

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 3rd, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to consult with and obtain authorization from Congress for any further combat operations in Niger, including providing information on the nature of the current mission and your administration's legal justification for sending troops into Niger and the basis for any proposed increase.


According to media reports, approximately 800 U.S. service members are deployed in Niger, one of the larger deployments of U.S. troops in Africa. Furthermore, these current numbers show a significant increase since 2013, when President Obama announced deployment of about 100 personnel. In your most recent War Powers Report on June 6, 2017, you wrote that "U.S. forces in the Lake Chad Basin continue to provide a wide variety of support to African partners conducting counterterrorism operations in the region." However, given the tragic death of four United States (U.S.) Army Special Operations Forces on October 4th and the ongoing security threats in West Africa's Sahel region, we remain concerned that Congress has been in the dark about the operations our U.S. service members are conducting in Niger and our overall operations in Africa.

We are also gravely concerned that the United States is committing itself to a long-term war in Niger and elsewhere in Africa. There has been no Congressional debate or vote on the long-term consequences of, and alternatives to, military action in Niger. The situation is complex, and will require a comprehensive political, economic, and diplomatic solution. That is why we request that your administration fully brief Congress on the ongoing military operations in Niger and our larger operations in Africa, the domestic and international legal justification for that presence, and the rules of engagement for U.S. forces in the region. In the wake of recent events, U.S. service members have used military force, if only for defensive purposes. If the rules of engagement permit use of military force other than in self-defense, we would like to know the basis of that authorization, and whether, in particular, your administration is citing the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) as the domestic legal justification.

The Constitution solely assigns to Congress the authority to decide whether to authorize the use of military force and to the President as commander-in-chief, the sole authority to guide and

The Constitution solely assigns to Congress the authority to decide whether to authorize the use of military force and to the President as commander-in-chief, the sole authority to guide and manage the services in the conduct of its military actions. Unfortunately, for far too long Congress has been on the sidelines and the 2001 AUMF has been used a blank check for ever-expanding war. Our brave service members face countless dangers for our Nation, which is clearly evidenced by the attack in Niger. We owe it to them to debate and vote on any further U.S. military action in Niger.

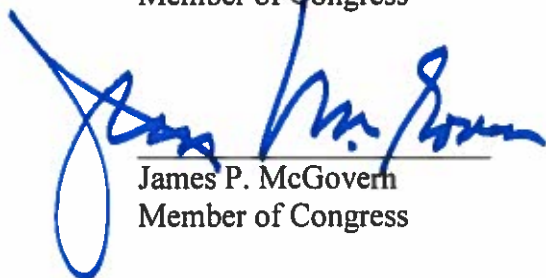
Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Justin Amash
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Thomas Massie
Member of Congress



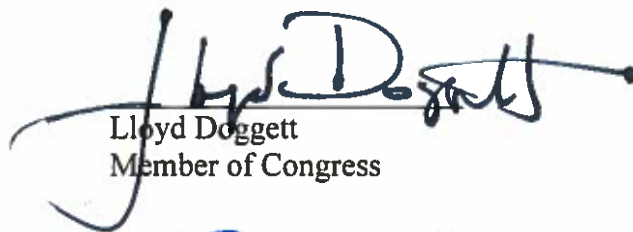
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

