

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 22, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

The February 7, 2017, Amnesty International report “Human Slaughterhouse: Mass Hangings and Extermination at Saydnaya Prison, Syria” offers even more apparent evidence of the types of crimes committed by Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria. The report asserts that up to 13,000 people have been methodically executed at the Saydnaya Prison as part of a calculated campaign of extrajudicial execution authorized at the highest levels of the Syrian government. This report comes more than three years after the 2014 Syrian Detainee Report, also known as the “Caesar Report,” which extensively documented the systematic killing of more than 11,000 detainees.

Taken together with credible, clear, and convincing previous reports of Assad’s actions – including the confirmed use of chemical weapons, the use of barrel bombs against noncombatants, as well as the use of torture and starvation against civilians – sufficient documentation exists to charge Bashar al-Assad with war crimes and crimes against humanity. He has lost legitimacy as Syria’s leader.

Russia and Iran’s ongoing military operations in support of Assad make Russian and Iranian leaders complicit in Assad’s war crimes and crimes against humanity. Russia has repeatedly blocked collective action to respond to Assad’s crimes at the United Nations Security Council, to include vetoing an effort to stop the murder of innocent civilians in Aleppo. Russian forces themselves appear to have committed war crimes, such as the bombing of a humanitarian convoy on September 19, 2016.

In light of Amnesty International’s report and the exhaustive documentation by Caesar and other courageous Syrians, we respectfully request that you work to ensure Assad, Russia, and Iran are made to answer for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria.

As you review U.S. policy toward Russia and participate in the Administration’s planning to defeat ISIS, Russia’s role in the tragic deaths of hundreds of thousands of Syrians must be considered. Russia must join the international community in seeking to hold Assad accountable, stop enabling the slaughter of the Syrian people, and undertake efforts to remove Iran-affiliated fighters from Syria.

We also ask that you provide an update on the steps the Administration is taking to document war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria, and planned U.S. support to the accountability process that must be part of a political agreement to end the war.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your response.

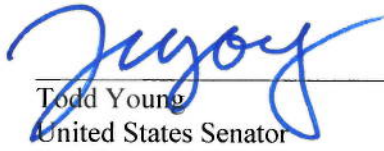
Sincerely,





Bob Corker  
United States Senator



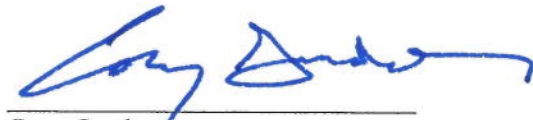
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Todd Young  
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Robert Menendez  
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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator

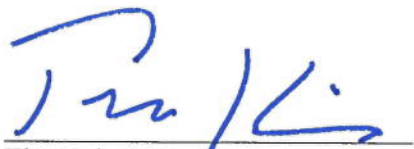
  
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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

  
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Cory Gardner  
United States Senator

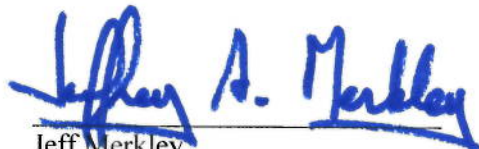
  
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Christopher Coons  
United States Senator


  
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Tom Udall  
United States Senator

  
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Chris Murphy  
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