



THE REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS

June 20, 2018

Dear Human Rights Watch,

Last June, I traveled to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and made very clear that continued United States participation on the Council depended on adoption of meaningful reforms in two specific areas: (1) improving the quality of Council membership; and (2) removing the anti-Israel bias from the Council's agenda. Since then, Human Rights Council reform has been a high Administration priority within the United Nations.

After co-hosting a High Level Week event on Council reform last September, attended by more than 40 Member States, we met with more than 125 Member States in bilateral and multilateral meetings to discuss the importance of Council reform. We discovered near universal agreement on the need for dramatic and systemic Council reforms and sought to put those shared goals into action.

Last month, our Mission circulated a draft Human Rights Council Strengthening Resolution to a small group of Member States for edits. To this date, we have received not one written edit from a single Member State. In fact, the only written responses disseminated to Member States have been démarches from Russia and China, as well as your joint letter, all requesting the exact same thing—that Member States oppose our resolution and not engage on the text.

It is unfortunate that your letter sought to undermine our attempts to improve the Human Rights Council. You put yourself on the side of Russia and China, and opposite the United States, on a key human rights issue.

You should know that your efforts to block negotiations and thwart reform were a contributing factor in the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Council. Going forward, we encourage you to play a constructive role on behalf of human rights, rather than the deconstructive one you played in this instance.

In no way does our withdrawal from a dysfunctional human rights body constitute a withdrawal from America's fight for human rights. The United States will continue to be a world leader in calling for human rights for all people and in forcing international attention onto mass atrocities. We are happy to work together with NGOs that share those goals but not with ones that undermine them.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nikki R. Haley".

Nikki R. Haley