

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 25, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

The U.S. Department of State Office of Inspector General (State OIG) issued a report in September 2025 titled “Classified Review of the Department of State’s Implementation of Leahy Non-Traceable Assistance Requirements.”¹ While the report itself is classified, the Washington Post recently cited an unclassified section describing that State OIG “found that Israeli military units committed “many hundreds” of potential violations of U.S. human rights law in the Gaza Strip that would take the State Department “multiple years” to review.”² Given these findings, we urge you to quickly implement the OIG’s recommendations and adjudicate these cases in a timely manner in order to ensure compliance with U.S. law.

As you know, Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act, also known as the Leahy Law, prohibits the U.S. Government from providing assistance to any unit of a foreign security force when the Secretary of State has credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights (GVHR). Furthermore, in 2022, Congress enacted updates to the Leahy Law to address cases in which the specific unit(s) that will ultimately receive assistance cannot be identified prior to the transfer of assistance. For these cases, the law requires a written agreement with the recipient government that it will not provide assistance to ineligible units. The aforementioned OIG report examined the Department’s implementation of the Leahy law and, for select countries, Leahy vetting practices where the assistance’s ultimate recipient is not known before transfer.

According to the Washington Post, State OIG further found that “the protocol, known as the Israel Leahy Vetting Forum, involves higher-level U.S. officials and a lengthier process than reviews for other countries.” This confirms earlier reports that have previously found the Israel Leahy Vetting Forum follows a different process and requires more burdensome consultation that allows the review to drag on, perhaps indefinitely.³ Additionally, an April 2025 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on “Human Rights: State Can Improve Response to

¹ Classified Review of the Department of State’s Implementation of Leahy Non-Traceable Assistance Requirements | Office of Inspector General, Sept. 2025, www.stateoig.gov/report/isp-s-25-08

² Hudson, John. “Classified U.S. Report Finds Backlog of ‘Hundreds’ of Possible Israeli Human Rights Violations - The Washington Post.” *The Washington Post*, 30 Oct. 2025, www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/10/30/state-department-report-israel-gaza-human-rights-violations/.

³ Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. “‘Different Rules’: Special Policies Keep Us Supplying Weapons to Israel despite Alleged Abuses.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 18 Jan. 2024, www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights.

Allegations of Civilians Harmed by U.S. Arms Transfers” found that State has not completed a single investigation into the hundreds of reported cases of civilian harm using U.S. weapons, despite State’s own finding of numerous credible reports.⁴

It is important to note, however, that the Leahy Law prohibits assistance to a foreign security force unit that has committed a GVHR, irrespective of whether U.S. weapons were involved in such an act. Therefore, the challenge of determining involvement of U.S. weapons should not delay adjudication of these Leahy law cases.

The findings from this September 2025 State OIG report are deeply concerning. But even more troubling is the fact that this review is simply the latest confirmation from a series of different reports that have each described failures to uphold American human rights laws and policies governing the use of U.S. weapons and other assistance globally. Without effective enforcement mechanisms, these laws and policies become meaningless. Therefore, by December 9, 2025, please respond to this letter with your plans to adjudicate potential Leahy law violations by Israeli security force units and other foreign military partners receiving this category of security assistance in a timely manner in order to ensure compliance with U.S. law. In your response, please describe what additional staff and resources are needed to address these cases and how you plan to revise the Israel Leahy Vetting Forum protocol to ensure a uniform process is followed for every country.

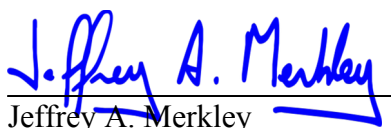
Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

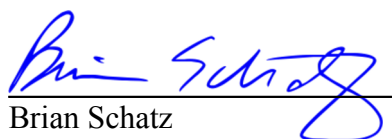


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator

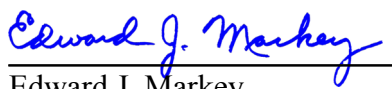
⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office. “Human Rights: State Can Improve Response to Allegations of Civilians Harmed by U.S. Arms Transfers” | U.S. GAO, 24 Apr. 2025, www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107077.


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