Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2004

His Excellency Mohammed Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Cairo, Egypt

Dear President Mubarak,

We are writing to express our strong concerns regarding the treatment of homosexual men by the Egyptian government, particularly in light of the report released on March 1, 2004 by Human Rights Watch entitled "In a Time of Torture: The Assault on Justice in Egypt's Crackdown of Homosexual Conduct."

The 144-page report by Human Rights Watch details Egypt's extensive repression, entrapment, and torture of men who engage in the "habitual practice of debauchery" – the vague legal charge used to criminalize homosexual behavior in Egyptian law. Testimonies by torture victims included being bound, suspended in painful positions, burned with cigarettes, submerged in ice-cold water, and subjected to electrical shocks on their limbs and genitals. This persecution undermines the legal protections for privacy and due process, not only for gay men, but for all Egyptians.

As you know, Egypt is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Treaty, and in November 2002 the United Nations Committee against Torture issued 19 recommendations to Egypt comprising specific measures to be undertaken by the government in order to eradicate torture. The treaty and the UN recommendations prohibit the use of torture and protect torture victims through the conduct of swift and impartial investigations. Furthermore, Article 42 of Egypt's Constitution declares that any detained person "shall be treated in a manner concomitant with the preservation of his dignity" and that "no physical or moral harm is to be inflicted upon him." We regard the repression, entrapment, and torture of individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation to be clear human rights violations. We sincerely hope Egypt will abide by the requirements of the treaties signed and laws in place, and that you personally will speak out against and work to prevent any future incidents of torture, including the torture of homosexual men.

We thank you in advance for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Steve Rothman
STEVEN R. ROTHMAN
Member of Congress

BARNEY FRANK
Member of Congress

Tom Lantos
TOM LANTOS
Member of Congress

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