

March 5, 2018

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

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretaries Tillerson and Mnuchin,

As organizations dedicated to the promotion of universal human rights and/or the fight against corruption, we welcome the Trump Administration's recent decision to impose sanctions against 15 foreign individuals and 37 entities for human rights violations and acts of corruption under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act of 2016 (PL 114-328, Subtitle F), as well as the issuance of Executive Order (EO) 13818, which expands the scope of actors and entities potentially subject to sanctions under the law.

In signing EO 13818, President Trump affirmed that:

Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets.

The president further committed the U.S. government to delivering "tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption," noting that such crimes have "reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems," and "constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States."

We concur with these sentiments, and note that the Global Magnitsky Act offers the United States a powerful and targeted tool to raise the cost of human rights abuses and corruption, and potentially to deter and modify behaviors and governmental policies. These beneficial effects will only be viewed as legitimate, however, if Global Magnitsky is implemented in a manner viewed as even-handed and fact-driven.

It is for this reason that we were disappointed to see that sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act were not imposed against human rights abusers and corrupt actors in many countries and regions of the world in which such crimes have been well documented. As your departments move forward in implementing Global Magnitsky sanctions in 2018, we urge you to avoid

selective application of this powerful tool, as the impacts of human rights abuses and corruption referenced in EO 13818 are no less destructive and destabilizing in countries friendly to the United States than in those that are not.

In closing, we applaud your respective staffs for their demonstrated commitment to institutionalizing the use of a new, complex, and important diplomatic tool in its first year of existence, and for your departments' meaningful outreach to civil society. In 2018, we will continue to assemble and turn over to the U.S. government information documenting human rights abuses and corrupt acts, while advocating for sanctions against the perpetrators of these crimes wherever they reside. We urge you to take advantage of these resources as part of your work to fulfill the promise of EO 13818.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights
in Bahrain

American Latvian Association

Boat People SOS

Center for Justice and Accountability

Council for Global Equality

Enough Project

Estonian American National Council

Ethiopia Human Rights Project

The FACT Coalition

Freedom House

The Freedom Initiative

Global Witness

Human Rights Campaign

Human Rights First

Initiatives for China

International Campaign for the Rohingya

International Christian Concern

Joint Baltic American National Committee

Lithuanian American Council

The Network of Chinese Human Rights
Defenders

PEN America

Physicians for Human Rights

Project Expedite Justice

Project on Middle East Democracy

Reporters Without Borders

Relieve

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support
Coalition International

Transparency International