

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
12TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

2308 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3212
(202) 225-7944

COMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL SERVICES

GOVERNMENT REFORM

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,
[SENIOR HOUSE DEMOCRAT]



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3212

April 22, 2019

- DISTRICT OFFICES:
- 1651 THIRD AVENUE
SUITE 311
NEW YORK, NY 10128
(212) 860-0606
 - 31-19 NEWTOWN AVENUE
ASTORIA, NY 11102
(718) 932-1804
 - 619 LORIMER STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11211
(718) 349-5972

WEBSITE: www.house.gov/maloney

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

I am deeply concerned by reports that the United States has threatened to veto a United Nations Security Council resolution sponsored by Germany on reducing and addressing sexual violence in conflicts set to be presented tomorrow.¹ The United States should be leading the charge to end sexual violence in conflict and uplift survivors, not stymying international efforts to promote women's safety.

In any conflict, women's bodies become battlefields. Rape is used as a weapon of war. The UN recognized rape as a war crime in 2008. It is simply unconscionable for the U.S. to block access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including access to emergency contraception, safe termination of pregnancy and HIV prevention and treatment. To prioritize political ideology in this way endangers the lives of women living in areas of conflict.

It is important that we remember who this resolution is about: the Rohingya women and girls who are being systematically gang raped in Myanmar, the Yazidi and other minority women who have been enslaved by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and the Congolese girls who seek out comprehensive medical services, from physicians like Nobel-prize laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege who will reportedly be present at the Security Council meeting along with fellow Nobel laureate Nadia Murad to advocate for this important resolution.² Is the Trump Administration's official position that women and girls who have suffered sexual violence do not deserve medical help?

According to reports, this resolution is designed to combat sexual violence by strengthening prevention measures and ensuring survivors have the support they need. The United States has led on this issue in the past. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton introduced the resolution establishing the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Sexual violence

¹ Noor Sheikh, "Will the US Stand With Victims of Rape in War?" PassBlue, <https://www.passblue.com/2019/04/20/will-the-us-stand-with-victims-of-rape-in-war-2/>, (April 20, 2019); "UN Action on Sexual Violence in War Zones Runs into Headwinds," The Crime Report, <https://thecrimereport.org/2019/04/22/resolution-on-sexual-violence-in-war-zones-runs-into-headwinds-at-un/>, (April 22, 2019).

² "Germany struggles in UN push to address sexual violence," Agence France-Presse, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190418-germany-struggles-un-push-address-sexual-violence>, (April 18, 2019).

devastates survivors, families, their communities, and undermines peace and security efforts. The United States should not undermine international efforts to address this crisis.

Vetoing this resolution would harm every woman and girl around the world who has been raped with impunity in armed conflicts. Standing in the way of their access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care only inflicts further damage. I urge you to support this crucial resolution.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress