Joint Statement in Support of Representative Omar

The vote to remove Representative Ilhan Omar from the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), following the partisan decision to keep Reps. Adam Schiff and Eric Swalwell off the House Intelligence Committee, lacked any legitimate justification and marks a disgraceful opening to the 118th Congress. In pressing ahead with the resolution of removal, Speaker McCarthy has robbed HFAC of a member of Congress committed to universal human rights, international justice and diplomacy, and the defense of democracy, while stirring up hate against a leading Black woman and Muslim member of Congress. We, the undersigned organizations, condemn this vote and affirm our intent to continue engaging with Rep. Omar as a leader in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

In the last four years, Rep. Omar has used her position on HFAC to center human rights and democracy, support critical humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected and disaster-stricken communities, combat hate and authoritarianism, and promote international justice. Her signature efforts include the Pathway to PEACE, a package of seven bills that would block arms sales to human rights-abusing governments, redirect funds from the Pentagon’s overseas slush fund to global peacebuilding efforts, and enhance congressional oversight of the executive’s sanctions authorities. She co-led the Combating International Islamophobia Act, which passed the House in 2021. She has led or co-led congressional letters expressing solidarity in defense of Brazil’s democracy, urging the creation of a Loss & Damage Finance Facility to help developing countries recover from climate catastrophes, and supporting the rights of migrants and refugees at every turn.

The partisan decision to remove her from HFAC as she becomes the first African-born ranking member of its Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights subcommittee is particularly egregious. Her formation of the U.S.-Africa Policy Working Group is an example of her willingness to push for a U.S. foreign policy that prioritizes partnerships with civil society and social movements. Her support for international accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, and close scrutiny of U.S. military operations in Somalia, the Sahel and elsewhere, are a needed corrective to policymakers who believe that the United States should be allowed to play by a different set of rules, thereby trying to preserve the integrity of international laws and norms.

In addition to uplifting her substantive contributions to HFAC, we cannot let this moment pass without condemning the obvious anti-Black, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant sentiment behind this decision. Until this vote, Rep. Omar was the most senior Black woman serving on HFAC, in addition to being its second most senior Black member and its only Muslim member. Speaker McCarthy’s resolution is the latest in a line of attacks animated by unapologetic and vile Islamophobic smears that seek to marginalize Black and Muslim perspectives. Previously, these attacks have encouraged death threats against Rep. Omar. In addition to ginning up further hate, this latest vote is another in a string of efforts to silence her and others who share her background from determining and influencing key U.S. policies.

We vow to continue to engage with Rep. Omar on U.S. foreign policy, and we will work to ensure that policy discussions in Congress and throughout the country make room for her views and voice.
Sincerely,

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Amazon Watch
America Indivisible
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Indian Opportunity
Americans for Peace Now
Arab American Civic Council
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
Borderlands for Equity
Bridges Faith Initiative
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Victims of Torture
Civic Ark
CODEPINK
Colombia Acuerdo de Paz NGO
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)
CommonDefense.us
Council for a Livable World
Council for Global Equality
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress Education Fund
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
Demos Action
Femena
Foreign Policy for America (FP4A)
Foreign Policy In Focus
Freedom Forward
Friends of the Earth
Giniw Collective
Global Zero
Greenpeace USA
Hindus for Human Rights
Human Rights First
Indivisible
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project
Islamophobia Studies Center
Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ocean Futures Society
Jetpac Resource Center
Jewish Voice for Peace Action
Just Foreign Policy
Justice Democrats
Keystone Progress
Lansing Area Peace Education Center
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Libyan American Alliance
MADRE
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Minneapolis DFL
Movement Voter Project
MPower Change Action Fund
Muslim Community Network
Muslim Counterpublics Lab
Muslim Public Affairs Council
Muslims for Just Futures
National Iranian American Council Action
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Our Revolution
Pacifica Strategies
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Peace Action New York State
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Poligon Education Fund
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Democrats of America
Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
Rethinking Foreign Policy
RootsAction.org
School of the Americas Watch
Social Security Works
SOUTH ASIAN NETWORK
South Dakota Voices for Peace
The Advocates for Human Rights (a Minnesota-based organization)
The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
The Black Hive @ M4BL
The People’s Justice Council
The Quincy Institute
Tunisian United Network
UltraViolet
US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO)
Win Without War
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Women Cross DMZ