

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
320 21st Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary Tillerson and Ambassador Haley:

We are a bipartisan group of members of the House of Representatives and Senate that includes the sponsors and cosponsors of the primary legislation and resolutions focusing on the genocide that the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been committing against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities.

We are writing to request an update on what actions the United States has taken, since the declaration by former Secretary of State John Kerry on March 17, 2016, that ISIS has been committing genocide against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities, to investigate the perpetrators and hold them accountable.

Additionally, we urge you to ensure that the United States is leading efforts at the United Nations and elsewhere to bring worldwide attention to the atrocities committed by ISIS against religious and ethnic minorities and to bring the perpetrators to justice. We urge you to press the U.N. Security Council to authorize a formal investigation into genocide and other atrocity crimes of ISIS, against the full range of victims, so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

The U.N. must stop waiting for and relying on the government of Iraq to approve prosecuting ISIS perpetrators who committed their crimes in Iraq. There must also be a mechanism that focuses exclusively on the crimes of ISIS, rather than the “International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011” which also includes crimes committed in the context of the civil war in Syria.

The need for action is urgent. One year since the genocide declaration of former Secretary Kerry, ISIS continues to terrorize innocent civilians in Iraq, Syria, and all over the world. To date, no ISIS perpetrator has been tried for genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, evidence that the international community has done too little to hold them accountable.

We were encouraged by the commitment of President Donald Trump when he said this year at the National Prayer Breakfast, “We have seen a campaign of ISIS and genocide against Christians...All nations have a moral obligation to speak out against such violence. All nations have a duty to work together to confront it.”

By contrast, some governments, and key entities within the United Nations, seem to have overlooked Christian victims of this genocide and the effects of this crime: Christians are at-risk of being wiped away from the lands where they have lived since the first century. According to

State Department international religious freedom annual reports, less than 250,000 Christians remain in Iraq, down from an estimated 800,000 to 1,400,000 in 2002 and 500,000 in 2013, the year before ISIS began its genocidal march across the country. According to those same reports, in Syria before the conflict began in 2011, Christians were an estimated eight to 10 percent of the 21 million person population and as of 2015 is considerably lower. They are entitled to justice as much as the other religious and ethnic minority groups that ISIS targeted for destruction.

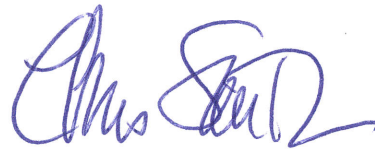
You have the strong support of the Congress to ensure that ISIS perpetrators are investigated, tried, and convicted for the genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes they have committed. The unanimous passage of a bipartisan resolution in the House of Representatives partially prompted the declaration of genocide of the Secretary and the Senate also unanimously passed a similar resolution. Congress appropriated Economic Support Funds in the enacted continuing resolution for fiscal year 2017 specifically to support investigations and trials of ISIS perpetrators.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your response and stand ready to support you in any additional ways that we can.

Sincerely,



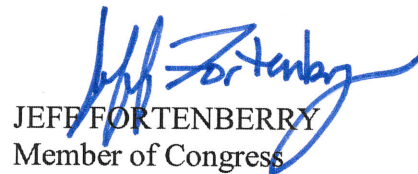
SEAN DUFFY
Member of Congress



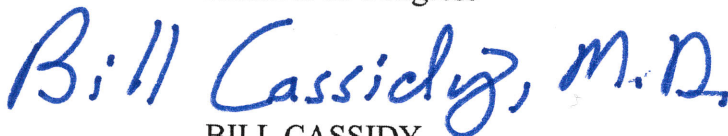
CHRIS SMITH
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress



JEFF FORTENBERRY
Member of Congress



BILL CASSIDY
United States Senator