

November XX, 2018

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

Egypt is an important security partner whose success and stability is significant for U.S. interests. It is for this reason that we are writing to express our concerns regarding Egypt's human rights record and other issues that are impeding our bilateral relationship. While Egypt's economy has improved significantly in recent months, we are worried that the Egyptian government's approach to human rights, in addition to repressing Egyptian freedoms and contravening American values, will have an unintended but harmful impact on Egypt's stability, the very thing the Egyptian government is seeking to protect. The State Department's August 2018 Memorandum of Justification for releasing \$195 million in military aid to Egypt noted "the overall human rights climate in Egypt continues to deteriorate." We are also worried that three issues related to U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are having a harmful effect on U.S.-Egypt relations, preventing a closer and more effective partnership.

First, we note the Egyptian government has made a series of arrests in recent months targeting Egypt's secular activists, bloggers, journalists, and human rights defenders that is unprecedented in severity. This crackdown comes on the heels of the government's targeting of media, with several journalists being arrested in the wake of the presidential election and a set of new media laws approved by the parliament which threaten to silent independent voices. These restrictions on freedom of expression put Egypt's stability, critically important for the region and U.S. interests, at risk.

Second, we note the ongoing persecution of American citizen NGO workers in Egypt. As you know, in 2011, Egyptian security forces raided 17 local and foreign NGOs operating in Egypt, many of which were implementing U.S. democracy and governance programs. Forty-three employees of these NGOs – including a number of U.S. citizens – were arbitrarily convicted and sentenced to prison for allegedly operating without necessary authorization and receiving foreign funding. These victims live in constant fear of repercussions stemming from these arbitrary convictions. While 16 of the 43 defendants are preparing for a retrial on November 11, concerns remain over their fate, in addition to the chilling effect on NGOs in Egypt if all 43 are not exonerated.

Third, we are concerned about the ongoing arbitrary detention and imprisonment of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent resident aliens with significant ties to the United States. While one of the most high-profile of these prisoners, Ahmed Etiwy, was recently released, there are an estimated 15 or more U.S. citizens, including Mustafa Kassem who was recently sentenced to 15 years in prison, and legal permanent residents who are still detained in horrendous conditions and deprived of fundamental due process rights. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) found that the arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Ola Al-Qaradawi and Hosam Khalaf, a couple approved for U.S. legal permanent resident status, "lack a legal basis."

Finally, we are troubled by Egypt's refusal to provide appropriate compensation to April Corley, a U.S. citizen injured by the Egyptian military on September 13, 2015 when her tour group in Egypt's Western desert was hit by a military air strike. The Egyptian government has admitted it "accidentally" targeted the tour group. Ms. Corley is in constant pain and will never be able to work again. Yet it is our understanding that Egypt refuses to provide compensation that would, at a bare minimum, meet April's needs, offering a take it or leave it amount that is less than half of what she paid for the Medivac.

Like you, we strongly believe that the U.S.-Egypt bilateral relationship provides critical stability in an increasingly unstable region. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore abuses of fundamental human rights, especially those directed at Americans. We look forward to working with you to support efforts to ensure that our partnership with Egypt is based on substantive progress towards democracy, rule of law, and respect for basic human rights.

Sincerely,