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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

December 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretaries Pompeo and Mnuchin:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the alarming slide towards authoritarianism in Uganda, a major recipient of U.S. foreign aid and one of the top recipients of U.S. security assistance in Africa. Having been in power for over three decades, President Museveni's government has a long track record of repressive behavior. More recently, this has included attacks on independent media, the banning of political rallies and concerts, the arrest, detention, and torture of individuals who dare to challenge the president or the ruling party, and a persistent lack of accountability for the arbitrary and extrajudicial killings and torture perpetrated by Ugandan security forces.

For several years, the United States has raised concerns about the Ugandan government's lack of respect for the civil liberties of its citizens and urged the government to conduct or permit credible investigations into alleged human rights abuses. However, diplomatic rhetoric alone has had little impact on President Museveni's behavior. Instead, he has further consolidated power while preventing the emergence of a viable democratic opposition.

To cite a few examples: In November 2016, Ugandan security forces massacred over 100 civilians in Kasese. In September 2017, Ugandan Special Forces forcibly entered parliament during a debate over whether to remove presidential age limits from the constitution, which now allows President Museveni to rule indefinitely. During the tumult, MP Betty Namboozee suffered serious spinal injuries from which she is still recovering. In July 2018, the government imposed a tax on citizens who wished to access social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter – a transparent ploy to discourage anti-government mobilization on the part of youths and

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dissidents. The following month, MP Robert Kyagulanyi and 32 other opposition politicians were arrested and brutally tortured following a by-election in Arua. Earlier this year, MP Francis Zaake was brutalized for distributing supplies to needy citizens during the coronavirus lockdown, while just last month, at least 45 people were killed by Ugandan security forces following protests in Kampala.

These violent incidents reflect a highly disturbing trajectory for the country, thus ensuring that the environment for general elections in January 2021 has been fundamentally tilted in favor of an incumbent who has been in power since 1986. Therefore, I request that the Treasury Department and the State Department utilize the authority of the *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Global Magnitsky Act)* to designate individuals who may be responsible for violence in Uganda in recent years, such as Lt. Gen. Peter Elwelu, Commander of Land Forces; Maj. Gen. James Birungi, Commander of the Special Forces Command; Maj. Gen. Don William Nabasa, former Commander of the Special Forces Command; Maj. Gen. Abel Kandiho, Chief of Military Intelligence; Maj. Gen. Steven Sabiiti Muzeyi, Deputy Inspector of General of Police; Frank Mwesigwa, Commissioner of Police; and Col. Chris Serunjogi Ddamulira, Director of Crime Intelligence.

I also ask that the State Department commence a review of all non-humanitarian assistance to Uganda; commit to providing robust support to human rights defenders, and independent journalists and to building the capacity of civil society organizations; and coordinate with like-minded allies to issue a joint condemnation of violent repression.

Finally, I request that you provide the Committee with the following information in writing no later than January 9, 2021:

- An overview of the U.S. government's engagement with the Government of Uganda, opposition political parties, and civil society organizations with respect to the 2021 elections, and how such engagement differs from previous elections;
- An assessment of the impact that several years of violent repression and impunity for gross human rights abuses has had on the Ugandan political environment;
- A detailed list of all United States security assistance and law enforcement capacity-building efforts with Ugandan security forces since FY15;
- An accounting, in classified form if necessary, of Uganda's compliance with end-use monitoring requirements and cooperation with Leahy vetting requirements.

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- An assessment of the risks to U.S. interests in East and Central Africa of continuing to work by, with, and through an increasingly authoritarian partner who has exhibited no indications of a succession plan, and a plan to mitigate said risks over the next five years; and
- A plan to intensify the U.S. response to human rights abuses beyond rhetorical condemnations and work with the Government of Uganda and local non-governmental organizations to secure accountability for citizens who have been subjected to arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings.

My desire to see a better human rights record in Uganda is firmly rooted in the country's own constitution and legal code, which prevent torture and enshrine the right to freely assemble and express viewpoints that may not be in accordance with those of President Museveni. Moreover, considering Uganda's importance to U.S. security interests in East and Central Africa, it is imperative that the United States and its international partners act to prevent further destabilization in Uganda and facilitate the opening of civic and political space for which Ugandan citizens are mobilizing.

I look forward to your response and thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman