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## United States Senate

September 27, 2019

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The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

According to a recent press report, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has pressured the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM) to remove references to climate change from IOM documents or risk losing funding from PRM. While President Donald Trump may foolishly and dangerously continue to deny climate science and the peril our planet faces, it is unacceptable for the State Department to effectively extort recipients of U.S. funding into toeing the administration's climate-denial line.

On September 11, 2019, *The Guardian* reported that PRM had advised IOM — the world's leading inter-governmental organization in the field of international migration — that “documents related to programme activities it funds ‘must not be in conflict with current [US government] political sensitivities.’”<sup>1</sup> Those “sensitivities,” included “the climate crisis, sustainable development goals, the [G]lobal [C]ompact for [M]igration and ‘anything that seems at odds with the administration’s take on US domestic/foreign issues,’” according to an August 28, 2019 email sent by an IOM official to colleagues.<sup>2</sup>

According to the email, “PRM is very willing to cut funding in areas that it deems are not in line with US foreign policy objectives.” *The Guardian* further reported that based on “IOM sources and further communications it has seen[,] the agency is avoiding direct references to climate change in documents for projects funded by other US government entities such as USAid [*sic*].” Indeed, *The Guardian* cites “at least one regional official who explicitly asked staff not to directly refer to climate change or the [G]lobal [C]ompact on [M]igration in a range of reports or proposals that would be sent to the US government.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Stoakes, *Leak suggests UN agency self-censors on climate crisis after US pressure*, THE GUARDIAN (Sept. 11, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/sep/11/leak-suggests-un-agency-self-censors-on-climate-crisis-after-us-pressure>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

IOM is one of the world's leading voices on the effects of climate change on migration and would be the implementing organization for the Global Compact for Migration, the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement recognizing the nexus of climate change and global migration. Forced migration is indisputably increasing in the context of environmental changes and climate-induced disruptions, including weather-related disasters, drought, famine, and rising sea levels. Since 2008, climate or weather-related events have displaced an average of 22.5 million people,<sup>4</sup> including seven million people in the first half of 2019 alone.<sup>5</sup> According to IOM, by 2050, there may be as many as 200 million climate-displaced persons.<sup>6</sup>

If *The Guardian* report is accurate, PRM has engaged in outrageous and unacceptable conduct to silence IOM on the most consequential environmental and humanitarian crisis of our time. I therefore respectfully request that, by October 11, 2019, you respond in writing to the following questions.

1. Has PRM communicated to IOM or any other PRM-funded entities that documents related to their program activities must be consistent with the Trump administration's foreign policy positions, including its positions on climate change and forced migration? If so, when and how was this communicated?
2. Please identify any reports, proposals, or other documents submitted to PRM by IOM or any other PRM-funded entities, which, for the reasons described in *The Guardian* report, were edited or changed to avoid directly referring to climate change or the Global Compact for Migration.
3. Has PRM communicated to IOM or any other PRM-funded entities that their funding could be in jeopardy if their program activities were not in line with Trump administration foreign policy objectives? If so when and how was this communicated?
4. On what basis does PRM believe it can lawfully cut or withhold funding from IOM if its program activities are not in line with Trump administration foreign policy objectives?
5. Irrespective of the lawfulness of pressuring entities funded by PRM to toe the Trump administration climate-change line, does the State Department believe it is good public policy to require IOM or any other PRM-funded entity to engage in self-censorship in exchange for U.S.-government support? If so, why?
6. According to the IOM official's email, PRM suggested that IOM should not directly refer to the Global Compact for Migration, which recognizes the existence of climate-caused migration. By attempting to prevent reference to this agreement, is the State Department

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/environment-disasters-and-climate-change.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Somini Sengupta, *Extreme Weather Displaced a Record 7 Million in First Half of 2019*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 12, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/12/climate/extreme-weather-displacement.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iom.int/migration-and-climate-change-0>.

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officially confirming that it does not recognize the phenomenon of climate-caused migration, despite 193 other countries' recognizing it?

Thank you for your prompt attention to these requests. If you have any question, please contact Andrew Cohen of my staff at 202-224-2742.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "M".

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator