

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2017

Administrator Mark Green
Administrator
US Agency International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Green:

As ISIS is driven from Iraq, the need for reconstructing the homes and cities of Christians, Yezidis, and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Nineveh Plain has reached a point of existential urgency. This area of Northern Iraq is the ancestral homeland of ancient faith traditions against which ISIS committed genocide. Returning Christians, Yezidis, and others to their rightful place will reknit the once-rich tapestry of pluralism and diversity that existed in the region—an effort that is essential to any hope of durable stability in Iraq and the region.

It is our understanding that the State Department has gravitated toward channeling humanitarian, stabilization, and recovery funds to the United Nations to handle such a dynamic. The United Nations often provides vital coordination in emergencies. But a combined strategy of re-securitization, revitalization, and repatriation—within a fast narrowing window of time—requires swifter, more effective, more accountable action to restore these indigenous communities. We have also received credible reports of significant corruption in the UN bidding and contracting process for stabilization projects in Iraq. In addition to issues of immigration and challenges of assimilation in new countries, we cannot allow inaction to create the conditions for permanent refugee camps or for scattering of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees who long to return home.

Success also has a national security dimension. Repatriation has a strategic advantage of heading off potential conflict between the KRG and Baghdad while barring an Iranian land bridge to the Mediterranean, which presently threatens to fill the vacuum in the Nineveh Plain created by the removal of ISIS. This land bridge will be occupied by forces loyal to Tehran if security and rebuilding fails to come from other quarters.

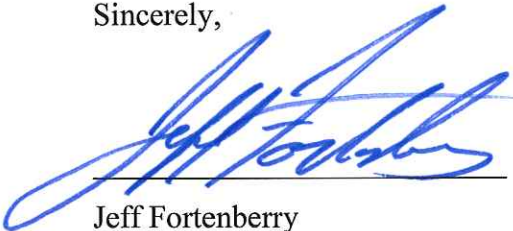
USAID has an immediate opportunity to partner with entities committed to the appropriate reconstruction of damaged homes and public buildings, in several key towns in the Nineveh Plain of Iraq. Although two Administrations and the United States Congress determined that ISIS targeted Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities for genocide, a lack of concerted response following the fall of ISIS has resulted in dire conditions where these peoples desperately need assistance if they are to survive. Timely action would address provisions

outlined in the genocide declarations and mirror the current Administration's desire to help the survivors.

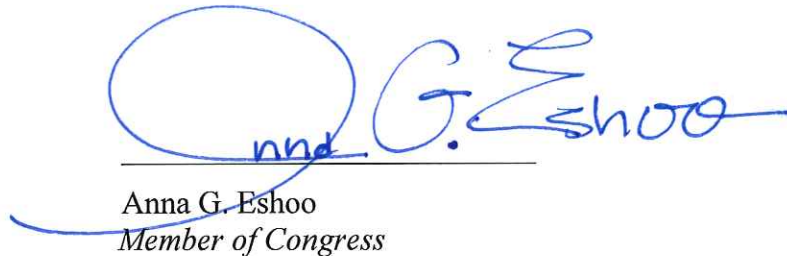
There have been a number of relevant Congressional actions—including Fiscal Year 2017 omnibus (P.L. 115-31) requirements that some of the \$1.4 billion appropriated for the International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts be made available for religious minority victims of genocide. Congressional delegations to the region met with survivors and their conversations animated legislation such as the Iraq and Syria Genocide Emergency Relief and Accountability Act (H.R. 390), which the House passed unanimously in June and followed upon the unanimously passed genocide resolutions (H. Con. Res 75 and S. Res. 340). In addition Congressional hearings and communications to the President and State Department have been clear about the importance of acting now. The goal is to assure that USAID and the State Department spend authorized and appropriated funds to prevent these endangered communities from being erased.

We implore you to review proposals from credible organizations on the ground in the region who are committed to these goals, and if deemed worthy, to move swiftly to empower them through available resources to rebuild the region. We strongly urge your agency to embrace the significant opportunity to restore hope for peoples who face extinction, and we stand ready to assist in any way we can.

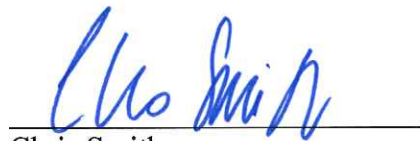
Sincerely,



Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Chris Smith
Member of Congress



Robert Aderholt
Member of Congress

CC: President Donald Trump
CC: The Honorable Rex Tillerson