

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

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

March 26, 2014

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to publicly address Saudi Arabia's serious human rights violations during your upcoming trip to the country. The government of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly engaged in systematic human rights violations targeting women, religious minorities, and peaceful political reformers. Your meetings with King Abdullah and other officials will be an opportunity to publicly integrate human rights concerns, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, into the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

A successful trip to Saudi Arabia will be one that combines both important symbolic gestures in support of advocates of fundamental human rights, as well as advocacy for specific reforms. Today in Saudi Arabia, those who advocate for human rights take serious risks and often pay a heavy price. This is why we urge you to seek a meeting with women activists in Saudi Arabia who are challenging the country's ban on women drivers – the only such ban in the world. We also urge you to meet with the family members of prominent peaceful human rights advocates who are imprisoned. Saudi Arabian authorities have harassed, intimidated, and imprisoned almost all of the country's leading independent human rights activists. Two examples are Mohammad al-Qahtani and Abdullah al-Hamid, founders of a local human rights organization who are currently imprisoned on the basis of their peaceful criticism of the government.

In addition to public meetings, we urge you to address specific human rights reforms in your direct meetings with King Abdullah and other officials. Religious freedom is a major concern in the country and, as you mentioned during your keynote address at the National Prayer Breakfast on February 6, 2014, "promoting religious freedom is a key objective of U.S. foreign policy." Saudi Arabia does not tolerate public worship by adherents of religions other than Islam, and the government also systematically discriminates against followers of minority Muslim faiths. For example, in May 2012, the Saudi government detained two Saudis, Sultan Hamid Marzooq al-Enezi and Saud Falih Awad al-Enezi, for becoming members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. They have been charged with apostasy, and their current whereabouts and status are unknown; if convicted, they could face the death penalty. Further, in December 2011, authorities raided a private Christian prayer gathering of approximately 35 Ethiopians in Jeddah and deported them in August 2012 for "illicit mingling." In another instance of ongoing oppression, Raif Badawi, the founder and editor of the *Free Saudi Liberals* website, which

encourages religious and political debate, was sentenced by the court to 600 lashes, seven years in prison and his website was ordered to close. Although his conviction and sentence have recently been overturned on appeal, Raif Badawi remains in jail and could still be tried again.

The Government of Saudi Arabia must end its ban on public gatherings, lift restrictions on social media, stop the use of torture, and reform the new so-called "anti-terror" laws that practically criminalize all forms of peaceful dissent. The government must enact a law for associations so that local human rights organizations are formally recognized. Finally, oppressive treatment of women and religious minorities must also end.

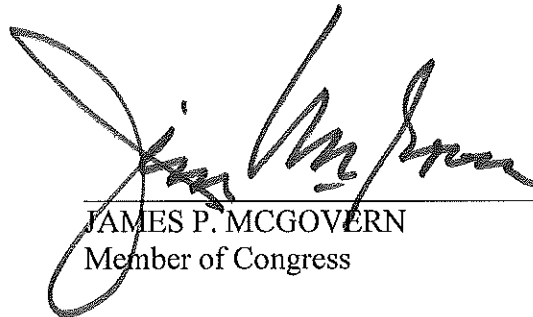
If your administration has previously raised such concerns through private channels, the Government of Saudi Arabia's grave human rights record reveals its willingness to ignore such advice. Consequently, we urge you to combine symbolic actions with direct advocacy for human rights reforms. It is time to publicly demonstrate U.S. support for those in Saudi Arabia who are willing to take such risks to advance fundamental rights in their society.

