments toward permitting or encouraging people-to-
16 people relations between their citizens or residents
17 and Israeli citizens.