OPEN LETTER FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF A TARGETED, GLOBAL EU HUMAN RIGHTS SANCTIONS REGIME

Dear Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

We, the 90 undersigned organizations dedicated to the promotion of universal human rights and/or the fight against corruption, write to voice our strong support for the Foreign Affairs Council to initiate a process aimed at establishing an EU-wide program for the imposition of targeted sanctions on individuals and entities deemed responsible for serious human rights violations. Noting that the Foreign Affairs Council will take up this matter on December 10, 2018—the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—we urge all state representatives to honor the Declaration by supporting action on such a sanctions regime, and, in so doing, beginning the process of providing the EU with an additional, critical tool to combat impunity and defend human rights worldwide.

Today more than ever, we recognize that the promotion and protection of equal and inalienable rights form the basis of justice, peace, and security. Where human rights are violated and corruption is allowed to flourish, individuals are less safe and communities are less stable and secure. With universal human rights and the rule of law under significant challenge globally, now is thus an opportune moment to take an unmistakable step forward in defense of our common values.

As we have seen in countries that have enacted and utilized “Global Magnitsky” sanctions laws to date, a global human rights and anti-corruption sanctions program can serve as a vital addition to the diplomatic and legal toolkit essential to upholding human rights and the rule of law. In a relatively short period of time, governments such as those in the United States and Canada have used their human rights and anti-corruption sanctions laws to fight impunity for some of the world’s most heinous crimes in countries from Myanmar to Saudi Arabia. A similar tool will provide the EU with the ability to shine a spotlight on and compel changes of behavior in some of the world’s worst human rights violators. Robust implementation also has the potential to deter would-be kleptocrats and those that would use violence to silence dissent and maintain their grip on power.

We applaud the Dutch government for its demonstrated commitment toward achieving a global human rights sanctions program. We also commend those other EU governments that have voiced their support for this effort and encourage in the strongest terms all other EU member states to likewise support the initiative on December 10.

Sincerely,
Aditus Foundation
American Jewish World Service
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain
Article 19
Association UMDPL Ukraine
Boat People SOS
Center for Civil Liberties
Center for Justice & Accountability
Center for Policies and Reforms (Moldova)
China Against the Death Penalty
China Change
China Human Rights Accountability Center
Christian Solidarity Worldwide
Citizen Power Initiatives for China
Citizens’ Watch
Clean Clothes Campaign International Office
Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam
Community WatchDog.md
Council for Global Equality
CrimeaSOS
Crude Accountability
DRA (Berlin)
EarthRights International
The Enough Project
Estonian American National Council
Fair Trials
Freedom House
Freedom Now
Institute of Public Policies
India Committee of the Netherlands
Institute for Development and Social Initiatives
Institute for European Policies and Reforms
International Campaign for Tibet
International Partnership for Human Rights
Joint Baltic American National Committee
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law
Lawyers for Lawyers
Legal Resources Centre from Moldova
Legal Transformation Center (Belarus)
Magnitsky Act Initiative
The McCain Institute
Media Initiative for Human Rights (Ukraine)
Mexicanos vs Corrupción e Impunidad
National Endowment for Democracy
Netherlands Helsinki Committee
The Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Open Dialogue Foundation
Pax
PEN America
Physicians for Human Rights
Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta
Project Expedite Justice
Promo LEX Moldova
Protection of Rights Without Borders (Armenia)
Public Association “Dignity”
Free Press Unlimited
Heartland Initiative
Helsinki Association Armenia
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vsnadzor
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)
Hivos
HRM Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan
Humanitarian China
Human Rights Center “Memorial”
Human Rights Club (Azerbaijan)
Human Rights Concern - Eritrea
Human Rights First
Human Rights Foundation
Human Rights House Zagreb
Human Rights Matter
Human Rights Monitoring Institute
Hungarian Helsinki Committee
Religious Liberty Commission, World Evangelical Alliance
Reporters Without Borders
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
The Sentry
Sova Center
Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International
Transparencia Venezuela
Transparency International
Transparency International Moldova
Truth Hounds
Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
VETO! Human Rights Defenders Network
Vietnam Coalition Against Torture
Vietnamese Women for Human Rights
VOICE
World Organisation Against Torture
Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit