

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 15, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

On July 2, 2019, a number of us wrote to you with concerns regarding the potentially inappropriate exclusion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the State Department's list of countries known to recruit and use child soldiers in the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report as required under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-457). The omission occurred despite reported concerns voiced by State Department officials of Saudi complicity that should have led to its inclusion on such list. As such, our letter included a number of specific questions as to how the decision was made regarding Saudi Arabia.


On October 10, 2019, Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Mary Elizabeth Taylor provided us with a generic response that neglected to answer any of our questions or address our concerns. Public Law 110-457 is clear in restricting U.S. foreign assistance to any country known to use child soldiers. We therefore again request answers to the following questions by December 2, 2019:


1. What is the process when a country is recommended for inclusion on the child soldiers list? How does the State Department reconcile differing opinions among offices or bureaus?
2. Did any State Department office or bureau recommend inclusion of Saudi Arabia on the child soldiers list?
3. If so, what caused you to make the determination to exclude Saudi Arabia from the State Department's list of countries known to recruit and use child soldiers in the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report? Specifically, what information did you use to make the determination, what was the source of that information, and what was the legal justification for such an omission (versus using a waiver at a later stage)?
4. The State Department's 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report notes media accounts indicating that Saudi Arabia may have "funded Yemeni militias that in some cases may have hired minors in combatant roles" and that all parties to the conflict "used both boys and girls as uniformed soldiers in combat..." including Saudi support for Sudanese

combatants that included children.¹ Does the Department believe these reports are credible? If not, why are they included in the Department's report? If so, how were these credible reports of the use of child soldiers factored into the Department's fact-based determination under the statute?

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Ami Bera
Member of Congress


Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

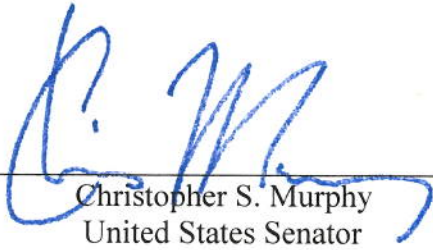

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

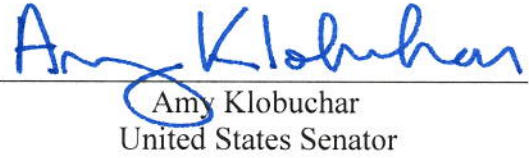

Ted Lieu
Member of Congress


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

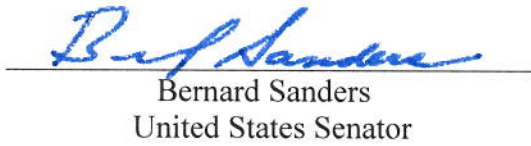
¹ Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report* (June 2019), 405, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf>.



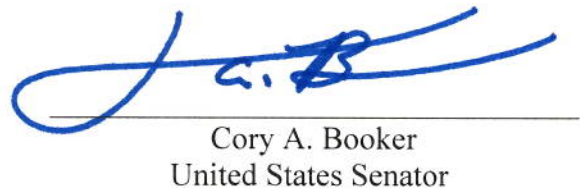
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



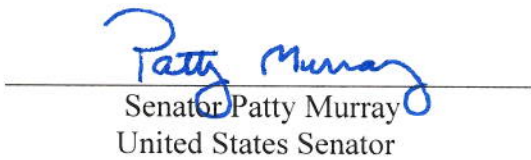
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



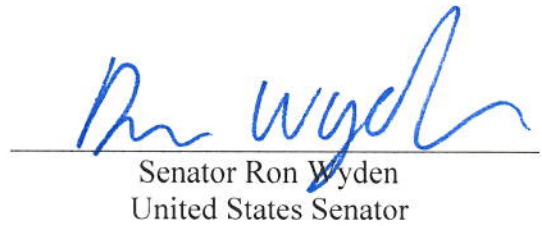
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



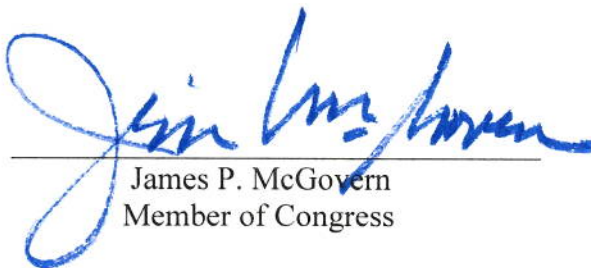
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Senator Patty Murray
United States Senator



Senator Ron Wyden
United States Senator




James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress