

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 18, 2012

Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi Soliman
Commander-in-Chief
Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
Minister of Defense
The Ministry of Defense
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Field Marshal Tantawi:

We write to strongly condemn the recent raids undertaken by your government's security forces on the offices of Egyptian and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the United States-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and Freedom House. We urge that they be able to return to their nonpartisan democracy and human rights activities immediately and without new conditions.

As you know, these NGOs have been working with the Egyptian people to support free and fair elections and build democratic capacity to implement the goals of the transition process that was approved in last year's referendum. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces that you lead has pledged to transition swiftly to a civilian government. Raids on the very organizations working to support that transition severely contradict the stated goals of the Supreme Council.

We ask that you take steps to immediately reopen all affected Egyptian and foreign NGO offices, return all confiscated property, bring the investigation of their activities to an immediate close, and register them without conditions so they can continue their operations. Further, it is crucial for their safety that these organizations and their staff are no longer subjected to undue hostile treatment from state-run media. Continued restriction of their activities and harassment of international and Egyptian staff will be looked at with great concern, particularly in light of Egypt's considerable U.S. assistance.

In the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations bill, Congress requires the U.S. State Department to certify that, "the Government of Egypt is supporting the transition to civilian government including holding free and fair elections; implementing policies to protect freedom of expression, association, and religion, and due process of the law." Clearly, the manner in which these actions against NGOs are resolved will be a factor in the certification process.

We urge you to stand by your pledge to the people of Egypt and to work with them, including through civil society organizations, to consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and protect the basic human rights of all Egyptians.

Sincerely,




Senator Richard J. Durbin




Senator Benjamin L. Cardin




Senator Mark S. Kirk



Senator Marco A. Rubio



Senator Patrick Leahy



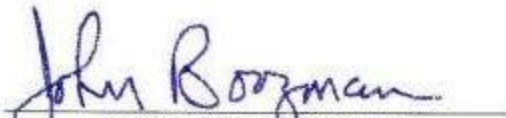
Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.



Senator Barbara Boxer



Senator Tom R. Harkin



Senator John N. Boozman



Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Senator Robert Menendez

CC: The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Secretary of State
The Honorable Anne Woods Patterson, United States Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt
His Excellency Sameh Shoukry, The Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United States