

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 18, 2013

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

We write today to thank you for your leadership and support of previous requests to tie Egypt's foreign assistance to progress on political and economic reforms. Egypt historically is an important U.S. ally and its transition period undoubtedly presents many challenges. At this important moment, the United States has a strong national security interest for Egypt's development of a democratic system that protects basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The FY2013 House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill established specific benchmarks for U.S. aid to Egypt. The bill directed the U.S. Secretary of State to certify that the Egyptian government met its obligations under the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, completed the transition to civilian government, including free and fair elections, and implemented policies to protect due process of law and freedom of expression, associations, and religion [H.R. 5857, § 7042 (a), 113th Cong., 2nd Sess. (2012)].

We request, as last year, that the House State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee on Appropriations include language to provide specific benchmarks and, moreover, an overall strategy for U.S. foreign aid to Egypt.

Following the December 29, 2011 raids on 17 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Egyptian government charged 43 NGO workers on grounds of operating without official registration and obtaining foreign funding without authorities' permission. While we welcome the release of the American NGO workers, it is important to note that none of the charges against these workers have been dropped. Egyptian nationals and other foreign nationals who work for the accused NGOs still face possible prison sentences for these politically-motivated charges, with a verdict expected on June 4, 2013. Furthermore, drafts of new NGO laws tighten restrictions even more and, in some cases, severely limit the ability of NGOs to conduct fact-finding visits and other essential activities, as well as further restrict funding.

Since Egypt's revolution, the Coptic Christian community and other minority groups in Egypt face even greater discrimination and persecution. The impunity with which attacks against Coptic Christians are carried out is striking and deeply troubling. In 2013 alone, Amnesty International reported at least five other attacks on Coptic Christians in the Governorates of Aswan, Beni, Suef, Cairo, and Fayoum. In addition, Pope Tawadros recently took the unusual step of publicly criticizing the constitution as discriminatory and divisive. The Coptic Orthodox Church identified five demands for President Mohamed Morsy to resolve the sectarian crises that erupted in various parts of the country: guarantee equality before the law, ensure safety and security in the entire country, fully activate the principle of citizenship, amend religious discourse, and teach Coptic history in schools.

A responsible strategy will direct U.S. and Egyptian leadership towards new realities in an evolving relationship, especially given the uncertain trajectory of the political transition and need for a re-calibrated and strengthened military relationship. To ensure a strong bilateral relationship during an uncertain time of transition, the U.S. must send a strong signal of support to Egyptian activists and democratic reformers by demanding that the government respect basic human rights and religious freedom. These rights are consistent with the values and principles of our country and ensure that Egypt will be a stable partner in the future.

The specific language we request in the FY2014 House State and Foreign Operations bill reads:

*“ASSISTANCE FOR EGYPT—(a) None of the funds made available in this Act for bilateral economic assistance may be provided to the Government of Egypt unless the Secretary of State certifies to the Committees on Appropriations that the following conditions have been satisfied:*

*(1) The Government of Egypt is not acting to restrict the political, economic, or religious freedoms and human rights of the citizens and residents of Egypt.*

*(2) The Government of Egypt is continuing to demonstrate a commitment to free and fair elections and is not taking any steps to interfere with or undermine the credibility of such elections.*

*(3) The Government of Egypt continues to implement the Egypt- Israel Peace Treaty.*

*(4) The Government of Egypt is taking all necessary action to eliminate smuggling networks and detect and destroy tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip and is taking all necessary action to combat terrorism in the Sinai.*

*(5) The Government of Egypt has lifted restrictions in law and practice on the work and funding of Egyptian and international nongovernmental organizations, in particular in the human rights and democracy field.*

*(b) Of the amounts made available in this Act under the heading "Economic Support Fund", not less than \$50,000,000 shall be for democracy and governance programs for Egypt, including direct support for pluralistic nongovernmental organizations, as well as programming for rule of law, human rights, good governance, and political competition.*

*(c) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on recommendations with respect to policy and funding changes to programs providing assistance to Egypt [to fulfill the objectives in Section (a)] and shall include a report listing all of the Foreign Military Financing contracts for the Government of Egypt carried out over the previous ten years and describing plans for such contracts over the next five years.*

*(d) In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—*

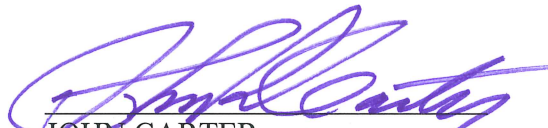
*(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and*

*(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate."*

We appreciate your continued interest and support.

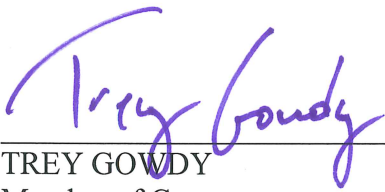
Most sincerely,

  
TRENT FRANKS  
Member of Congress

  
JOHN CARTER  
Member of Congress

  
JOE PITTS  
Member of Congress

  
GUS BILIRAKIS  
Member of Congress

  
TREY GOWDY  
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