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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3815

April 18, 2012

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Ambassador Sameh Shoukry  
3521 International Court NW  
Washington, DC 20008-3023

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

A growing number of Americans are deeply concerned over the treatment of religious minorities in Egypt. During this time of transition and increased tension, I am seeking assurances the Egyptian Transitional Government is doing everything in its power to properly identify and protect the numerous religious groups practicing throughout the country.

Recently, I met with Archbishop Maximus Hanna of the Holy Synod of St. Athanasius Congregation (HSSAC). Headquartered in the 15<sup>th</sup> District of Pennsylvania, HSSAC is a community of Christians comprising an autonomous reformed Orthodox Church. HSSAC's congregation is primarily comprised of Egyptian Americans.

Archbishop Hanna informed me that in addition to this church in the United States, HSSAC operates a number of churches throughout Egypt. Although the main church is located in Cairo, Egyptian authorities have unfortunately not yet recognized HSSAC as a member of the country's religious community – an oversight that is impeding their religious freedom.

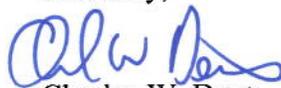
The American-Egyptian relationship is mutually beneficially and must remain especially strong during this challenging transition. That said, the Egyptian authority's reluctance to recognize HSSAC and the Government's ineffective protection of Christian communities gives me great pause. I am seeking reassurances the Egyptian Transitional Government is doing everything reasonable within its power to permit Christians and other religious minorities their right to worship in safety and security.

Mr. Ambassador, I would appreciate your assistance in investigating why HSSAC has not been recognized as a religious institution by the Egyptian transitional authorities. Additionally, I would like to learn more about what is being done to protect religious minorities in Egypt.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to your response.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Charles W. Dent  
Member of Congress

CWD/cf