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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

April 30, 2021

Dr. Muhammad Bakr Ghbeis
President, Citizens for a Secure and Safe America
10727 Chase Court
Fishers, IN 46037

Dear Dr. Ghbeis,

I am writing to express my support and admiration for the important work that Citizens for a Secure and Safe America is doing to shine a light on the suffering of the people of Syria and advance conflict resolution efforts to allow all Syrians to live in peace and security. Just over a decade ago, as people throughout the Arab world took to the streets to demand democratic reforms and respect for their fundamental freedoms, hundreds of Syrians began peacefully demonstrating in the streets of Damascus. Instead of acknowledging their legitimate concerns, the regime launched a systematic effort to stamp out all resistance to its fear-based rule, hiding behind the spurious claim that those objecting to Assad's government are terrorists.

And so, for over a decade now, Bashar al-Assad, backed by his Iranian and Russian enablers, has fomented a reign of fear, repression, and torture against his own citizens. He has not only cooperated with terrorists to incite violence, he has murdered innocent civilians in cold blood and barbarously bombed hospitals and medical workers to prevent them from providing relief. Over the past ten years, the regime's efforts have directly contributed to the deaths of an estimated half a million people and the displacement of over eleven million Syrians, nearly half the country's pre-war population. And still, a full decade later, the regime has not won, its charade of governance perpetuated only by the malevolent intervention of its external backers.

Through these many years of unwarranted suffering, the courage and endurance of the Syrian people have persisted. Through acts great and small they have resisted this murderous regime and worked to document its crimes. From the courage of Caesar, smuggling out evidence of the Assad regime's brutality, and the valor of the men and women of the White Helmets, to the continuous advocacy of groups like Citizens for a Secure and Safe America that helps to ensure that that the world will hold the Assad regime accountable for its crimes.

I am deeply grateful for your tireless advocacy on behalf of Syria and its people. With your help we were able to pass the "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act" into law with bipartisan support. As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am committed to ensuring that the provisions of this law, including sanctions on human rights abusers in Syria, are rigorously implemented.

But there is more that we must do. We must push harder to ensure that humanitarian aid to Syria is depoliticized. Russia and China must not be allowed to use their veto at the UN Security

Council to choke off direct cross-border assistance to civilians in rebel-held areas. I will continue to work with the Biden Administration in the coming months to push for greater humanitarian access in Syria, as well as greater oversight over the way in which the United Nations administers humanitarian aid in regime-controlled areas.

Thank you again for the important work that you do. I look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of the people of Syria to ensure that the Assad regime, their enablers, and other human rights violators in Syria are held accountable and that the Syrian people see justice done in their names.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Chairman