

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are extremely alarmed by the Trump Administration's policy of remaining silent in international fora about racism and xenophobia and declining to condemn hate speech and incitement. It's outrageous that any administration, regardless of political ideology, would refuse to stand for these basic American ideals.

Documents revealed in the press show that State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration Andrew Veprek disputed the idea that leaders have a "duty to condemn hate speech or incitement" and tried to strike an entire section of a United Nations document that links fighting racism with building a diverse democratic society.

This is dangerous policy. The United States Holocaust Museum notes that genocide is often preceded and accompanied by widespread hate speech. Ensuring that hate speech is condemned is not just basic decency—it's also a tool for preventing atrocities.

The Trump administration's retreat from the world has directly undermined our long held global leadership role. His racist and xenophobic policies have slammed America's door on some of the world's most desperate people. Ultimately, this latest blunder amplifies the increasingly widespread perception that some officials in the Trump administration are racist and support an anti-foreigner, anti-Muslim discriminatory agenda and further erodes our national credibility on the world stage.

We demand an explanation and expect that DAS Veprek will be made available to meet with our staffs to explain these baffling actions and the policies behind them. Please contact Sajit Gandhi of the Foreign Affairs Committee staff at (202) 226 8467 by the end of the week to schedule this meeting without delay.

Sincerely,

Eliot L. Engel

Eliot L. Engel
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee

Karen Bass

Karen Bass
Co-Chair
CBC Foreign Affairs and
National Security Task Force

Cedric Richmond

Cedric Richmond
Chair
Congressional Black Caucus

Judy Chu

Judy Chu
Chairwoman
CAPAC

Marc Veasey

Marc Veasey
Co-Chair
CBC Foreign Affairs and
National Security Task Force

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus