

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

April 25, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We write with concern about the continued imprisonment in Egypt of New Jersey native Ahmed Hassan since November 20, 2016. On February 19, 2017, Ahmed, 17 years old, was sentenced to a one year sentence for attempting to prevent the arrest of his uncle. Ahmed's uncle was charged for building without a permit. According to his family and his lawyers, Ahmed was beaten by police officers and thrown in a dark, crowded prison cell with adult prisoners. Additionally, he was denied access to a lawyer until the day of his trial. Sentencing a minor to a one year sentence appears to be far out of proportion to what he is accused of.

According to family members, Ahmed has described his experience in prison as "scary" and says that he has been "mistreated" because he is American. As a minor in an adult prison, his case illustrates the serious risks that such experiences can have on young people. While his circumstances are undoubtedly shared by many other Egyptian young people caught up in the prison system, as a minor and as an American citizen, Ahmed's case warrants our collective attention.

We also note the context in which Ahmed's arrest has occurred. His imprisonment is part of a troubling stifling of independent voices across Egypt over the past several years. According to Human Rights Watch, authorities in Egypt have "imprisoned tens of thousands, effectively banned protests, and outlawed the country's largest opposition group." Unsurprisingly, this crackdown on civil society has swept up many innocent people on dubious charges.

There are reportedly around 20 Americans jailed in Egypt – a country to which the Congress provides \$1.3 billion in assistance each year. We recognize the importance of the United States-Egypt partnership and the vital role our two countries play in fighting extremism, preventing illicit smuggling, and enhancing regional stability. However, our assistance is not mutually exclusive to the demand for human rights and the rights of our citizens. Cases such as Ahmed's raise serious concerns over Egyptian authorities' respect for human rights, civil liberties, and the treatment of American citizens.

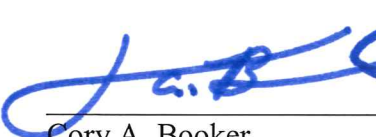
While we appreciate the efforts of consular personnel at the U.S. Embassy Cairo hereto, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:


- What steps is the U.S. Department of State taking to ensure Ahmed's timely release?
- How is the U.S. Embassy in Cairo supporting Ahmed and his family?


- Did you or President Trump raise Ahmed's case and those of other American citizens when President Sisi visited Washington in early April?

We welcome the release of American citizen Aya Hijazi after three years of wrongful imprisonment in Egypt and hope this decision will pave the way for the discharge of other unjustly detained Americans like Ahmed. Thank you for your attention to Ahmed's case and we urgently await your response.

Sincerely,

  
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

  
Frank A. LoBiondo  
Member of Congress