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February 10, 2012

His Excellency Sameh Shoukry
The Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt
3521 International Ct. NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I want to express my deep concern that 43 individuals, including 19 Americans, have been placed on a no-fly list in Egypt and may be charged in connection with their work for various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I understand that Staci Haag, a native of my state of North Dakota, is among these individuals, and I call upon Egypt to drop the charges against her and her colleagues and remove them from the no-fly list without delay.

In late December, several respected NGOs found their offices ransacked, their property stolen and their employees threatened. Since then, Egypt has moved to block their exit from the country and initiated legal proceedings against them. These organizations are well known to Egyptian officials. Their operations are long-standing and their activities fully disclosed. Because Egypt has not expressed legal concerns about these groups in the past, I can only conclude that the actions against employees of these NGOs are politically motivated.

Unless Egypt changes its actions, I do not believe the Secretary of State should certify that Egypt is meeting the conditions necessary to receive the aid Congress approved in Fiscal Year 2012. I am a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, which is the panel that approves aid for Egypt. My colleagues and I are currently reviewing the status of FY12 appropriations for Egypt, and we will consider carefully how Egypt responds in this matter as a part of any future appropriations decision.

I hope that you will convey my concerns to the authorities in Egypt, and I hope that this situation can be resolved so that it does not hinder the development of relations between the United States and the new Egyptian government.

Sincerely,


John Hoeven
U.S. Senator