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HUMAN RIGHTS ON CAPITOL HILL

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1) Vetting of Brett Kavanaugh on Human Rights is Insufficient

In a series of [letters](#) to Senators, Amnesty International urged the Senate not to hold a vote on Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court unless and until there is full disclosure of information relevant to his possible involvement in U.S. torture practices, and the allegations of sexual assault against him are fully investigated. No such information relevant to the question of his possible involvement in torture was made public and available information—including public communications by those who came forward with apparently relevant information, their legal representatives, and media investigations—indicates that the investigation ordered by President Trump on September 28 and carried out by the FBI was not thorough.

2) Trump Administration Continues to Degrade International Human Rights

Amnesty International USA condemned the [news](#) on September 10 that John Bolton, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, proposed that the Administration ban International Criminal Court (“ICC”) judges and prosecutors from entering the U.S., impose sanctions on them and prosecute them in the U.S. court system [stating](#), “The United States’ attack on the ICC is an attack on millions of victims and survivors who have experienced the most serious crimes under international law and undermines decades of groundbreaking work by the international community to advance justice.”

Amnesty International USA is deeply alarmed that the State Department is withholding more than [\\$25 million in funding](#) for U.N. human rights programs including \$7 million for the U.N. Human Rights Council and \$16 million the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

3) Refugees - Administration Sets All-Time Low Refugee Cap that Disproportionately Harms Mid East and African Refugees

The administration has set the FY19 refugee admissions cap at 30,000 -- the [lowest number](#) in the history of the U.S. refugee program. In the last year of the Obama administration the refugee ceiling exceeded 100,000. Ryan Mace, Grassroots Advocacy and Refugee Specialist, was [interviewed](#) by Democracy Now, “This is very much a matter of life and death.”

The Administration's cuts are devastating for refugees worldwide but [disproportionately harm](#) Mid East and African refugees. The FY19 refugee plan will halve the number of refugees from the Mid East and Africa.



4) Amnesty International Directors from Kenya, Ukraine, and Argentina Urge Congress to Sustain Robust Humanitarian Aid and to Protect Women and LGBTI Communities



Amnesty International Section Directors (left to right) Irungu Houghton (Kenya), Mariela Belski (Argentina) and Oksana Pokalchuk (Ukraine) speak with Joanne Lin, National Director of Advocacy and Government Relations

On September 24 the heads of Amnesty International Kenya, Ukraine, Argentina briefed Congress on human right crises in the Americas, Africa and Europe. They urged Congress to sustain robust humanitarian aid, push the Trump Administration to resettle more refugees, and to stand up for the human rights of women and LGBTI communities worldwide.



Daniel Balson, Eurasia Advocacy Director, testifies at Lantos Commission Briefing

5) Turkey - Amnesty International Testifies at Lantos Commission Briefing on Turkish Authorities' Crackdown on Human Rights Defenders

On September 26 Daniel Balson, Eurasia Advocacy Director, [testified](#) at a Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission [briefing](#) about the Turkish government's [crackdown on human rights defenders, journalists and dissidents](#). Since the failed 2016 coup attempt, Turkish authorities have jailed over 100 journalists and media workers, stifled 180 media outlets, and shut down 1300 Turkish NGOs. More than [100,000 people](#) have been subjected to criminal investigations, and more than 50,000 people have been jailed pending trial. Balson urged Congress to continue to press Turkish authorities to dismiss [all charges against](#) Amnesty International Turkey's board chair, Taner Kilic and director, Idil Eser.

6) China - Congress Must Press China to End Round-ups and Detention of Muslim Groups

In Amnesty International's [statement](#) submitted for the September 26 House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on "China's Repression and Internment of Uighurs: U.S. Policy Responses," we describe how Chinese authorities have intensified their [crackdown](#) on Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other predominantly Muslim groups through mass internment, intrusive surveillance, political indoctrination, and forced cultural assimilation. A September Amnesty International [report](#) captured the plight of people who have lost touch with relatives detained inside the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Amnesty International interviewed more than 100 people outside of China whose relatives are missing, as well as individuals who were tortured while in detention camps. Congress should pressure the Chinese government to end detention of Muslim groups.

7) Myanmar - Secretary Pompeo Misses Key Opportunity to Project the Lives of Rohingya

On September 24 the U.S. [announced](#) more than \$185 million in humanitarian aid to displaced Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Despite this positive announcement, the State Department at the same time declined to designate the atrocities committed by the Myanmar military as “crimes against humanity” or “genocide.” In response, Francisco Bencosme, Asia Advocacy Manager, commented: “This represents a significant missed opportunity on a crucial human rights issue and sends a worrying message about how the United States plans to address crimes under international law moving forward.”

8) U.S. - Federal Government has Allowed Gun Violence to Become a National Human Rights Crisis

A September Amnesty International USA [report](#) urges lawmakers to adopt the following controls: comprehensive background checks; national regulations for licensing and registering firearms and required training for gun ownership; ban on semi-automatic assault rifles and other military-grade weapons; investment in evidence-based community violence reduction and prevention programs; and mandatory safe-storage laws.

What’s Coming Down the Pike?

- *Amnesty International Report on people seeking safe haven in the U.S. (October 11):* This report will document the administration’s cruel and unlawful efforts to deter and punish asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border, including the government’s policies of family separation, border pushbacks, and arbitrary and prolonged detention.
 - *Write for Rights Campaign.* Amnesty International’s largest annual human rights campaign is underway through January 2019. This year, for the first time, all the featured human rights defenders (“HRDs”) are women. Amnesty International urges Members of Congress to adopt and champion individual HRDs. For more information please visit: <http://write.amnestyusa.org/>.
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