

March 13, 2020

The Honorable José E. Serrano
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science & Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science & Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt,

We, the undersigned democracy, human rights, and anti-corruption organizations and experts, write to thank you for your inclusion of report language highlighting the importance of *Global Magnitsky* sanctions enforcement in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill and urge you to include \$1 million for this purpose in the Fiscal Year 2021 bill.

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 Department of Justice's Civil Division (including the Federal Programs Branch) and Criminal Division (including the Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section and the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section) assist the Departments of Treasury and State with assembling and vetting case files 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 appreciated the House's inclusion of report language in FY20 recommending the Department hire additional personnel to review cases. With this in mind, we respectfully request the following bill and report language for FY21:

Bill text: For expenses necessary for the administration of the Department of Justice . . . of which not less than \$1,000,000 shall be available for addressing human rights violations and corruption as authorized by the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* (22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

Report language: The Committee directs the Department to spend no less than \$1 million for the hiring of additional personnel in the Criminal and Civil Divisions to increase the Department's ability to assemble and vet the large number of case files of individuals and entities subject to sanctions under the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* (22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

One million dollars would enable the hiring of four to six additional full time employees, enabling the identification and vetting of a greater number of perpetrators, thus ensuring more robust enforcement of the law and the advancement of a critical U.S. policy priority.

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 include \$1 million for *Global Magnitsky* enforcement in the FY21 CJS appropriations bill, along with directive report language. 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
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
Citizen Power Initiatives for China
Council for Global Equality
Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) Association of Washington DC
Free Russia Foundation
Global Diligence LLP
Human Right Campaign
Human Rights Foundation
International Christian Concern
International State Crime Initiative, Queen Mary University of London
NGO Truth Hounds
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
Ariel Dulitzky, Human Rights Clinic, University of Texas at Austin, School of Law
David J. Kramer, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
Nadeem Nusrat, Voice Of Karachi

Cc: The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member