



## *INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC POLICY*

June 1, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our deep concern over the impending deportation to Egypt of Mr. Sameh Khouzam (A# 75 795 693), who is currently being held at the York County Prison in Pennsylvania. According to the Second Circuit Court decision which granted a stay of deportation, it was "more likely than not" that he would be tortured upon his return. In light of this finding, we, the coalition members, find it unconscionable that the U.S. Government would take at face value an assurance from the Egyptian Government that Mr. Khouzam would not be tortured and urge you to interfere in the case. More so than the Court's decision is a well-documented history of human rights abuses by the Egyptian Government against its own citizens in general, and religious minorities in particular. For these reasons, we implore you to prevent the deportation of Mr. Khouzam to Egypt as such action would run counter to the principles upon which American foreign policy is built and to which it is committed.

Mr. Khouzam fled Egypt in 1998, under pressure from the Egyptian Government to change his religion. He, along with several family members, were detained and imprisoned by the government during this time and was forcefully "encouraged" to convert from Christianity. Mr. Khouzam fled the country in fear for his life at which time the Egyptian Government informed US officials that Mr. Khouzam was wanted for murder. He was placed in a hospital upon his arrival due to obvious physical abuse but was ultimately detained pending the verification of the charges against him and despite any credible evidence.

Mr. Khouzam was imprisoned for eight years, until he was granted parole based on a Second Circuit Court decision that, were he to be deported, he would most certainly face torture at the hands of the Egyptian Government.

Mr. Khouzam has proven to be an upstanding member of his community since his return to free society. However, when he voluntarily reported to immigration authorities on May 29, 2007, he was detained, imprisoned, and scheduled to be deported on June 1, 2007. US authorities informed him of the assurances extended by the Egyptian Government that he

would not be tortured but his lawyers correctly sought and received an extension of the stay of deportation; he is now scheduled to be deported on June 7, 2007.

Madam Secretary, Egypt has demonstrated its unwillingness to protect and respect the human rights of religious minorities. The case of Mr. Khouzam is particularly troubling due to the physical abuse and false accusations he has already endured. It is our professional opinion of people intimately familiar with the human rights situation in Egypt, that Mr. Khouzam faces certain harm if he is to return to Egypt. Therefore, we request that you review the facts of this case and prevent the deportation of Mr. Khouzam. The integrity of American principles requires the United States Government to stand on in support of the inalienable rights endowed upon all human kind.

Sincerely,

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