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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 28, 2022

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield  
U.S. Representative to the United Nations  
U.S. Mission to the United Nations  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield:

We write to encourage further action by the U.S. government to respond to Russia's unprovoked, inhumane, and illegal invasion into Ukraine at the United Nations (UN), specifically in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

In February, Russia launched a massive military invasion into the free and sovereign nation of Ukraine, resulting in thousands of casualties, including that of children, pregnant women, health workers, journalists, and countless others. We have seen the indiscriminate shelling of apartment buildings, hospitals, and schools and the slaughter of fleeing civilians. The multitude of crimes committed by the Russian Federation, and by Vladimir Putin himself, demonstrates that the Russian government has no intention of upholding international human rights. As such, it is time we consider whether the Russian Federation deserves to reap benefits from an organization whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.

If the United States is a member of the Council, then it should use its seat to counter authoritarian agendas as part of a foreign policy centered on democracy and human rights. Despite the UNHRC's flaws, the Council took an important step on March 4 when it overwhelmingly adopted a Ukrainian-sponsored and U.S.-supported resolution to establish an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of human rights in the context of the Russian invasion. Still, it is our belief that Russia should not have a seat on what is supposed to be the premiere international human rights body. Russia should not have an opportunity to continue to block, stifle, and otherwise distract from important conversations on the situation of human rights in Ukraine. Swift action must be taken to show the world the United States and our allies will not stand for indiscriminate and unprovoked attacks on civilians and democracies. The time has come for Russia to no longer have a seat on the Council.

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield

March 28, 2022

Page 2

According to the membership rules of the UNHRC, states engaging in a pattern of gross and systemic abuses can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the UN General Assembly. We implore you to introduce a resolution in the UN General Assembly to call for the removal of the Russian Federation from the UNHRC immediately.

Russia does not deserve to maintain a seat on the UNHRC while it is waging a violent war against peaceful civilians. The world must take a stand for the promotion and protection of human rights, including those under attack in Ukraine.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH  
Ranking Member



ROBERT MENENDEZ  
Chairman



MITT ROMNEY  
Member



BRIAN SCHATZ  
Member



ROB PORTMAN  
Member



JEANNE SHAHEEN  
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO  
Member



TIM KAINE  
Member



CORY A. BOOKER  
Member



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS  
Member



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN  
Member



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
Member