Sincerely,



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TRENT FRANKS  
Member of Congress



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JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
Member of Congress



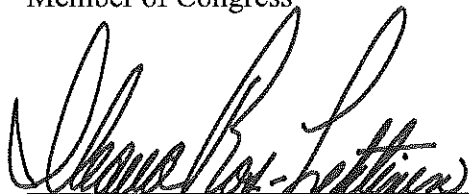
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FRANK WOLF  
Member of Congress



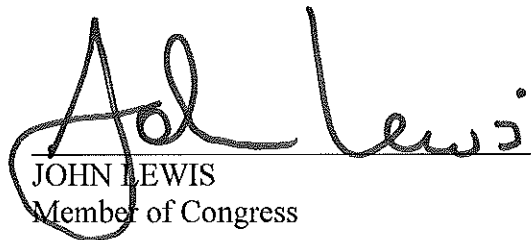
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JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress



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ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN  
Member of Congress




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JOHN LEWIS  
Member of Congress

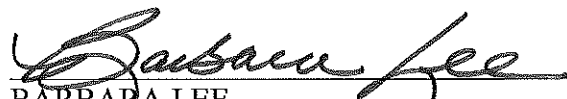
  
BOBBY L. RUSH  
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Member of Congress

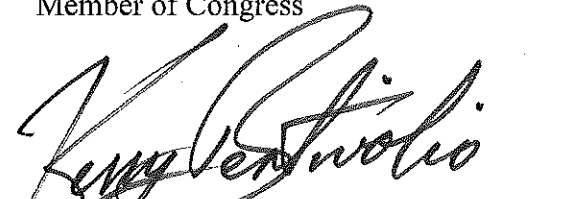
  
TREY GOWDY  
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PETER J. ROSKAM  
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BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

  
TED POE  
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KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO  
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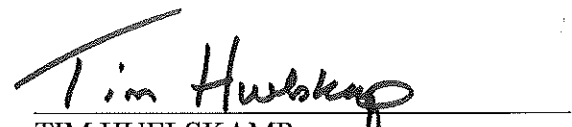
  
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.  
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EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress

  
VANCE MCALLISTER  
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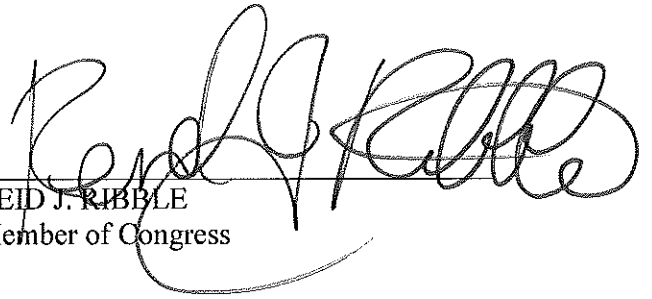
  
GUS M. BILIRAKIS  
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RAUL M. GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress

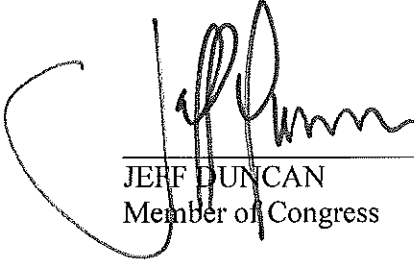
  
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MAXINE WATERS  
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LOUIE GOHMERT  
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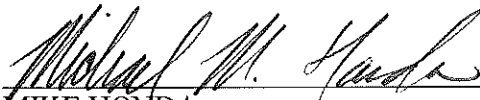
JIM MORAN  
Member of Congress



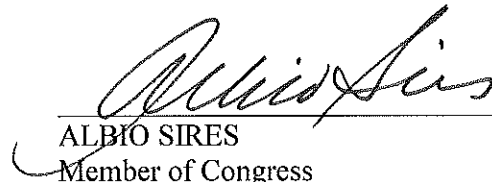
CAROL SHEA-PORTER  
Member of Congress



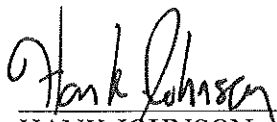
STEVE STIVERS  
Member of Congress



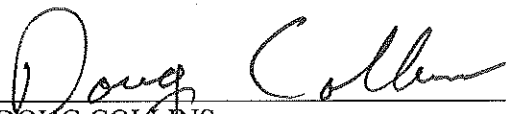
MIKE HONDA  
Member of Congress



ALBIO SIRES  
Member of Congress



HANK JOHNSON  
Member of Congress




DOUG COLLINS  
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CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
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CHELLIE PINGREE  
Member of Congress



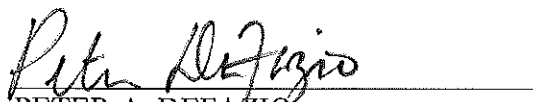
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ALAN S. LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress



