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As Congress advances the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Amnesty International USA and our members across the country strongly urge the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to prioritize human rights and include the following amendments in the final bill.

Several proposed House amendments cover critical human rights priorities. These include accountability for rights abuses - such as those by authorities in Egypt and Saudi Arabia - by restricting arms sales and security aid; strengthened State Department human rights monitoring; addressing repressive use of surveillance tools; evacuating, resettling in the U.S., and supporting Afghans at greatest risk by Taliban rule, ending gender-based violence, reducing harmful U.S. police militarization, and other urgent issues.

We urge members of Congress to pass and ensure inclusion of these pressing issues and amendments.

### **Prioritizing human rights in arms sales, security assistance, and foreign policy**

Existing U.S. laws bar the U.S. government from providing security assistance to any governments systemically violating human rights. Yet every year, the U.S. provides billions in arms and security assistance to governments thoroughly documented by Amnesty and others - and even the [State Department](#) - as flagrant abusers of human rights, in some cases enabled by or directly using U.S. assistance. And when the U.S. government has continued to fail in its obligations to uphold accountability.

It is critical that Congress pass these amendments to begin to remedy these human rights failures.

#### **Strengthened human rights monitoring, reporting, and accountability for abuses**

- [H.Amdt.123](#), introduced by Rep. Frank Pallone to require the administration to address abuses by recipients of U.S. security aid, and improve human rights training.
- [H.Amdt.765](#) introduced by Rep. Jesús Garcia and [H.Amdt.458](#) introduced by Rep. Joaquin Castro to require reporting on humanitarian impacts of U.S. sanctions; and inclusion of migrant rights in the State Department's annual human rights reports.
- [H.Amdt.294](#), introduced by Rep. Gerry Connolly to require a report on human rights abusers and military coup participants who received U.S. security training.
- [H.Amdt.532](#) and [H.Amdt.536](#), introduced by Rep. Tom Malinowski to direct the Secretary of State to report on abuses by Egypt's government against Americans and their families; and on extrajudicial killings and torture by Egyptian authorities.
- [H.Amdt.567](#), introduced by Rep. Tom Malinowski to require the administration to report and ensure accountability for torture or war crimes by U.S. citizens in Libya.
- [H.Amdt.581](#), introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna to extend authorization for payments to civilians harmed or killed by the U.S. military or supported forces.
- [H.Amdt.817](#), introduced by Rep. Ilhan Omar to require the State Department to report on human trafficking and slavery in Libya and to hold perpetrators accountable.

#### **Stop the weapons giveaways to human rights abusers, in line with existing U.S. law**

- [H.Amdt.520](#), introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to bar U.S. assistance to the Saudi Rapid Intervention Force, which killed U.S. journalist Jamal Khashoggi.
- [H.Amdt.573](#), introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna to end U.S. assistance for Saudi forces conducting strikes, as well as the broader Saudi and UAE-led coalition in Yemen.
- [H.Amdt.19](#), introduced by Rep. Gerry Connolly to restrict arms sales to Saudi Arabia; and uphold accountability for Khashoggi's death and abuses against Saudi nationals in the U.S.
- [H.Amdt.553](#), introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to direct annual review on if Colombian security forces committed gross violations, restricting security aid if so.
- [H.Amdt.737](#), introduced by Rep. Jesús Garcia to prohibit U.S. security aid to Brazil used in the forced displacement of its Indigenous or Quilombola communities.

### **Addressing the abuse of digital security and surveillance technology as a tool of repression**

Surveillance and cybersecurity tools have been used globally with increasing frequency to silence dissent and target critics under the guise of “anti-terror” and “digital security”. The Amnesty-supported [Pegasus Project](#) revealed such NSO Group spyware was sold to repressive governments, who used it to commit violations globally. Congress must respond to these growing, easily-abused surveillance tools by passing:

- [H.Amdt.698](#), introduced by Rep. Tom Malinowski to require annual reports on groups proliferating cyber-weapons and hack-for-hire to rights abusers and repressive governments.
- [H.Amdt.468](#), introduced by Rep. John Curtis to require the State Department’s annual human rights reports to address use of advanced technology for abuses and unlawful surveillance.

### **The crisis in Afghanistan and the evacuation, resettlement, and protection of at-risk Afghans**

For two decades, the U.S. government poured trillions of dollars into its war in Afghanistan with myriad human rights violations. Today, the U.S. has [a responsibility to urgently](#) and extensively act to evacuate and resettle to the U.S. the thousands of Afghans left behind after the August 31st withdrawal. Their lives are at risk - [facing increasing abuses and retaliation](#) by the Taliban for their associations, beliefs, identity, or human rights work. As such, Congress must pass these measures in support of Afghan refugees:

- [H.Amdt.63](#), introduced by Rep. Ilhan Omar to ensure the Commission on Afghanistan reports on civilian harm resulting from grave human rights violations, and the extent of that impact.
- [H.Amdt.671](#), introduced by Rep. Elissa Slotkin to require the administration to increase efforts to urgently evacuate at-risk Afghans and provide a strategy to safely process Afghans abroad with pending refugee referrals and special immigrant visa applications.
- [H.Amdt.769](#), introduced by Rep. Lou Correa to require the naming of an Afghan Refugee Special Envoy to coordinate evacuation and resettlement in the U.S. of at-risk Afghans.
- [H.Amdt.813](#), introduced by Rep. Jackie Speier to remove barriers and improve evacuation of Afghan refugees, especially prominent Afghan women and human rights defenders.

### **Combating dangerous police militarization and curbing violence by law enforcement**

Research shows the Defense Department’s 1033 program to transfer surplus military equipment to U.S. law enforcement does not [keep anyone safer](#), disproportionately targets and endangers people of color, and lacks [sufficient oversight](#). Curtailing 1033 is a [crucial step](#) to reduce dangerous and violent policing.

- **[OPPOSE]** [H.Amdt.376](#) introduced by Rep. Josh Gottheimer to require the Defense Department identify ways to expand access to military surplus for police in smaller localities.

### **Ending gender-based violence and discrimination**

- [H.Amdt.652](#) introduced by Rep. Norma Torres to direct the administration to aid Central American officials in protecting vulnerable families and prevention of domestic and gender-based violence.
- [H.Amdt.149](#) introduced by Rep. Jackie Speier to direct the Defense Department to report progress in better integrating gender advisors and “Women, Peace, and Security” principles.

### **Critical human rights issues absent from the legislation and proposed amendments**

Though missing from the House legislation and amendments, Amnesty calls on the Senate to address and ensure inclusion of the following important measures:

- **Facilitating [the long-overdue closure](#) of the **Guantánamo Bay prison****, an ongoing U.S. human rights atrocity which continues to illegally hold dozens of Muslim men without charge or fair trial and tortured by the U.S. government, with at least six already cleared for transfer.
- **Ending 1033 Program transfers** of military surplus to police, as supported by [over 150 groups](#).

- **Stronger enforcement of the Leahy Laws and Foreign Assistance Act** to prohibit arming and providing U.S. assistance to systemic human rights abusers, as proposed in [H.Amdt.600](#).
- **Direct the administration to investigate and release findings** around credible evidence of the use of U.S. arms such as [in Egypt](#), [Israel](#), [Yemen](#) via the [Saudi-UAE-led coalition](#), and [Colombia](#) in grave rights violations and likely war crimes; **and to implement preventative measures.**

Sincerely,

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