



Ecumenical Advocacy Days

Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Exports Act Leave Behind

We urge Congress to protect human rights by enhancing congressional oversight of U.S. arms sales. All people have been created in God's image and are deserving of dignity and safety. Too often, however, corrupt actors violate human rights with the support of U.S. weapons. In order to better protect these rights, Congress must reclaim the power to review U.S. arms transfers to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of human rights abusers. Passing this legislation will reduce the prevalence and severity of human rights violations across the globe. This legislation is a force for peace and justice.

Therefore, we call on the House and Senate to pass the Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Exports Act of 2021 (H.R.5629 and S.1473).

The Safeguarding Human Rights Arms Exports Act of 2021 (SAFEGUARD Act) seeks to prevent arms exports from being used in violation of international humanitarian law or internationally recognized human rights; ensure that arms sales, exports, or transfers fully comply with those standards; and require accountability for violations. The bill includes the complete prohibition of arms sales to countries committing genocide or war crimes. This legislation also empowers Congress and the president to review or recall arms sales if it is evident that the recipient is committing or enabling human rights abuses such as torture, rape, unjust incarceration, or extrajudicial killings.

Overall, new standards of reporting and review in the SAFEGUARD Act will reduce the likelihood of U.S. weapons being used to violate international law or human rights. As people of the United States, we acknowledge that our country has committed and abetted such atrocities in the past. We resolve to reduce and ultimately eliminate such occurrences in the future. As people of faith, we believe these rights are sacred and must not be violated.

The House and Senate can ensure a better future by passing the Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Exports Act of 2021.