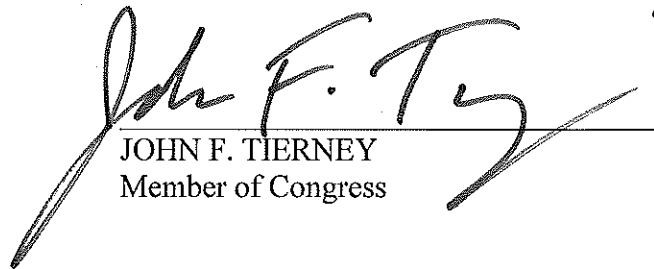
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NIKI TSONGAS  
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PETER A. DEFAZIO  
Member of Congress




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JOHN F. TIERNEY  
Member of Congress



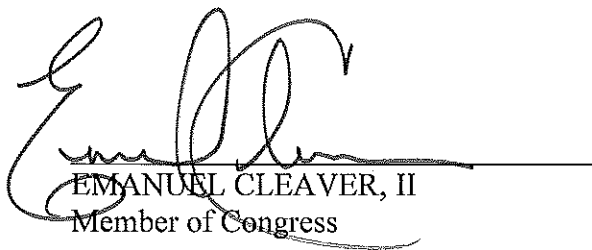
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MARK MEADOWS  
Member of Congress



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RODNEY DAVIS  
Member of Congress




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EMANUEL CLEAVER, II  
Member of Congress



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DAN LIPINSKI  
Member of Congress



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MIKE DOYLE  
Member of Congress




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ANN WAGNER  
Member of Congress



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GARY C. PETERS  
Member of Congress



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SEAN DUFFY  
Member of Congress

*Bill Johnson*

BILL JOHNSON  
Member of Congress

*Rush Holt*

RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress

*Steve Chabot*

STEVE CHABOT  
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*Vicky Hartzler*

VICKY HARTZLER  
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*Sheila Jackson Lee*

SHEILA JACKSON LEE  
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*Charles B. Rangel*

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*Scott E. Rigell*

SCOTT E. RIGELL  
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*Randy K. Weber*

RANDY K. WEBER  
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*Joseph R. Pitts*

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*Robert Pittenger*

ROBERT PITTENGER  
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*Lloyd Doggett*

LLOYD DOGGETT  
Member of Congress

*Janice Schakowsky*

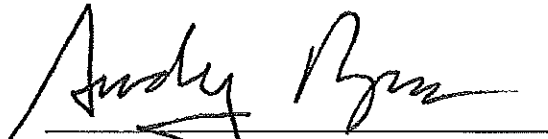
JANICE SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress

*Eleanor Holmes Norton*

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
Member of Congress

*William Keating*

WILLIAM KEATING  
Member of Congress



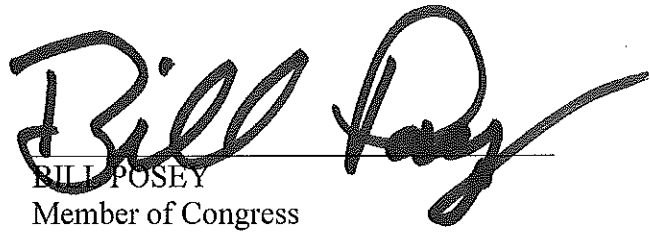
ANDY BARR  
Member of Congress



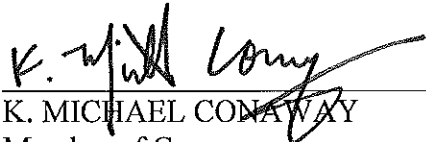
CORRINE BROWN  
Member of Congress



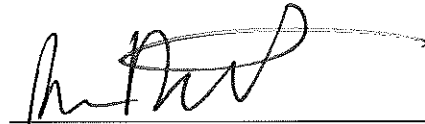
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BILL POSEY  
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K. MICHAEL CONAWAY  
Member of Congress



RON DESANTIS  
Member of Congress



MATT SALMON  
Member of Congress



ANDY HARRIS  
Member of Congress