

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 27, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We write regarding disturbing reports that the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser has sought to undermine and perhaps roll back the determination of your predecessor, Secretary of State John Kerry, that ISIS is "responsible for genocide" against Christians, Yezidis and other religious minorities. As you know, Mr. Kerry announced that determination on March 17, 2016, pursuant to a congressional mandate (Omnibus Spending Act of 2016), at a press conference. It was only the second time in history that a U.S. secretary of state made a genocide determination and it was widely heralded. Both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed resolutions along similar lines. President Trump and Vice President Pence also have denounced this "genocide" in their public statements in recent months.

Next week marks three years since the Islamic State waged a brutal offensive in Iraq, laying siege to Mt. Sinjar and overtaking Iraq's largest Christian city, Qaraqosh, and murdering, enslaving, displacing and otherwise terrorizing thousands of religious minorities whose community's roots in these lands go back to antiquity. The full measure of human suffering exacted against these innocents is incalculable.

As we approach this solemn anniversary, and with it persistent questions regarding the long-term viability of these ancient communities, it is vital that we have clarity regarding the policy of this administration, specifically as it relates to the most egregious of all human rights atrocities, genocide.

As such, we respectfully request urgent clarification on this matter, including answers to the following questions:

- Has the Legal Adviser issued any guidance or directives in recent months that would contradict or undermine Secretary Kerry's determination? If so, please provide the language.

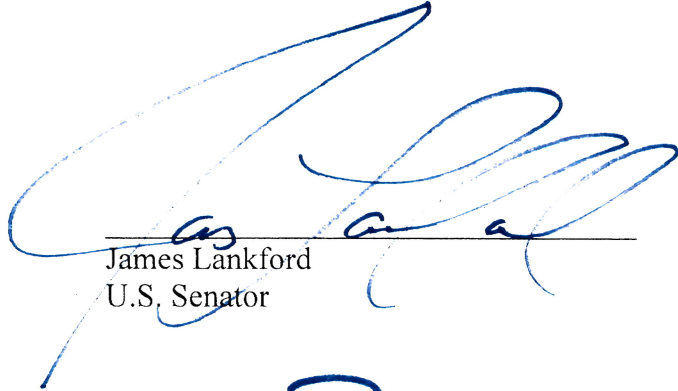
- If the Legal Adviser has engaged on this issue, have you supported these efforts?

Thank you in advance for your timely response on this inquiry.

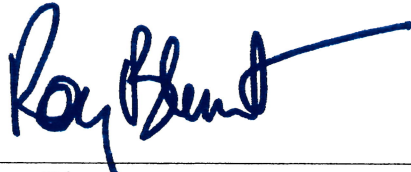
Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



James Lankford
U.S. Senator



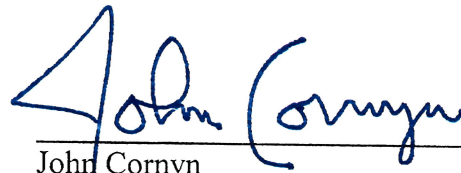
Roy Blunt
U.S. Senator



Ben Sasse
U.S. Senator



Cory Gardner
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator

CC: The Honorable President Donald J. Trump, President of the United States
The Honorable Vice President Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States