

March 25, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510-7020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510-7010

To the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders:

Last December, you received a letter from more than 25 leading organizations working to promote human rights, democracy, and labor rights encouraging you to act swiftly on two key State Department nominations: Sarah Sewall and Tomasz Malinowski. We welcomed the Senate's confirmation in December of Ms. Sewall as Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. We write now to urge the Senate's immediate—and overdue—action on Tomasz Malinowski to be Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

At a moment when the United States is facing significant challenges to its global leadership on democracy and human rights, the Secretary of State needs his leadership team in place to advance the important diplomatic work of promoting these universal values that strengthen our national security. On so many issues—the crisis in Ukraine; the atrocities in Syria, Sudan, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; the ongoing violence in the Arab world from Egypt to Bahrain to Libya; the crackdown on civil society from Russia to China to Cuba to Vietnam; the hopeful beginnings of a democratic opening in Burma; and trade negotiations with Asia in which workers' rights will be a key component—the administration needs leadership from the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. We urge you to act quickly to fill this position and strengthen the ability of our government to advance human rights around the world.

We recognize that negotiating floor time for nominations is difficult in the current environment. But the Senate has found a way to move forward on numerous positions in the State Department's regional bureaus. The Senate's failure to take action on the position dedicated to advancing human rights, democracy, and labor rights sends a damaging message that the United States does not prioritize these issues, precisely when many of the global challenges we face as a nation implicate them.

It has been more than 250 days since Mr. Malinowski was nominated. He enjoys bi-partisan support, and there is no known opposition to his appointment. Voting on his nomination should be a high priority for the Senate.

Sincerely,

Elisa Massimino, President and CEO, Human Rights First
Wade Henderson, President and CEO, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Kerry Kennedy, President, RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights
Kenneth Wollack, President, National Democratic Institute
David J. Kramer, President, Freedom House
Christopher J. Griffin, Executive Director, The Foreign Policy Initiative
Stephen Rickard, Executive Director, Open Society Policy Center
John Prendergast, Co-founder, Enough Project
Ambassador Mark P. Lagon
Steven W. Hawkins, Executive Director, Amnesty International, USA
John Bradshaw, Executive Director, National Security Network
Suzanne Nossel, Executive Director, PEN American Center
Mark Bromley, Council Chair, Council for Global Equality
Gary Haugen, President and CEO, International Justice Mission
Stephen McInerney, Executive Director, Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
Curt Goering, Executive Director, Center for Victims of Torture
Jennifer Windsor, Board of Trustees, Freedom House
Don Kraus, President & CEO, GlobalSolutions.org
Lisa Dougan, Policy Advisor, Invisible Children
Paul Ronan, Project Director, The Resolve
Pamela Merchant, Executive Director, Center for Justice & Accountability
Susan M. Farnsworth, Executive Director, Global Rights
Joy Olson, Executive Director, Washington Office on Latin America
Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President, Lantos Foundation
Matteo Mecacci, President, International Campaign for Tibet
Stacy Burdett, Government and National Affairs Director, Anti-Defamation League
Mark Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS
Richard L. Trumka, President, AFL-CIO

* Names of organizations are included for identification purposes only