

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2018

Senator James M. Inhofe, Acting Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee

Rep. Mac Thornberry, Chairman
House Armed Services Committee

Senator Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee

Rep. Adam Smith, Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Acting Chairman Inhofe and Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Members Reed and Smith,
and Conferees:

We are writing to urge you to retain the widely supported bipartisan legislation in the final National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that enables targeted sanctions on Burmese military officials implicated in gross human rights abuses and other atrocities against ethnic minorities in Burma, and in particular those implicated in the recent horrifying campaign against the Rohingya, which began on August 25, 2017.

Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have introduced bipartisan legislation regarding the Burmese military's campaign of executions, deportations, mass gang rape, intentional killing of children, arson, the destruction of homes and other personal property. Both parties and chambers of Congress have been able to unite and take action to craft a strong response to these terrible crimes.


This past May, Amendment 43 to the House NDAA passed by a broad margin, with 382 out of 412 votes in favor. The amendment included provisions that mandate the Administration report on Burmese military and security officials responsible for atrocities and take action to impose targeted economic sanctions and travel restrictions. A similar bill in the Senate –the Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act– passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously in February 2018. Due to technical and procedural hurdles, a corresponding amendment was not offered for a vote on the Senate NDAA during floor consideration.

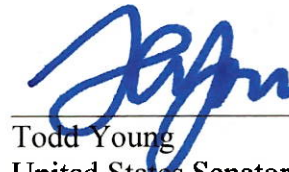
As the NDAA Conference gets underway, we believe it is vital to include the House-passed language targeting the Burmese military in the final, reconciled bill. We therefore urge you to include Title XII, Subtitle G (Sections 12990-1, 12990-2, 12990-3, 12990-4, 12990-5) from the House NDAA, which includes reporting on key perpetrators of abuse and the provision of authority to impose targeted sanctions on Burmese military officials found responsible for atrocities.

If included in the final bill, this language will enhance the administration's and Burma's civilian leadership's capacity to press Burma's recalcitrant military and enhance its efforts to better engage with the international community to address these grave crimes and hold perpetrators accountable. Including this language in the final NDAA will also demonstrate U.S. leadership and encourage other governments and multilateral institutions to take similar steps.


The atrocities that the Burmese military has committed over the last year are among the worst carried out by any military in this century. The world is only now beginning to come to terms with the sheer scope and gravity of these crimes. In this context, we note that the State Department has carried out an in-depth and objective investigation into abuses committed against the Rohingya and will soon make a formal determination on the severity of these crimes. Congress has always played a leadership role on U.S.-Burma policy; we cannot fail to act now.


Sincerely,

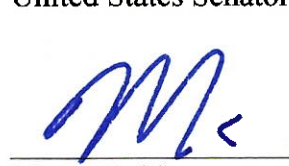

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

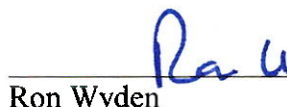

Todd Young
United States Senator

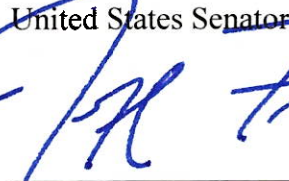

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

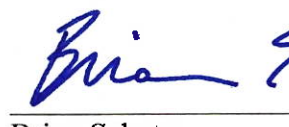

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Marco Rubio
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Jeff Flake
United States Senator


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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Chris Coons

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator