

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our deep concerns about the Chinese government's suppression of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Not only are the human rights of millions of individuals being abused, but American journalists and their family members are also in peril. We urge you to call on the Chinese government to cease these repressive policies and release those in arbitrary detention immediately.

According to human rights groups, during the past year, the Chinese government has detained more than one million residents of XUAR, including Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, in "political re-education camps" or forced them to attend mandatory re-education sessions in their villages. The 2017 Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report on China found that government officials sent men, women, and children to forced labor camps and separated them from family members.

In addition to "political re-education", the Chinese government has undertaken a dramatic expansion of its compulsory biometric collection program and implemented a widespread crackdown on free expression. According to Human Rights Watch, the Chinese government mandated the collection of millions of DNA samples, retina scans, and voice prints in XUAR for all those individuals who "authorities consider threatening to regime stability – and their family members." Officials routinely subject innocent individuals involved in the peaceful expression of political and religious views to arbitrary arrest, confinement, harassment, and expedited judicial procedures—all in the name of combatting supposed terrorism and extremism.

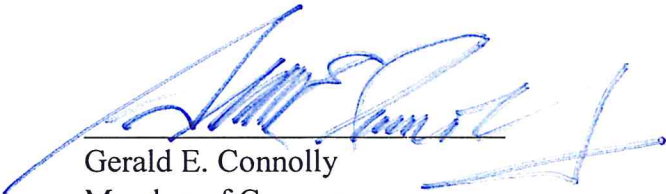
We urge you take immediate action to address an alarming situation affecting six U.S.-based journalists with Radio Free Asia's (RFA) Uyghur Service. As you know, RFA is one of five media networks under the United States Agency for Global Media. Its Uyghur-language news service provides roughly 12 million of China's mostly Muslim, Turkic-speaking Uyghur population with trustworthy, accurate news on the deteriorating human rights situation in China's XUAR.

RFA's journalists, most of them U.S. citizens and all residents of Virginia, have relatives in China—including elderly parents—who have been detained, jailed, or forcibly disappeared in what appears to be an act of direct retaliation against these U.S. journalists for their work in exposing the unfolding

humanitarian crisis in Xinjiang. We are deeply concerned that these cases represent a concerted effort to interfere with Radio Free Asia's congressionally mandated mission of bringing free press to closed societies.

We request that the Department continue to consult with RFA's journalists about their China-based families' situations. In your capacity as the United States' senior diplomat, we request that you raise this urgent issue with your Chinese counterpart, seek answers as to the whereabouts and well-being of the missing, detained, and jailed relatives, and appeal for these individuals to be released at every opportunity. We ask you to make clear to the Chinese government that these cases are a priority for the Department of State and to brief our offices by September 30, 2018 with an update on their cases.

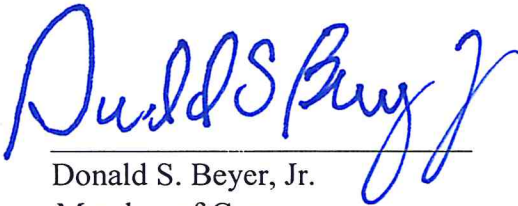
Best Regards,



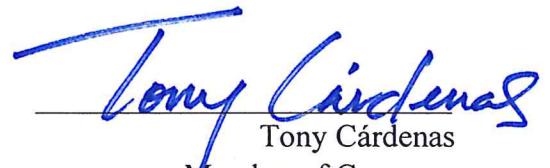
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress
11th District of Virginia



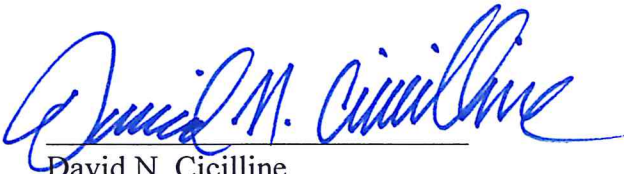
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress
1st District of Ohio



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress
8th District of Virginia



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress
29th District of California



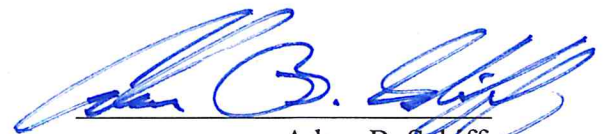
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress
1st District of Rhode Island



Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Washington, D.C. – At Large



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress
8th District of Maryland



Adam B. Schiff
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