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One Hundred and Twelfth Congress  
**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

January 27, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St NW Ste 7276  
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write today to ask that the U.S. embassies in Baghdad and Cairo appoint a person dedicated solely to handling religious freedom at each of the respective posts. Currently, the political officers at Embassy Baghdad and Embassy Cairo who are responsible for issues of religious freedom also handle a number of other issues including human rights, women's rights and human trafficking.

In the wake of recent attacks on Christians in both Iraq and Egypt, it is critical that the United States devote greater attention to the issue of religious freedom. Growing sectarian tensions in the region have serious implications for the prospect of stability and tolerance in the Middle East. The recent spate of violence has driven many Christians and other religious minorities to flee the lands they have inhabited for centuries and attempt to emigrate to the West. According to an article in *National Geographic Magazine*, this pattern of emigration deprives the region of "some of its best educated and most politically moderate citizens—the people these societies can least afford to lose."


Given the increasingly precarious situation for these minority communities, we believe it is necessary to have one individual in the embassies dedicated to religious freedom. It is critical that the individual designated to such a position build strong relationships with and conduct extensive outreach to religious minority communities to ensure their concerns and needs are being adequately addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter and we look forward to your response.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

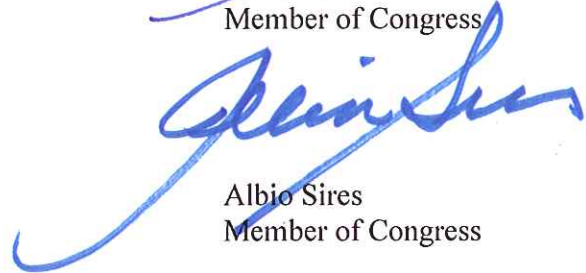
  
Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

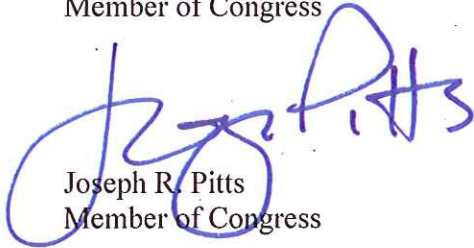
  
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