

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We write regarding disturbing reports that State Department staff – specifically within the Office of the Legal Adviser – have sought to undermine and perhaps roll back the March 17, 2016 determination that ISIS is committing genocide against Christians, Yezidis and other religious and ethnic minorities.

If true, we hope you would agree with us that this is unacceptable and must be rejected. The determination of genocide is only the second such determination in U.S. history. It was reached through a rigorous State Department and inter-agency process that concurred with preceding Congressional resolutions. Any backdoor attempt to reopen a settled matter is short-sighted and will have serious humanitarian implications.

We are encouraged that President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence publicly acknowledged and denounced this “genocide” in their statements in recent months. Their statements were consistent with aforementioned resolutions from the House of Representatives (H. Con Res. 75) and the Senate (S. Res 340), each of which was passed unanimously in the respective chambers in 2016. Similarly, in its 2016 Human Rights Report released just this March, the State Department referenced the determination in the country reports for Iraq and Syria.

Next week marks three years since the Islamic State conducted a brutal offensive in Iraq, laying siege to the historic Yezidi homeland of the Sinjar Mountains, overtaking Qaraqosh, Iraq’s largest Christian city—murdering, crucifying, enslaving, displacing and otherwise terrorizing thousands of religious and ethnic minorities, whose roots in these lands are ancient. The full measure of human suffering exacted against these innocents is incalculable.

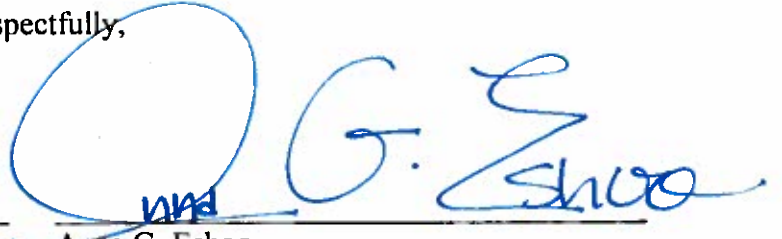
As we approach this solemn anniversary, there should be no questions regarding the commitment of the United States and other countries to provide the humanitarian, stabilization, and recovery assistance necessary to ensure long-term viability of these ancient communities who continue to be attacked. It is incumbent that the Administration speaks with a clear voice, affirming the designation of genocide while providing – and prioritizing – assistance to these communities subjected to genocide.

We respectfully request that you provide details, including any memoranda or communications, on whether staff in the Office of the Legal Adviser, or any other office or bureau, sought to change, clarify, contradict, or undermine the March 17, 2016 genocide determination.

Respectfully,



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress



Trey Gowdy
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



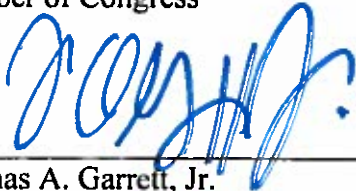
Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress



Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



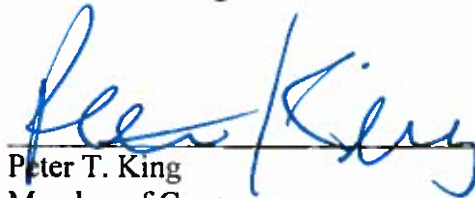
Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Dave Trost
Member of Congress



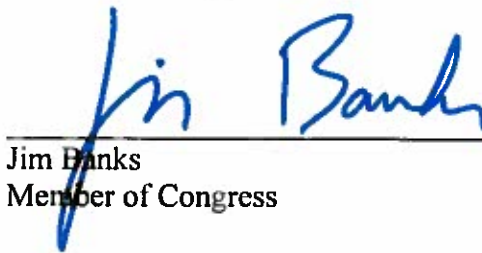
Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress




Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Flores
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier *French Hill*

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

French Hill
Member of Congress

Sander Levin

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

Steve King

Steve King
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Barry Loudermilk

Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Francis Rooney

Francis Rooney
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert

Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger

Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho F2.3

Ted S. Yoho, DVM
Member of Congress

Paul Cook

Paul Cook
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Doug Collins
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Andy Harris, MD
Member of Congress



Tom Marino
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Peter J. Roskam
Member of Congress

Attachment: List of Signatories

1. Rep. Christopher H. Smith
2. Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
3. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry
4. Rep. Trent Franks
5. Rep. Juan Vargas
6. Rep. Michael T. McCaul
7. Rep. Betty McCollum
8. Rep. Robert B. Aderholt
9. Rep. Daniel W. Lipinski
10. Rep. Trey Gowdy
11. Rep. Zoe Lofgren
12. Rep. Randy Weber
13. Rep. Keith Ellison
14. Rep. Doug Lamborn
15. Rep. Adam B. Schiff
16. Rep. Barbara Comstock
17. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher
18. Rep. Sean P. Duffy
19. Rep. Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.
20. Rep. Jody Hice
21. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis
22. Rep. Dave Trott
23. Rep. Glenn Grothman
24. Rep. Peter T. King
25. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick
26. Rep. Jim Banks
27. Rep. Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
28. Rep. Bill Flores
29. Rep. Jackie Speier
30. Rep. French Hill
31. Rep. Sander Levin
32. Rep. Steve King
33. Rep. James P. McGovern
34. Rep. Barry Loudermilk
35. Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.
36. Rep. Francis Rooney
37. Rep. Gregory W. Meeks
38. Rep. Louie Gohmert
39. Rep. Adam Kinzinger
40. Rep. Ted S. Yoho, DVM
41. Rep. Paul Cook
42. Rep. Jackie Walorski
43. Rep. Josh Gottheimer
44. Rep. Doug Collins

45. Rep. Vicky Hartzler
46. Rep. Tim Murphy
47. Rep. Andy Harris, MD
48. Rep. Tom Marino
49. Rep. Leonard Lance
50. Rep. Peter J. Roskam