

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 20, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write today to focus your attention on the status of American citizen and Illinoisan Mark Frerichs. Mr. Frerichs has been missing from Afghanistan since January 31, 2020 and is believed to have been kidnapped by members of the Taliban, Haqqani Network or their affiliates. As the duration of his captivity stretches into months, his family is understandably distressed about his well-being and questioning what efforts are underway to secure his return.

As plans continue to develop for a drawdown of American forces in Afghanistan, we are increasingly concerned that we may be losing our largest point of leverage to make sure that all American hostages in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including Mark Frerichs, are returned safely home to their families. We urge you, as our Nation's chief representative on foreign affairs, to devote your attention to this case and ensure that the Frerichs family remains apprised of all your efforts to secure Mark's safe return.

To that end, we also request a briefing on the latest developments in the Frerichs case, to include any updates from the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs as well as the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell. Additionally, we request a briefing on how American hostages who were kidnapped in Afghanistan, like Mark Frerichs, are being incorporated into any negotiations or conversations being conducted by the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation.

We appreciate any clarity you can provide on the diplomatic options that remain for Mark's return, in light of the President's recent announcement of an accelerated withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator