June 30, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2301 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As Members of Congress deeply concerned by the rise of global anti-Semitism, we are writing in response to reports that the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism may be unstaffed as of July 1. Congress required the State Department to create the Office, headed by the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, in the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act (Public Law 108-332), through provisions authored by Rep. Chris Smith, a lead cosigner of this letter. The Act passed Congress in 2004 with broad bipartisan support. Earlier this year, 167 members of Congress from both parties sent a letter to President Trump, urging him to prioritize the appointment of Special Envoy after reports surfaced that the position may not be filled.

We now ask whether the State Department intends to comply with the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Omnibus Appropriations Act and plans to fill the position of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism in a timely manner. Further, we urge you to maintain staff in the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, which is crucial to ensuring U.S. efforts against global anti-Semitism match the scale and severity of threats to Jewish communities on the ground.

Under Public Law 108-322, the Special Envoy and the Office are to monitor and combat acts of anti-Semitism abroad, document these incidents in State Department reports, and consult with appropriate domestic and international nongovernmental and multilateral organizations. A strong leader needs solid staff support – particularly true for a position such as the Special Envoy who is tasked with tracking anti-Semitism around the globe.

Under the leadership of Ranking Member Nita Lowey, a lead cosigner of this letter, the FY17 Omnibus instructed federal departments to comply with the directives, reporting requirements, and instructions contained in the FY17 House and Senate reports unless specifically directed to the contrary. Page 14 of the House Report 114-693 states:

“Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL).--The Committee recommendation includes the requested funds for human rights vetting. The recommendation also includes funds for support of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. The Committee remains concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism and the increase in anti-Semitic incidents around the world. The Committee supports efforts by the Department of State to emphasize Holocaust education.”
Because of the importance of this position and growing anti-Semitism abroad, the FY17 Omnibus included additional language regarding the Special Envoy on page 7 of its explanatory statement:

"The Secretary of State is directed to fill the position of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism authorized by Public Law 108-332 in a timely manner."

State Department spokesperson Mark Toner stated on April 14 that the Administration will appoint a Special Envoy. We understand that filling the position of Special Envoy takes time and the final placement of the Office may wait until a State Department reorganization is complete. Nevertheless, these new reports about the lack of staff in the Office raise questions about whether the State Department will comply with the directives and instructions regarding the Special Envoy contained within the FY17 Omnibus.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to your response about whether the State Department intends to comply with the FY17 Omnibus and fill the position of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism in a timely manner and fully implement Public Law 108-332 by maintaining staff in the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism.

Respectfully,

Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Edward R. Royce
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress

Kay Hager
Member of Congress
Joseph Crowley
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Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Robin Kelly
Member of Congress

Don Beyer
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

Randall Hultgren
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Brian Mast
Member of Congress

Randy Weber
Member of Congress
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
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Adam Schiff  
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Filemon Vela  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
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Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
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F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
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Peter T. King  
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Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.  
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Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
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Steve Chabot  
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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Ted Lieu  
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Krysten Sinema  
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul  
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David P. Joyce  
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Bruce Poliquin  
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson  
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Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress

Peter J. Roskam  
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress
Brenda Lawrence  
Member of Congress

David Schweikert  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Scott Taylor  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
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David Kustoff  
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Josh Gottheimer  
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Jeff Duncan  
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Yvette D. Clarke  
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Francis Rooney  
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Rick Larsen  
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Dave Trott  
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Mike Doyle  
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Carlos Curbelo  
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Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress  

Val B. Demings  
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Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress  

Keith Ellison  
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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress  

Bill Foster  
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Marcy Kaptur  
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Gene Green  
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Sander Levin  
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Ruben J. Kihuen  
Member of Congress  

Zoe Lofgren  
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Dan Lipinski  
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Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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Alan Lowenthal  
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
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Donald Norcross
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Jared Polis
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Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress