

November 22, 2022

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Risch
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Menendez, Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member Risch, and Ranking Member McCaul:

On November 26, Ukrainians around the world will commemorate Holodomor Remembrance Day, remembering the millions of Ukrainians starved to death by the Soviet regime in an artificially-created famine. Raphael Lemkin, the Polish-Jewish lawyer who first coined the term *genocide*, called the Holodomor “the classic example of Soviet genocide.” His work formed the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, which the United States helped draft and is party to. Indeed, in 2018, the House recognized the Holodomor as a genocide in H.Res. 931.

Today, the Ukrainian nation is once again fighting for its right to exist. We are thankful for the support the United States has provided Ukraine, and we are grateful for your leadership in that process. In that same spirit, we urge you to support and pass out of Committee **S. Res. 713 and H.Res. 1205**, which recognizes Russia’s actions in Ukraine as genocide. Although we appreciate that executive-branch processes are also common for such determinations, the Kremlin’s genocidal intent and actions are so clear and so evident that a congressional declaration is not only advisable, but absolutely necessary in the spirit of preventing further atrocities.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine unambiguously meets the definition of the term *genocide*, as defined by the Genocide Convention and reflected in U.S. law (18 U.S.C. § 1091). According to that definition, genocide occurs when *any one or more* of the following acts are committed with “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such”:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; *or*
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Russian officials have conducted an incitement campaign and adhered to a policy of attempting to not just conquer Ukraine, but to eliminate Ukrainians as a separate national group. This is all too apparent through the coordinated campaign of eliminationist rhetoric disseminated by state-run media, military campaigns that intentionally target civilian areas and life-sustaining infrastructure, and military occupation regimes that seek to arrest, deport, and destroy members of the Ukrainian nationality.

Russia's rhetoric categorically paints Ukrainians who view themselves as a distinct national group as "Nazis." This rhetoric frames the existence of Ukrainians as a threat to Russia, directly implying that destroying Ukrainians is needed to win a civilizational struggle. Putin has let other officials and state propagandists clarify what the goal of "denazification" means. Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev has stated openly, "I hate them. They are bastards and degenerates... I will do everything to make them disappear." Timofei Sergeitsev wrote in the tightly Kremlin-controlled outlet RIA Novosti that "a significant part of the masses" will need to be subjected to "reeducation," "ideological repression," and "forced labor," — or at least "those who will not be subject to the death penalty or imprisonment."

In addition to indiscriminately shelling Ukrainian civilians during the course of military operations, the Russian military has carried out executions of Ukrainian civilians, tortured them, forcibly deported them, and deliberately targeted them in missile and artillery attacks. The devastating images from Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol, and Izium are not isolated incidents; they are emblematic of systematic, widespread atrocities perpetrated by Russian occupants. Some of the perpetrators have been publicly awarded by the Kremlin for such crimes. A disturbing and systematic pattern of sexual violence has emerged, with intercepted audio recordings revealing Russian soldiers bragging about raping Ukrainians.

Between one and two million Ukrainians have been forcibly deported, often through constellations of "filtration" concentration camps. Thousands of Ukrainian children are estimated to have been forcibly adopted into ethnic Russian families and compelled to assimilate, a crime that by itself violates Article II(e) of the Genocide Convention. Russian government officials have notoriously spoken about the need to indoctrinate Ukrainian children. Russian children's rights ombudswoman Maria Lvova-Belova bragged that after a group of children were forcibly deported to the Moscow region, their love for Ukraine had been "transformed into a love for Russia." Ukrainian schoolchildren who remain in occupied territories are pressured to reject

their own national identity, studying under an imposed school curriculum that denies Ukraine's distinct history and nationhood.

Russia's policies in Ukraine undoubtedly point to genocidal intent and genocidal acts. **S. Res. 713 and H. Res. 1205** reaffirm America's commitment to our fundamental principles, underscoring the seriousness of Russia's crimes. In 2018, a broad bipartisan coalition in Congress found that genocide and similar crimes "threaten national and international security" (Pub. L. 115-441). If we do not recognize this invasion for what it is, we not only fail the Ukrainian people, but we neglect our security interests and our foundational values. We urge the Committee to pass this important resolution before the conclusion of the 117th Congress. The United States must recognize and help end genocide, and not just memorialize it after the ruination and devastation of a nation.

Respectfully,

Razom



Human Rights Foundation



Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights



Genocide Watch



Renew Democracy Initiative



Emek Sholom Holocaust
Memorial Cemetery



Ukrainian Congress Committee
of America



Ukrainian National Women's
League of America



Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
Alliance for Ukraine



Ukrainian American
Coordinating Council



Transatlantic Task Force for Ukraine



MedGlobal



Congress of Bosniaks of North America



American Coalition for Syria



Joint Baltic American National Committee



Syria Faith Initiative



Georgian Association in the USA



Free Belarus Coalition



Ukrainian Medical Association of North America



Belarus Freedom Forum



Association of Belarusians in America

