



One Hundred and Fourteenth Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

June 18, 2015

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write to you in advance of the upcoming visit to the United States by newly elected Indonesian President Joko Widodo. While President Obama has rightly hailed Indonesia's democratic transition, as evidenced by last year's election, we remain deeply concerned about ongoing human rights challenges. We therefore urge you to strongly communicate the need for continued progress on the human rights situation in Indonesia by raising specific violations and working with the new government to fulfill all of its obligations under international law.

Of particular concern is the imprisonment of peaceful activists who exercise the basic right to freedom of expression and assembly. We have continued to receive reports that large numbers of Papuan activists, over 60 as of last February, remain in prison on treason charges as a result of attending rallies or raising the separatist flag in support of Papuan self-determination. While the future of Indonesia's many regions must be decided by the people of Indonesia, the right to peaceful expression and assembly must also be protected.

The case of Papuan activist Filep Karma, for example, has been repeatedly raised by the international community. Mr. Karma is a prominent political activist and former civil servant who has been detained since 2004 in response to his activism – and despite the fact that he has explicitly denounced the use of violence. The Indonesian government sentenced Mr. Karma to fifteen years in prison on treason charges for organizing a protest on December 1, 2004, that included the raising of the Papuan Morning Star flag during a demonstration celebrating the region's independence from Dutch rule in 1961. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention called for his immediate release, citing a trial that fell far below international standards of due process and the fact that his imprisonment resulted from the peaceful exercise of internationally protected rights. Mr. Karma's case was also highlighted in a letter from a bipartisan group of 26 members of Congress on August 22, 2011.

As was noted in the letter of August 22, 2011, the imprisonment of peaceful activists on treason charges is an unfortunate echo of Indonesia's pre-democratic past. President Widodo now has the power to move his country firmly into the community of stable,

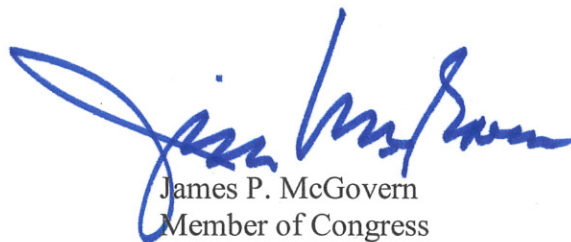
rights-respecting democracies. We are encouraged by his public commitment to hear the grievances of Papuans and open the region to international journalists and observers. We also welcome the commitment by President Obama to assist Indonesia in implementing President Widodo's reform agenda.

A first step in such reforms must include President Widodo issuing amnesty to political prisoners, including Mr. Karma, and immediately rehabilitating all Indonesians imprisoned for peacefully exercising fundamental civil and political rights. During his visit to Papua last May 9, President Widodo released five Papuan prisoners, but their release was based on clemency, which requires an admission of guilt from the prisoner. President Widodo should release all political prisoners with an immediate presidential amnesty, rather than demanding that they admit guilt for convictions that violated their basic human rights. President Widodo should also ensure that future prosecutions of persons under his country's jurisdiction protect individuals' fundamental rights of due process.

Sincerely,



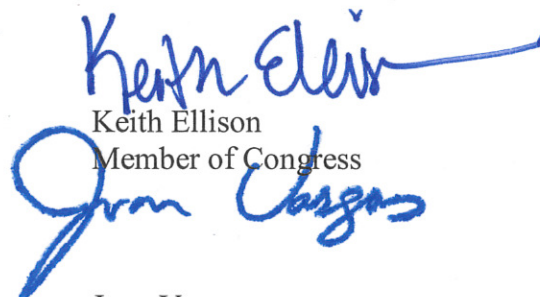
Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



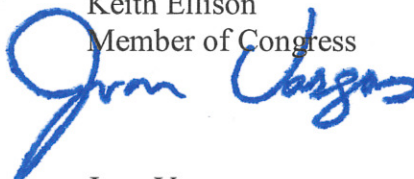
Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress