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One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

August 24, 2018

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Tomorrow marks one year since the Burmese military and security forces began a campaign of terror in Rakhine State, Burma which has driven more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma into Bangladesh. The Trump Administration has called this campaign ethnic cleansing.

Unfortunately, the violence that began a year ago was not the first nightmare for the Rohingya: they have been systematically stripped of citizenship and other basic rights since 1982. And the nightmare continues for the now almost one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and the desperately poor communities that host them. Further, the humanitarian community has been struggling to provide life-saving support to refugees and their host communities during landslides and catastrophic monsoon rains. With only 33% of the joint humanitarian effort funded and little meaningful progress made toward safe, voluntary and dignified return, the end of the nightmare is not yet in sight.

In the year since, substantial additional evidence has come to light regarding what occurred in Rakhine state. This includes murder of civilians by the Tatmadaw, rapes, and the systematic burning of Rohingya villages. We now have evidence regarding the complicity of

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Burmese military and security forces, including units such as the 33rd and 99th Light Infantry Divisions which were rightfully designated by the U.S. Treasury last week along with several other military officials.

These additional sanctions are a promising start, but more must be done to seek justice for victims of these crimes, not just in the Rakhine State, but in Kachin, Shan, Karen states and the peripheries of Burma where ethnic groups have endured decades of abuse.

We urge you to designate the most senior officials responsible for these crimes: the commanders of the 33rd and 99th bridges as well as Commander in Chief Min Aung Hliang and the Commander of the Army Soe Win. Having operated with impunity for decades, the Tatmadaw uses similar tactics to terrorize and oppress other ethnic groups in Burma.

We also urge you to send a strong message of condemnation to the military leadership in Burma. As more information has come to light regarding the pre-planned and intentional nature of these crimes, we urge you to confirm publicly that acts of genocide have occurred and to make public such evidence to support this legal determination.

To do less sends a troubling message, not just to the Rohingya victims and other ethnic minority groups in Burma, but any other nation who may contemplate such crimes now or in the future. We must ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice, that the civilian governments of Bangladesh and Burma are supported, that victims see restitution, and the communities that birthed this ethnic hatred seek reconciliation over time.

We urge the Administration to seize upon this crisis when the U.N. General Assembly meets next month and work with other member states to refer the Burma case to the International Criminal Court. The United States must also urgently support the creation of an independent and credible investigative mechanism to collect and preserve evidence of these terrible crimes and to work with partners to ensure that the humanitarian relief effort on both sides of the border is fully supported in this time of desperate need.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress



STEVE CHABOT
Member of Congress

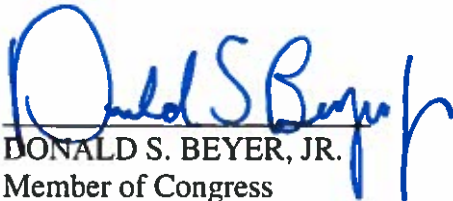
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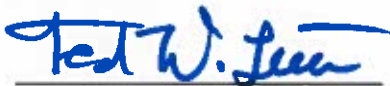
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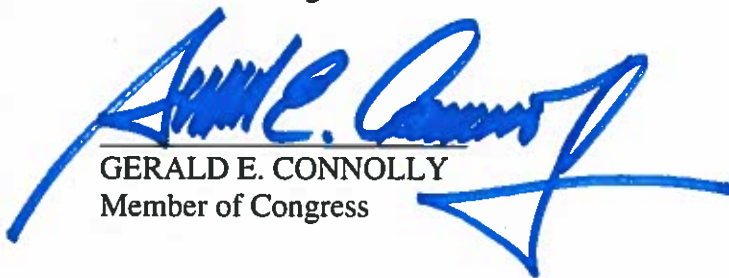
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