

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Madeleine Albright [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2012 10:51 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Text of Letter from Ex-Mins to Egyptian Leaders

B6

H
 Thought you might want to see letter from exmins. Quite a list of signatories. We are sending privately not publicity. Also sending copy to Amre Moussa who is technically a part of our group
 Bill Burns has been great
 M

From: Erin Cochran
To: Madeleine Albright
Sent: Thu Feb 09 10:45:10 2012
Subject: Fw: Text of Letter from Ex-Mins to Egyptian Leaders

From: Price, Jonathon [REDACTED]
To: Erin Cochran
Sent: Thu Feb 09 10:41:16 2012
Subject: Text of Letter from Ex-Mins to Egyptian Leaders

B6

Mohamed Saad El-Katatni, Speaker of the House
 People's Assembly
 Magless El-Shaab Street
 Kasr El-Ainy
 Cairo, Egypt

Dear Mr. Speaker:

As former foreign ministers of our respective countries, we were dismayed to learn that on December 29, 2011 the offices of seven American, European and Egyptian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were subject to an armed raid; their property confiscated, their staff interrogated and their doors shut. Following the raids, pressure on these civil society organizations has increased as a criminal prosecution is proceeding, travel restrictions have been imposed on some employees and interrogations are ongoing. Moreover, media reports indicate that up to 400 organizations may be under investigation – most of them Egyptian organizations working in the fields of democracy, human rights and legal awareness.

The groups raided on December 29, and groups like them, are present in countries around the world to support democratic processes, promote human rights, advocate for freedom of the press and free association, and to assist in the development of governing institutions. We know directly or by reputation many of these groups. We believe that the work of non-governmental, inter-governmental and international organizations are an indispensable component of a thriving community of democracies.

Domestic and international democracy and human rights NGOs can help support the transition plan that you and other Egyptian officials have proposed as well as help Egyptian citizens participate fully in that process. Indeed, several of the organizations that were raided were officially accredited election witnesses during the recent parliamentary elections and issued constructive reports on the process.

Freedom of association and speech are fundamental to any democratic system. This is one of the most important lessons that each one of us learned while serving our countries as foreign ministers. Non-governmental organizations must be able to carry out their mandates openly and freely. Harsh and undue restrictions on civil society profoundly undermine the progress that has been made in your country.

As has been the case in Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere in the Middle East, the presence and ability of these organizations to support the leadership and initiative of local democracy activists is, as you know, one signal the international community considers to understand how an important transition is proceeding.

Egypt has made tremendous strides in the past year. Following a largely peaceful transfer of power to a temporary military government, a referendum was held on constitutional change, new political parties formed, an election held and a parliament seated which is reflective of the will of the people. We would urge that you not allow these positive strides to be overshadowed by completely unnecessary actions against civil society.

We look forward to Egypt's entry into the community of democratic nations and its adherence to the principles of free association. We would ask that you immediately end the onerous restrictions on civil society, cease the prosecution of NGOs, free citizens imprisoned for exercising freedom of speech and move expeditiously on the path to civilian rule.

Sincerely,

Madeleine K. Albright – United States

Halldór Ásgrímsson – Iceland

Lloyd Axworthy – Canada

Erik Derycke – Belgium

Lamberto Dini – Italy

Alexander Downer – Australia

Jan Eliasson – Sweden

Joschka Fischer – Germany

Jaime Gama – Portugal

Rosario Green – Mexico

Igor S. Ivanov – Russia

Don McKinnon – New Zealand

Marwan Muasher – Jordan

Ana Palacio – Spain

Niels Helveg Petersen – Denmark

Surin Pitsuwan – Thailand

Lydie Polfer – Luxembourg

Malcolm Rifkind – United Kingdom

Adam Daniel Rotfeld – Poland

Knut Vollebaek – Norway

Jozias van Aartsen – The Netherlands

cc: Prime Minister Kamal Al-Ganzoury
Cabinet of Ministers
2 Magless El-Shaab Street
Kasr El-Ainy
Cairo, Egypt

Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi
Residence of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

Cairo, Egypt