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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

July 28, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

The State Department's annual Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report is an essential global tool for ensuring continued progress against human trafficking including its worst forms which amount to modern slavery. In our view, the value of the TIP Report, and the United States' credibility on this critical issue, relies heavily on the integrity of the Report. We wish to better understand the factual basis for the 2015 TIP Report's upgrade of several countries, including Malaysia and Cuba.

We recognize that U.S. policy and engagement on trafficking does not exist in a vacuum, and we appreciate the many varied and nuanced trade-offs that are necessary between competing policy issues. We also believe that it is critical that the impartial reliability of the TIP Report be safeguarded and maintained if it is to have utility on this critical issue in the future.

As many as 36 million women, children and men around the world are subjected to forced labor or sexual exploitation. Given the enormous nature of the problem, we urge you to continue to pursue every opportunity to end trafficking, including the full utilization of the TIP report, and to engage nations around the world to take strong action. Maintaining the integrity of the TIP report is essential to our success. Because of these concerns regarding the 2015 TIP Report, we request a briefing to clearly understand the basis for the upgrades accorded to certain countries.

Sincerely,

Ben Cardin
Ranking Member

Bob Corker
Chairman