



JOSEPH R. PITTS, Pennsylvania
Co-Chairman

One Hundred and Fourteenth Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Statement For:

**Briefing: Human Rights in Southeast Asia & Burma: An
exchange with ASEAN Parliamentarians- Sept 16th @4PM-
Room 441 CHOB**

I would like to welcome the visit of these parliamentarians from ASEAN, who are dedicated to advocating for human rights. Their mission to uphold the dignity of human life and to ensure a space for lives free of abuse mirrors closely that of our Commission. I share APHR's concerns that democracy and human rights are backsliding in their region, with specific regard to Burma and the plight of its Rohingya population. The region's failure to address the human trafficking crisis and the human rights abuses from which it stems is unacceptable and warrants a coordinated international response.

Other abuses in Burma also must not go unchallenged. Over 60 churches have been destroyed since fighting resumed in Kachin State. Congress and the Obama administration must send a strong signal to the Burma's government in light of these prolonged human rights abuses. I believe that the Administration should use targeted sanctions – including the invoking of the International Religious Freedom Act – against individuals who are so violently abusing the human rights abuses of minority populations. I thank the delegation for its consistent and steadfast dedication to promoting human rights in that region and look forward to continue working with them to support human dignity across the globe.