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December 19, 2019

The Honorable António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

Thirty-five years ago today the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China signed the Joint Declaration – a bilateral agreement that was registered at the United Nations which defined the terms of the “one country, two systems” principle that would protect Hong Kong’s autonomy as it transferred from British to Chinese authority in 1997. In the decades since, and in particular during both the Umbrella movement in 2014, the unraveling of the Legislative Council elections in 2016, and over the last six months, Beijing has systematically violated core aspects of Hong Kong’s autonomy, from violently silencing demonstrators to interfering in local elections to imposing on Hong Kong’s judicial independence. Simply put, China has repeatedly demonstrated cavalier disregard for its treaty commitments, including those registered at the United Nations.

China’s actions in Hong Kong are consistent with its actions in other parts of the region and its treatment of those within its borders who may hold different beliefs from those of the Communist Party of China. Its detention camps in Xinjiang holding nearly a million Uyghur Muslims reflect China’s true ambitions. Last month, over 400 pages of leaked internal documents published in *The New York Times* revealed harrowing examples of how Chinese officials issued guidance for surveillance and population control, including requiring that Chinese bureaucrats threaten that students’ behavior could impact their relatives’ detention, and that their parents’ faith is a “virus” in their thinking” which requires that authorities “show absolutely no mercy.”¹

This week, in response to *The New York Times* report about these documents, Chinese authorities reportedly began a campaign to systematically destroy all documentation related to its internment camps in Xinjiang. According to *The Associated Press*, Chinese officials were reportedly instructed to “burn paper forms containing sensitive personal details on residents in their area, such as their detention status, and for various state offices to throw away computers, tighten management of classified information, and ensure all information related to the camps is now stored on databases disconnected from the internet in special, restricted access rooms to bar hackers.”²

Mr. Secretary-General, when asked about the detention camps in Xinjiang earlier this year you rightfully insisted that “it is necessary for human rights to be respected,” and that “it is very important to act in a way that each community feels that their identity is respected and that they belong, at the same

¹ Austin Ramzy, Chris Buckley, “The Xinjiang Papers: ‘Absolutely No Mercy’: Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims,” *New York Times*, 16 November 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html> Accessed 16 December 2019.


² “AP Exclusive: China tightens up on info after Xinjiang leaks,” *The Associated Press*, 14 December 2019, <https://apnews.com/c1d08873154907be8a3dd93562d6785c> Accessed 16 December 2019.

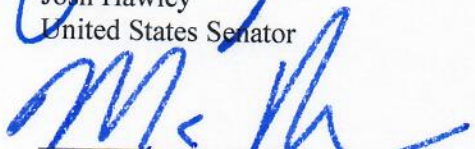
time, to the society as a whole.”³ The United States and twenty-two countries at the United Nations came together to push for holding China accountable for its actions in Xinjiang.⁴

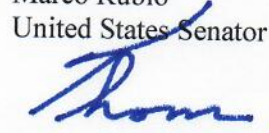
Mr. Secretary-General, as representatives of the U.N.’s principal founding member and largest contributor, we the undersigned urge actions by the United Nations to hold China accountable for its human rights violations. Specifically, we ask that you work with both member states and with the U.N. Human Rights Council and the U.N. Security Council to take meaningful steps to condemn China’s operation of its detention camps in Xinjiang and to protect the documentary record of what is taking place in Xinjiang. Your actions on this matter will be a testament to the United Nations’ important mandate of protecting human rights wherever they are threatened.

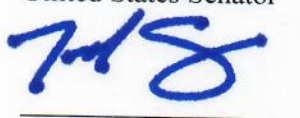
If you take these actions we stand ready to work with you to ensure China’s ruthless disregard for international norms and basic liberties will have consequences.

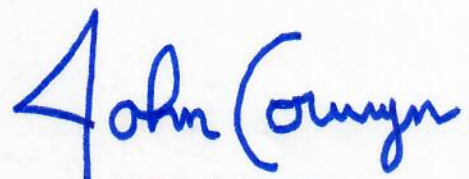
Sincerely,

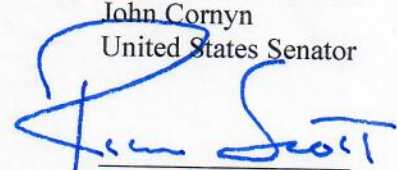

Josh Hawley
United States Senator

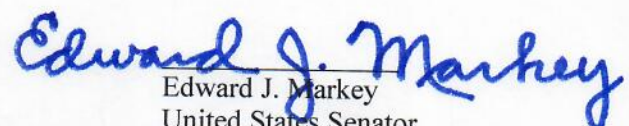

Marco Rubio
United States Senator

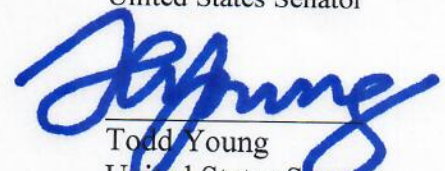

Thom Tillis
United States Senator


Ted Cruz
United States Senator


John Cornyn
United States Senator


Rick Scott
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Todd Young
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Ambassador Kelly Craft, Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

³ Associated Press, “UN chief Antonio Guterres rejects claim he did not condemn China over Muslims detained in Xinjiang,” *South China Morning Post*, 19 September 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3028068/un-chief-antonio-guterres-rejects-claim-he-did-not-condemn> Accessed 16 December 2019.

⁴ Reuters, “China warns US that criticism over detention of Uighurs is not ‘helpful’ for trade talks,” *CNBC*, 29 October 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/30/china-warns-us-criticism-over-xinjiang-is-not-helpful-for-trade-talks.html> Accessed 16 December 2019.