

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We are writing to urge the Administration to take immediate action to help secure the release of journalists in Egypt who are imprisoned on what appear to be baseless and politically motivated charges. Freedom of the press is a universal right and cornerstone of democracy that transcends ideological and geographical divides. We urge you to take all appropriate action to encourage the Egyptian government to free them immediately.

According to reports, the recent crackdown on journalists began with the arrest of correspondent Peter Greste and producers Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed of Al Jazeera, on December 29th, 2013. The reason for their arrest has been reported as "spreading lies harmful to state security and joining a terrorist group." Mr. Greste wrote a public letter describing the unacceptable, inhumane treatment that he and his colleagues faced during their incarceration. This included extended periods of solitary confinement and denied access to necessary medical treatment. Recently, the prosecutor general referred them to the criminal court on terrorism-related charges, and extended their initial 15 day detention. More recently, Egyptian authorities prosecuted an additional twenty journalists, all on similar charges. On February 2nd, the Associated Press wrote that "Al-Jazeera journalists have been targeted for their coverage of Brotherhood protesters. Authorities have long depicted the network as pro-Brotherhood." Despite the acquittal and release of another journalist, Mohamed Badr, it is clear that journalists are being targeted by the Egyptian authorities, and this obvious violation of the freedom of press should not be tolerated.

We recognize that Egypt is struggling to find its identity. The struggle will be hard and it may be long. While there are different views on how Egypt might best move forward to an inclusive, peaceful, and democratic future, we all agree that no Egyptian government can be successful without a free press. The imprisonment and prosecution of journalists sends a clear and ongoing message of harassment and intimidation to all journalists in Egypt. We would like to remind you that the explanatory statement accompanying this year's annual assistance package to Egypt specifies your consideration of "the support by the Government of Egypt for the development of democratic political processes and basic freedoms, including civil society and the media."

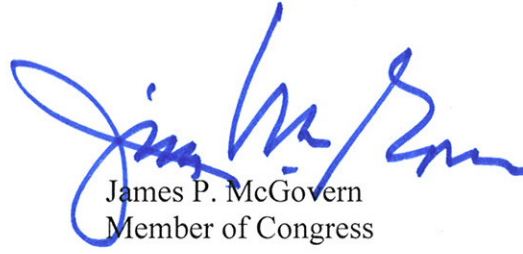
The imprisonment and prosecution of journalists sends a clear and ongoing message of harassment and intimidation to all journalists in Egypt. The United States should not sit idle as

Egyptian authorities intimidate and harass the press. That is why we urge you to immediately take all appropriate action to encourage the Egyptian government to free the journalists immediately.

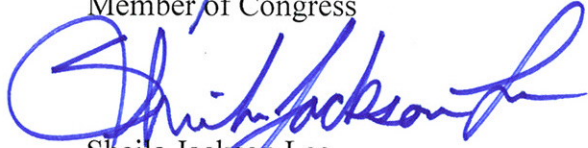
Sincerely,



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



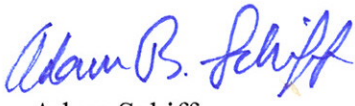
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



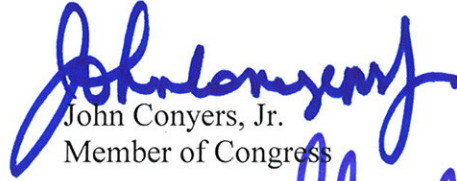
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jim Moran
Member of Congress



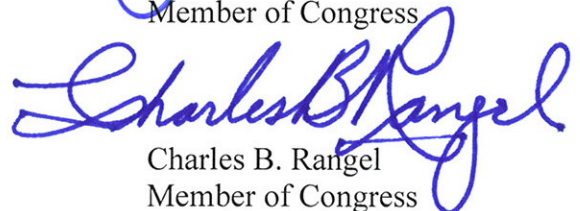
Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



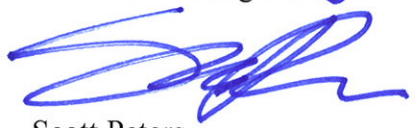
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



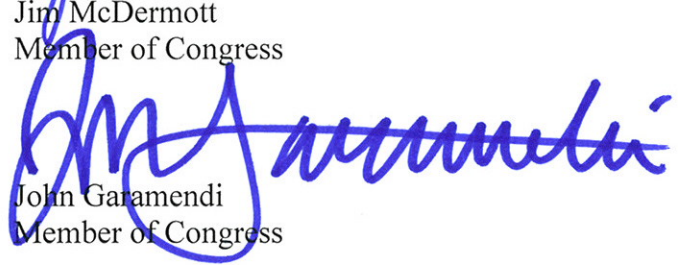
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Scott Peters
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress