



*Human Rights on Capitol Hill*  
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1. **AIUSA denounces White House immigration plan as anti-human rights:** The list of White House immigration demands released on October 8 includes constructing a southern border wall, fast-track deportations of unaccompanied Central American children, and tougher standards and stiffer penalties for people seeking refugee protection. AIUSA has [denounced](#) the President’s list of immigration demands as anti-refugee, anti-child, anti-Dreamer, anti-Native American.

AIUSA has urged the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) to pass a clean Dream Act, in order to protect the 800,000 Dreamers who stand to lose work permits and protection from deportation. Congress has before it a bipartisan Dream Act with widespread support. Congress should quickly pass the Dream Act without a border wall or “border security” measures that would endanger people seeking humanitarian protection.

2. **Gun violence: Congress must reject gun silencer bill and pass gun control reform legislation.**

The Las Vegas massacre was the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history. The killings in Las Vegas prove the need for common-sense restrictions on the purchase of guns. Yet it could

have been far worse if the gunman had used a silencer. The House should reject the SHARE Act (H.R. 3668), which would make gun silencers easier to obtain. Congress should also [reject concealed carry reciprocity](#) bills which would weaken protections against hidden firearms would lead to more gun-caused deaths. Instead Congress should pass universal background-check legislation and other measures to protect individuals from gun violence.

**3. Rohingya refugees: Congress and the administration must press the Myanmar military and civilian government to halt ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya.**

Since August 25, 2017, more than a half million Rohingya refugees have fled the Myanmar military and poured into neighboring Bangladesh. Amnesty International (“AI”) crisis response researchers have been on the ground in Bangladesh throughout September interviewing refugees who have been raped, shot, and pushed out of their villages by security forces who set their homes ablaze, sometimes with people stuck inside. Through high-resolution satellite technology, AI experts have documented over 80 Rohingya villages that have burned down, and AI munitions experts have determined that security forces have planted anti-personnel landmines along routes used by fleeing refugees.

AI has briefed House staff and submitted a [statement](#) for the October 5<sup>th</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on the Rohingya. In mid-October, AI will be briefing Senate staff and the National Security Council.

AI policy recommendations: The U.S. should urge the U.N. Security Council to impose a comprehensive arms embargo against Myanmar. Congress and the administration should press Myanmar to provide unfettered access to all international humanitarian organizations as well as to the U.N. Fact-finding Mission. The U.S. should increase humanitarian aid for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh as well as those internally displaced within Myanmar. The U.S. should continue refraining from any military to military engagement with Myanmar, and should urge Germany and Australia to suspend military to military engagement including training and support. Finally, a bipartisan congressional delegation should visit northern Rakhine State in Myanmar as well as Bangladesh to assess the humanitarian situation in both countries.





**4. Rwanda: AIUSA advocacy director for Africa testifies before House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on deteriorating human rights situation in Rwanda**

On September 27 Adotei Akwei, AIUSA Advocacy Director for Africa, testified before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. He spoke on the deteriorating human rights situation in Rwanda in relation to the August 2017 elections. Akwei described the culture of fear and intimidation created by the Rwandan government's assault against civil society organizations and human rights defenders.



- 5. Congress should block proposed dismantling of key DOS human rights offices:** On September 26 the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a [hearing](#) on the Secretary of State's proposed redesign of DOS. AIUSA submitted a [statement for the record](#) calling on Congress and DOS to preserve the structure, staffing, and resources for the refugee bureau, war crimes office, and global women's issues office – all essential offices for the

protection of human rights worldwide. AIUSA is troubled by reports of plans to downgrade these human rights offices, and urges Congress to permanently authorize these offices to ensure adequate staffing, expertise, and resources.

6. **Congress should press the administration to reconsider decision to slash refugee cap to lowest number in history of U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (“USRAP”):** In late September the President slashed the annual refugee cap to 45,000 for FY18 – the lowest annual target since the creation of the USRAP in 1980. This cap represents the all-time low in the history of the USRAP, a program that has enjoyed widespread bipartisan support for over 35 years. At its peak the USRAP admitted 209,000 refugees per year, and during every year of the George H.W. Bush presidency the U.S. admitted more than 100,000 refugees annually. No president has issued a refugee cap below 67,000 per year since the beginning of the Reagan administration.

Instead of continuing the United States’ long tradition of protecting refugees, President Trump has shut America’s doors to refugees fleeing violence and torture, thereby placing their lives at risk. AIUSA is urging Congress to press the President to admit at least 75,000 refugees in FY18.

7. **AIUSA Lobby Day: legislative coordinators hit Capitol Hill:** On September 25 AIUSA legislative coordinators -- representing over 25 states -- traveled to DC to lobby for human rights protection on Capitol Hill. They attended 51 House meetings and 11 Senate meetings, and pressed Congress to:
- pass a clean DREAM Act with no border wall and no “border security” measures that would endanger people seeking humanitarian protection;
  - reject the Share Act (H.R. 3668) which includes a gun silencer provision;
  - pass resolutions aimed at halting the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya;
  - urge the President to admit at least 75,000 refugees for FY18;
  - restore full funding of DOS and USAID; and
  - permanently repeal the global gag rule.



AIUSA legislative coordinators also asked House members to join the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and become champions of human rights both in the U.S. and worldwide.

*For more information, please contact:*

Africa: Adotei Akwei [aakwei@aiusa.org](mailto:aakwei@aiusa.org)

Mid East: Raed Jarrar [rjarrar@aiusa.org](mailto:rjarrar@aiusa.org)

Gender: Tarah Demant [tdemant@aiusa.org](mailto:tdemant@aiusa.org)

Nat Security: Daphne Eviatar [deviatar@aiusa.org](mailto:deviatar@aiusa.org)

Americas: Marselha G. Margerin [marselha@aiusa.org](mailto:marselha@aiusa.org)

Asia: T. Kumar [tkumar@aiusa.org](mailto:tkumar@aiusa.org)

Europe: Dan Balson [dbalson@aiusa.org](mailto:dbalson@aiusa.org)

Crim Justice: Krissy Roth [kroth@aiusa.org](mailto:kroth@aiusa.org)

Guns: Zeke Johnson [zjohnson@aiusa.org](mailto:zjohnson@aiusa.org)

Other issues: Joanne Lin [jlin@aiusa.org](mailto:jlin@aiusa.org)