

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write with concern over recent events in Yemen, and urge you to use the powers of your office to facilitate a comprehensive diplomatic solution to end this devastating war.

The threat of COVID-19 brings new urgency to negotiations in Yemen. There is now a draft agreement on the table that includes a nationwide ceasefire, a framework for comprehensive political negotiations, and increased economic and humanitarian access. International support is now necessary to secure the agreement and put a halt to the ongoing fighting. We are deeply concerned for the fate of the population in Marib, Taiz, al-Jawf, al-Bayda and other areas of Yemen currently under assault. The declaration of self-rule by the Southern Transitional Council and resulting violence in Abyan and Shabwa further complicates a precarious peace process and demonstrates the need to act before the country irreversibly fractures. Nevertheless, diplomatic engagement with both sides continues behind the scenes and this presents an opportunity for the United States to play a role.

We strongly support the efforts of United Nations Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to achieve a permanent ceasefire and framework for a sustainable political solution in Yemen. However, the conflict has been significantly more deadly and difficult to resolve due to the active involvement of outside powers. The United States is uniquely positioned to engage all parties – including Saudi Arabia, President Hadi, and the Houthis – to support inclusive negotiations on a comprehensive political agreement.

More than five years of war has devastated Yemen's health care system, which is operating at only 50% of its pre-war capacity while needs are exponentially higher. Immunity levels are dangerously low due to years of malnutrition; as COVID-19 sweeps through Yemen it could result in the deaths of millions of people. Over 80% of the population depends on assistance to survive. In light of this desperate situation, we urge you to ensure U.S. aid can continue reach the most vulnerable and expand the category of life-saving assistance to include basic health care, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene in order to prevent a dangerous dual surge of cholera and COVID-19. And finally, we support your backing of the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator Lise Grande in negotiations over humanitarian access with the Houthis, who have imposed unacceptable conditions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in an effort to control and divert aid flows.

The United States has important national security interests in Yemen, including stability in the Gulf region, ending the humanitarian crisis, and eliminating opportunities for Iranian meddling. Ending the war in Yemen is critical to each of these goals. Your interventions were important to securing past interim agreements. We now believe that sustained, high-level U.S. engagement is necessary to finally put an end to this devastating civil war.

Thank you for your ongoing attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States is supporting an end to the war in Yemen in line with our national security interests.

Sincerely,



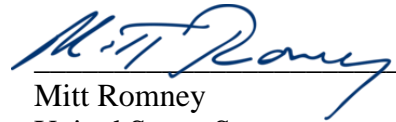
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United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Mitt Romney
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United States Senator



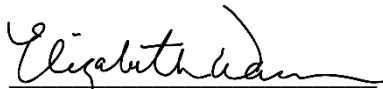
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