

March 26, 2020

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Coons,

We, the undersigned democracy, human rights, and anti-corruption organizations and experts, write to thank you for your inclusion of \$3 million for sanctions enforcement in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill and urge you to retain this same funding level in Fiscal Year 2021.

As you know, the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* (22 U.S.C. 2656 note), which authorizes visa bans and asset freezes for human rights abusers and corrupt officials, is one of the most powerful foreign policy tools created in recent memory. It enjoys broad bipartisan support, and is widely viewed as one of the United States' most effective methods for addressing human rights abuses and corruption – two key drivers of instability globally.

We have collectively documented numerous firsthand accounts from human rights activists around the world about the law's powerful deterrent and accountability effects on corrupt activity and human rights abuses. Authoritarian leaders have taken notice. The law's novel provision requiring the consideration of information submitted by international human rights organizations has empowered civil society to play a key role in holding kleptocrats and abusive actors to account, helping to energize and organize collaborative efforts in even the most repressive of environments.

Since the *Global Magnitsky Act* was signed into law in 2016, targeted sanctions have been imposed on 199 human rights violators, corrupt actors, and associated entities in 25 countries. This remarkable success is a testament to unprecedented cooperation between Congress, the Executive Branch, and civil society, and a demonstration of a shared conviction about the law's utility.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury is the U.S. government's lead agency for enforcement of the *Global Magnitsky Act*. Assisted by the Department of State and Department of Justice, Treasury is tasked with assembling packages of information about each individual on whom the U.S. government plans to impose *Global Magnitsky* sanctions. Unfortunately, the number of potential sanctions cases to be vetted by the U.S. government far exceeds current capacity.

We are grateful that the inclusion of \$3 million in the FY20 FSGG appropriations bill for the enforcement of *Global Magnitsky* and other sanctions will enable Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI) to begin to alleviate this case backlog. It is critical that this funding level, and the specific funding set aside with "shall" language, be maintained in FY2021 bill to allow this important work to continue. We propose the following bill text and report language be included in Fiscal Year 2021:

Bill text: For the necessary expenses of the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence...of which not less than \$3,000,000 shall be available for addressing human rights violations and corruption, including activities authorized by the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* (22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

Report language: The Committee strongly supports efforts to strengthen national security through the use of targeted sanctions measures to address human rights abuses, combat threats, and protect the integrity of the financial system. Therefore, the recommendation once again includes funding for and directs the department to enhance expertise and investigatory capacity for sanctions investigations, policy development, and enforcement of sanctions, including through the use of the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* (22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

Corruption and human rights abuses perpetuate and are born from violence and criminal activity, and exact an enormous toll socially, economically, and militarily. The United Nations estimates that the annual costs of corruption alone equal \$3.6 trillion—roughly four percent of total global gross domestic product. Addressing corruption and human rights abuses is of paramount importance for U.S. foreign policy, and *Global Magnitsky* sanctions are one of the most powerful tools for doing so.

We respectfully urge you to maintain FY20 funding levels for sanctions enforcement, including the specific “shall” set aside, in the FY2021 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill and to include directive report language on implementation. We appreciate your consideration of this request and would be happy to meet with you in person to discuss this request in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Freedom House
Human Rights First
The Sentry
African Bar Association
American Jewish World Service
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)
Boat People SOS
China Aid Association
China Human Rights Accountability Center
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
Citizen Power Initiatives for China
Committee to Protect Journalists
Council for Global Equality
EarthRights International
Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) Association of Washington DC
Free Russia Foundation
Global Diligence LLP
Global Witness
Henry M. Jackson Foundation
Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC)
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Foundation
International Christian Concern
International State Crime Initiative, Queen Mary University of London
Magnitsky Act Initiative
NGO Truth Hounds
Open Dialogue Foundation
Open Society Policy Center
PEN America
Reporters Without Borders

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Safeguard Defenders
TAF - Tahrir Alnisa Foundation
The Church of Almighty God
The Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
Torture Abolition And Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC)
Transparency International
Truth Hounds NGO
Uyghur Human Rights Project
WatchDog.MD Community (Republic of Moldova)

Puneet Ahluwalia, South Asia Minorities Alliance Foundation
Toufic Baaklini, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, In Defense of Christians
Teng Biao, Grove Human Rights Scholar, Hunter College, the City University of New York
Bill Browder, Head of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign
Samuel M. Chu, Managing Director, Hong Kong Democracy Council
Ariel Dulitzky, Human Rights Clinic, University of Texas at Austin, School of Law
Camille Eiss, Chief of Global Partnerships and Policy, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
David J. Kramer, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
Nadeem Nusrat, Voice Of Karachi

Cc: The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member