

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are deeply concerned about the recent outbreak of violence in the Maspero section of Cairo, Egypt, directed principally against peaceful demonstrators and urge your administration to strongly condemn the disproportional use of violence by the Egyptian military and security apparatus against unarmed protestors.

On Sunday, October 9th, tens of thousands of Coptic Christians took to the streets to protest the interim military government's failure to protect them from attacks on their churches. News reports indicate that the protests began peacefully, but violence soon ensued after the Christians were attacked by civilians. Subsequently, the military further incited the situation: army personnel carriers plowed through the crowds, crushing protestors as soldiers fired on unarmed civilians. The Washington Post reported on October 11th that 26 protestors, most of them Christians, were killed and over 500 people were injured in the demonstrations.

The ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has thus far rebuffed calls to provide information about the military personnel that they claim were injured or killed by protestors. Moreover, the official government-controlled media further incited violence on October 9th, when they urged "honorable Egyptians" to take to the streets to defend soldiers from mobs of armed Christians.

We are fearful that the treatment of these protestors signals how Egypt's military government will continue to not stand up for the Christian Coptic community, a community you mentioned by name in your 2009 Cairo speech. The Copts are now more vulnerable to lawless forces that are determined to persecute them for religiously-motivated reasons. We agree with your October 10th statement that, "As the Egyptian people shape their future, the United States continues to believe that the rights of minorities--including Copts--must be respected, and that all people have the universal rights of peaceful protest and religious freedom." We are at a turning point in Egypt, and it is crucial for the United States to express how religious tolerance and pluralism in Egypt will be the foundation for democracy.

As you know, the United States gives Egypt \$1.3 billion in military aid annually and regularly engages with the Egyptian military in training exercises. In a time when the U.S. is struggling to balance the budget and get our nation back on a path of fiscal responsibility, it is unacceptable to continue providing unconditioned military aid to a country that disregards the basic principles of human rights and religious freedom.

We urge your administration to strongly denounce the violence used by the Egyptian military against unarmed protestors last Sunday and urge the SCAF to conduct a transparent and independent investigation into the actions of the military and security forces surrounding the incident.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response.

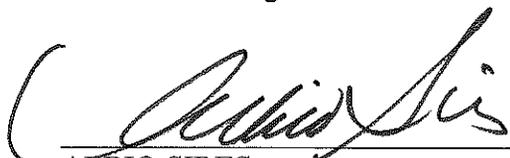
Sincerely,


JOHN CARTER
Member of Congress


TRENT FRANKS
Member of Congress


JAMES P. McGOVERN
Member of Congress

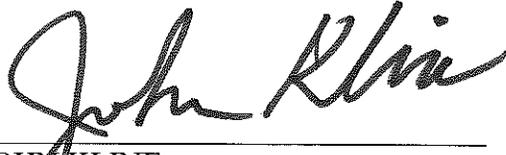

EDWARD ROYCE
Member of Congress


ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress


MICHAEL CAPUANO
Member of Congress


CHRIS SMITH
Member of Congress

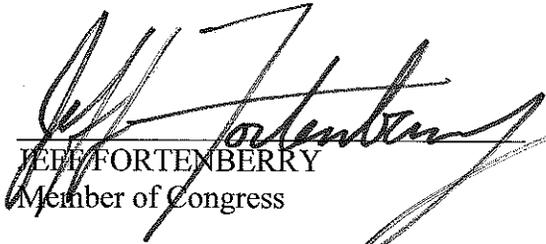

FRANK WOLF
Member of Congress



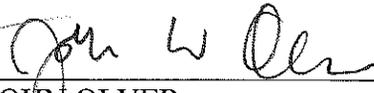
JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress