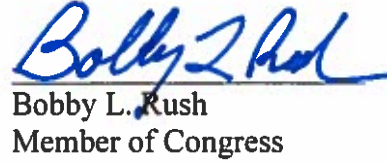


Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress

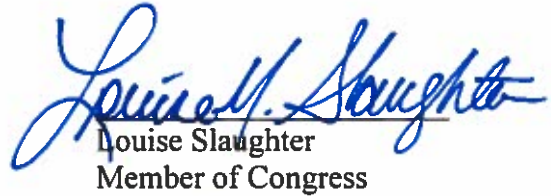

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress


David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

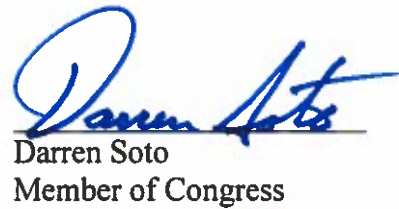

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

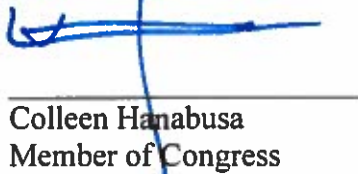

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

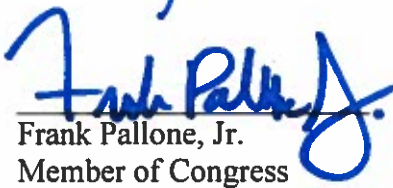

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

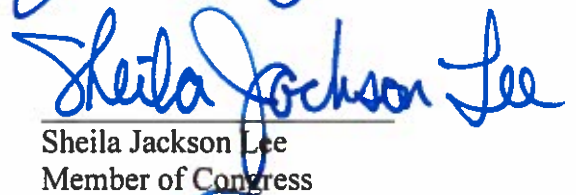

John Garamendi
Member of Congress


Darren Soto
Member of Congress

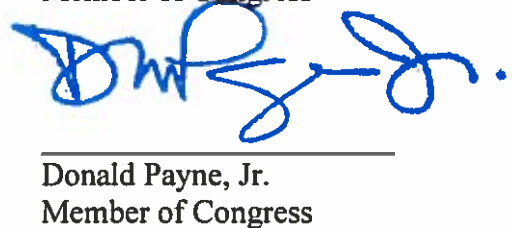

Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress

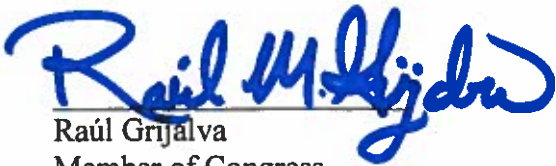

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress


Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress


Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress


Dwight Evans
Member of Congress


Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



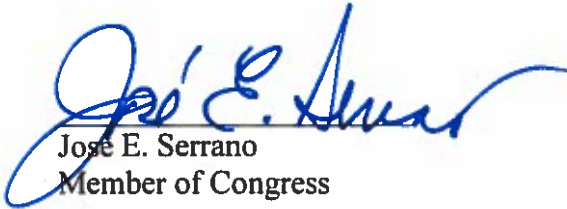
Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



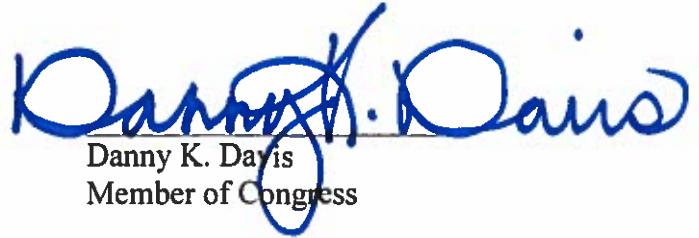
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



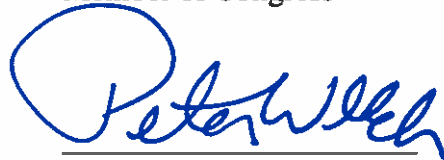
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



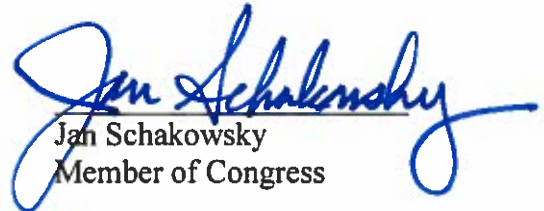
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



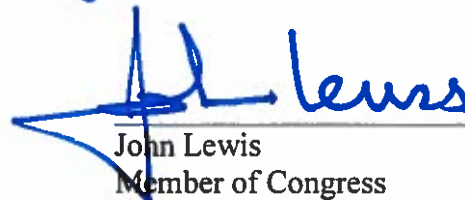
Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, H
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress