



September 13, 2017

Senator Addison McConnell
Senator Majority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Amnesty International USA Urges Congress to Reject Southern Border Wall Funding

Dear Senator McConnell and Speaker Ryan:

On behalf of Amnesty International USA ("AIUSA") and our more than seven million members and supporters nationwide, we strongly urge you to reject any and all requests to fund a southern border wall. AIUSA vigorously [objected](#) to the \$1.6 billion for a border wall that was passed by the House of Representatives in July 2017, as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2018 AKA Make America Secure Appropriations Act (H.R. 3219).

As Congress negotiates and crafts a spending package to keep the government funded beyond December 2017, it is essential that any such package be free of any funding for a southern border wall. AIUSA [will oppose](#) any and all funding measures to build a border wall. The construction of a border wall would pose serious human rights consequences and would violate international law and standards in two major ways.

First, Congress should not approve funding for a wall that will cut through tribal land unless the U.S. government first obtains the free, prior, and informed consent of affected Nations, as prescribed by Article 19 of the United Nations ("U.N.") [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). The U.S. must consult in good faith with Native American Nations that would be impacted by the construction of any wall. The [National Congress of American Indians](#) and the [Tohono O'odham Legislative Council](#), the second-largest tribe in the U.S. by land holdings, have both passed resolutions opposing the construction of the wall without tribal consent. Absent the free, prior, and informed consent of affected Native American Nations, Congress may not approve border wall funding without violating the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Second, the construction of a border wall would deter asylum seekers from entering the U.S., including children and families who have survived torture or other persecution. In order to provide a fair asylum process, the U.S. government must ensure the existence of sufficiently located, secure, regulated border crossing points for asylum seekers. This is essential to ensure that the U.S. government does not violate the principle of *non-refoulement*, which is enshrined in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and binding on States Party to the 1967 Protocol.


AIUSA urges Congress to reject any funding for a border wall, and to ensure the protection of human rights of our first Americans as well as of those asylum seekers in need of U.S. humanitarian protection. For more information, please contact AIUSA senior managing director Joanne Lin at jlin@aiusa.org or 202/509-8151.




Sincerely,



Rana Abdelhamid



Govind Acharya




Ali Arab




Donald Bierer




Ann Burroughs



Reza Fakhari




Becky Farrar



Hadar Harris



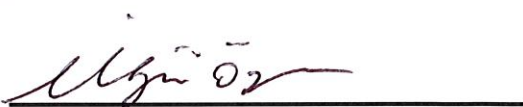
Angie Hougas




Elizabeth Jennings



Janet Lord



Ilgu Ozler



Terry Rockefeller



Adriana Sanford



Aniket Shah