

October 3, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We are very proud of and grateful for your leadership for life on behalf of President Trump and pro-life Americans. As you know well, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, has routinely used his position as Secretary General to advocate for abortion. Your decision to reduce contributions by the United States (U.S.) to the OAS due to such advocacy, which conflicts with the Siljlander amendment, is a clear testament to how seriously you take this issue.¹ As Luis Almagro is now under consideration for a second term as Secretary General, we believe it is time for a change in leadership at the OAS, and respectfully request that the U.S. government withdraw its support for his reelection.

Today, the region is faced with a serious human rights crisis in Venezuela and Nicaragua, in addition to the ongoing repression of the Cuban people by its communist regime. We recognize that a strong and focused OAS is crucial to the stability and freedom of the region.

Yet, although Mr. Almagro has shown a willingness to confront the tyrannical regime of Nicolas Maduro, he is delegitimizing the institution of the OAS by insisting on promulgating abortion throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It is important to note that the Secretary General has no mandate under the OAS Charter or the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the American Convention of Human Rights or under any resolution adopted by the OAS General Assembly or Permanent Council to promote abortion in the region. To the contrary, both the American Declaration² and the American Convention³ guarantee the right to life and the Convention, in particular, states that it should be respected “from the moment of conception.”

In early 2015, while still a candidate for the position of Secretary General, Luis Almagro, in a meeting with civil society groups in Washington DC to lay out his radical “human rights” agenda, stated that “Abortion [among others] ... are issues that need to be taken up by the OAS.”⁴

Upon assuming the leadership of the OAS, Mr. Almagro made good on his promise to promote abortion as a human right, granting a lucrative consulting contract to Leonel Briozzo,⁵ a socialist gynecologist at the center of the 2012 campaign to legalize abortion in Uruguay. Most notably, Dr. Briozzo also presided over a high-level meeting of radical pro-abortion non-governmental

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pompeo-cuts-oas-funds-over-advocacy-of-legal-abortion/2019/03/26/4ea5314d-d7e0-48de-b636-e552447430b0_story.html

² <https://www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic2.american%20Declaration.htm>

³ http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights.htm

⁴ <https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/-almagro-impulsa-desde-la-oea-aborto-y-marihuana-en-la-region-201522022590>

⁵ <https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/almagro-recluto-en-la-oea-a-los-fieles-de-mujica-20151118500>

organizations known as the “Montevideo Consensus,” that called for overturning all legislation that protects the right to life in Latin America.⁶

Within the first year of his mandate as Secretary General, Mr. Almagro had multiple meetings with representatives from International Planned Parenthood Federation⁷ and the Center for Reproductive Rights⁸ to dialogue about “strategies” to advance the legalization of abortion in a region that is overwhelmingly pro-life. In 2016, when the Zika virus epidemic was at the center of international health concerns, Mr. Almagro issued an official press release calling it a “historic opportunity” to promote abortion in the region.¹⁰

Mr. Almagro’s pro-abortion activism is gravely inappropriate for the Secretary General of the OAS, especially if we consider, as we have already stated, that it is contrary to treaty law. Nor have member states authorized him to advance abortion throughout the hemisphere. His irresponsible behavior puts at risk the legitimacy and authority of the OAS at a time when we need it to be strong and credible to effectively denounce the egregious violations of human rights in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

We believe that this record of abortion advocacy warrants a change in leadership at the OAS, and respectfully ask that the U.S. support an alternative candidate for the position.

Sincerely,

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⁶ <https://www.efe.com/efe/cono-sur/sociedad/exviceministro-uruguayo-pide-a-latinoamerica-que-advance-en-la-despenalizacion-del-aborto/50000760-3712984>

⁷ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/oasoea/22209447683>

⁸ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/oasoea/24213299512>

⁹ https://twitter.com/Almagro_OEA2015/status/788760179936485376

¹⁰ https://www.oas.org/es/centro_noticias/comunicado_prensa.asp?sCodigo=C-051/16

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