DAN LUNGREN
Member of Congress



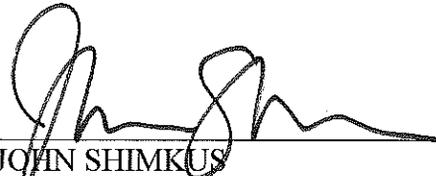
JEFF FORTENBERRY
Member of Congress



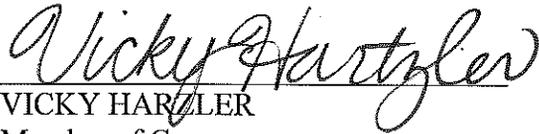
JOHN OLVER
Member of Congress



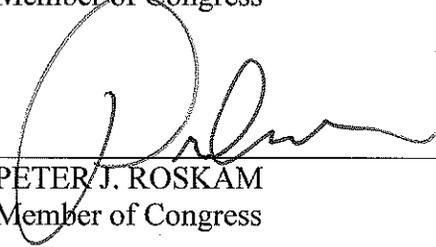
ROBERT ADERHOLT
Member of Congress



JOHN SHIMKUS
Member of Congress



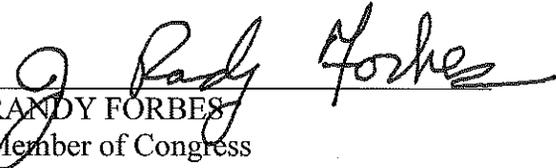
VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress



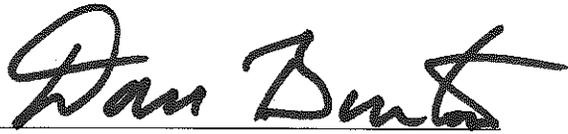
PETER J. ROSKAM
Member of Congress



LOU BARLETTA
Member of Congress



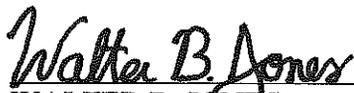
RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress



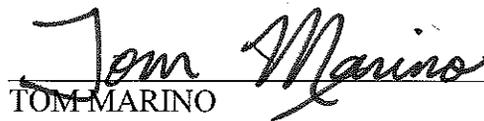
DAN BURTON
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WALTER B. JONES
Member of Congress



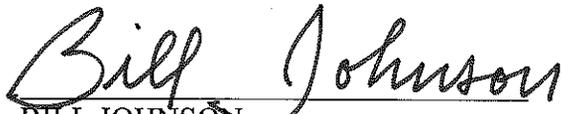
TOM MARINO
Member of Congress



JOE PITTS
Member of Congress



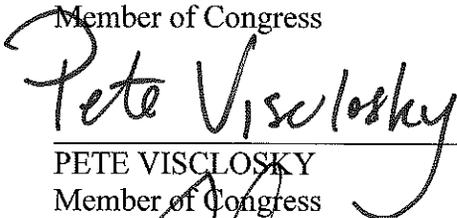
MIKE POMPEO
Member of Congress



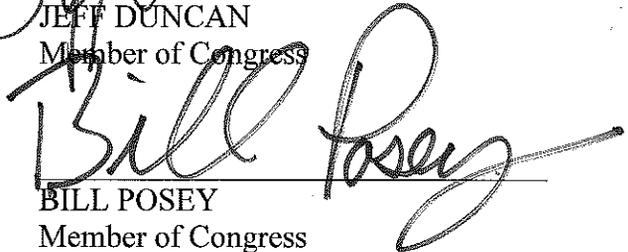
BILL JOHNSON
Member of Congress



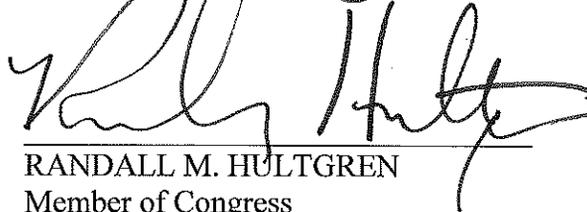
JEFF DUNCAN
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PETE VISCLOSKY
Member of Congress



BILL POSEY
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RANDALL M. HULTGREN
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SUE MYRICK
Member of Congress



GARY PETERS
Member of Congress



DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



MICHAEL GRIMM
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CONNIE MACK
Member of Congress



JOHN FLEMING
Member of Congress



DAVID MCKINLEY
Member of Congress



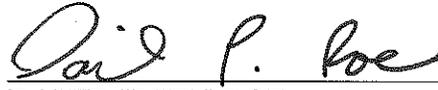
GUS BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress



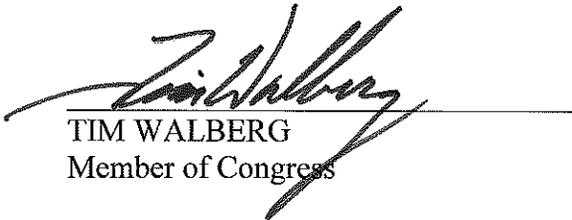
DIANA BLACK
Member of Congress



KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress



DAVID "PHIL" ROE
Member of Congress



TIM WALBERG
Member of Congress