

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We are gravely concerned by credible reports that members of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen are recruiting and deploying children from Sudan to fight in the conflict in Yemen. We are also seeking information about whether these children have been provided US-made weapons and uniforms and what precautions the State Department has taken to ensure that U.S.-origin equipment is not being used by children.

According to the New York Times, since the end of 2016, the Saudi-led coalition has recruited as many as 14,000 Sudanese at any given time, including children as young as 14, to fight in Yemen, offering payments of up to \$10,000 USD per recruit. Several fighters interviewed stated that children made up at least 20 percent of their units, and two fighters said that children constituted 40 percent.

Under the Child Soldier Prevention Act (CSPA) of 2008 (Public Law 110-457), the United States is prohibited from providing several categories of military assistance – including licenses for commercial sales of military equipment – to governments known to use child soldiers. This law was adopted with strong bipartisan support out of a conviction that our country should not support this abhorrent practice.

Given the grave nature of the evidence, we urge the administration to:

- Assess the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates regarding Sudanese forces deployed in Yemen and the legal implications with respect to the CSPA;
- Immediately brief members of Congress on any information it has regarding recruitment and use of child soldiers in Yemen by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, or any other country, and on any diplomatic efforts it has undertaken to seek an end to the practice;
- If the reports are accurate, include Saudi Arabia and any of its coalition partners involved in the recruitment or use of child soldiers in the State Department's 2019 list of governments (published as part of the annual Trafficking in Persons report) that are in violation of the CSPA and subject to sanctions;
- Implement the sanctions outlined in the CSPA by immediately suspending the following forms of assistance to the Saudi-led coalition: licenses for direct commercial sales of

military equipment; foreign military financing for the purchase of defense articles and services, as well as design and construction services; international military education and training; excess defense articles; and peacekeeping operations and other programs;

- Maintain sanctions until the Saudi-led coalition has: implemented screening procedures to ensure all recruits are at least 18; identified all recruits under 18 and worked with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to demobilize and return them to Sudan, and provided assistance for rehabilitation programs; signed an action plan with the United Nations to end violations against children;
- Immediately review Sudan's status with respect to the CSPA, including an assessment of its forces deployed in Yemen, and whether evidence exists for Sudan to be put back on the CSPA list in the 2019 Trafficking in Persons report;

Finally, in light of credible evidence of Houthi forces forcibly conscripting minors into combat, we urge you to investigate these claims and deliver a report to Congress.

We look forward to your response on this matter of grave concern.

Sincerely,



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



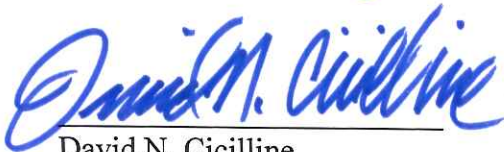
Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



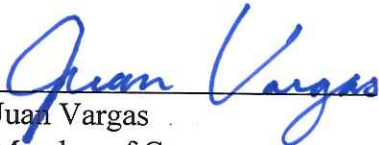
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



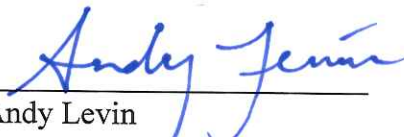
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



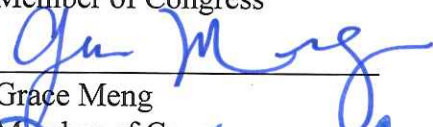
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



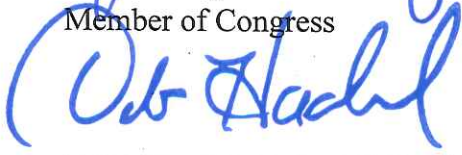
Andy Levin
Member of Congress



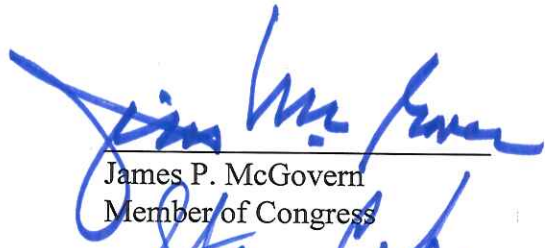
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



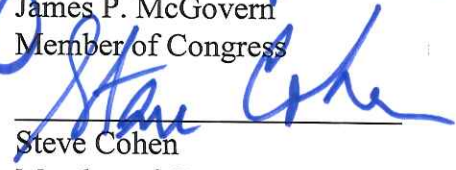
Grace Meng
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Deb Haaland
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Steve Cohen
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