

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Ambassador Budi Bowoleksono
2020 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20036

June 16, 2017

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

We are writing in regards to recent reports of possible human rights abuses in Indonesia targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people (LGBTQ). These attacks are an unfortunate symptom of the growing radicalization in Indonesia that has targeted women, religious and ethnic minorities, and which could negatively impact diplomatic relations and foreign investments in your country, if left unchecked.

We have recently seen reports of a public caning of two gay men in Aceh province on May 23rd. The men were photographed and humiliated by thousands of jeering spectators as they received their punishment. But worrisome incidents are occurring beyond Aceh as well. Other reports demonstrate a disturbing pattern of police targeting LGBTQ people and other minorities across the country. On May 24, West Java police chief Anton Charliyan said that he plans to establish a task force to persecute LGBTQ Indonesians, adding that LGBTQ people suffer from “a disease” and will “face the law and heavy social sanctions.” Disturbingly, Charliyan’s statement echoes the rhetoric of Banda Aceh mayor Illiza Sa’aduddin, who announced in February 2016 that she would create a “special team” to make the public more aware of the “threat of LGBTQ” and to “train” LGBTQ people to “return to a normal life.”

We were also disturbed by reports that on April 30, 2017, police raided a private gathering of gay men in Surabaya, arrested 14 men, and subjected them to HIV tests without their consent, and a report that on May 21st police raided the Atlantis Spa in Jakarta, arrested 141 men and charged 10 for holding an alleged sex party under 2008 Anti-Pornography law, a provision often used against LGBTQ persons. Officers allegedly paraded the suspects naked in front of the media, and interrogated them while they remained unclothed.

These attacks fall into a problematic pattern of increasing intolerance for minorities across Indonesia, a trend demonstrated most recently by the sentencing of former Jakarta Governor Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian, to two years in prison for blasphemy. This new court ruling, combined with authorities’ behavior towards LGBTQ people, is sending a chilling message about the current state of pluralism, tolerance, and stability in Indonesia.

While the United States respects the values and traditions of other nations, we cannot turn a blind eye to the persecution of minority communities, whether women, religious minorities, or LGBTQ people. Such attacks can metastasize and put an entire country’s stability, security, and foreign investments at risk. We would also note that economic studies have demonstrated that

discriminatory practices and laws can severely impact a country's economic health and foreign investment levels. A recent study by the Williams Institute at the University of California found that anti-LGBTQ discrimination may be lowering Indonesia's gross domestic product by as much as \$12 billion.

We deeply value our nation's ties with Indonesia, the world's third largest democracy, a democratic leader in the Muslim world, and a close ally and trade partner. In the spirit of that friendship, we urge the Indonesian government to exercise its responsibility to investigate and put a stop to repressive and discriminatory actions against minorities. Indonesia, as much as any other country, should uphold the rule of law and affirmatively protect the civil and human rights of all its citizens, no matter their identities, sexual orientations, genders, religions, or religious views.

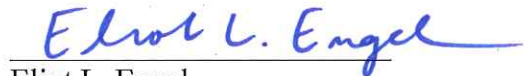
Please know that we will continue monitoring the situation, and hope that Indonesia will proactively attend to this human rights situation.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,



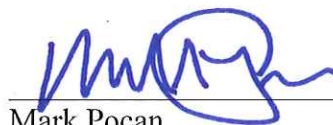
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



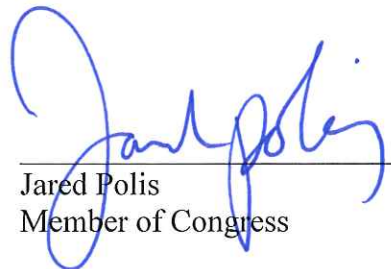
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress




David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

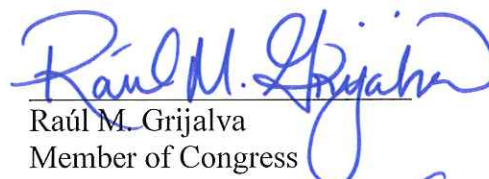



Jared Polis
Member of Congress

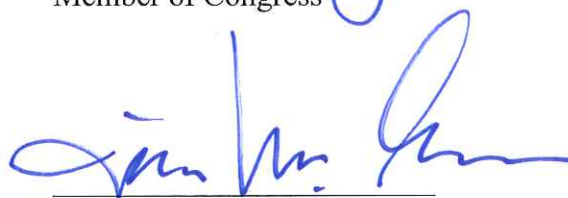

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr
Member of Congress


Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

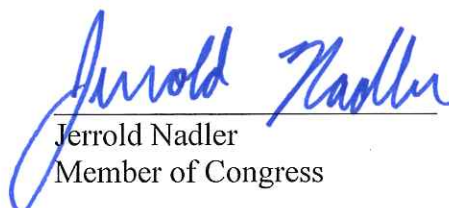

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress


Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress


Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress


William R. Keating
Member of Congress


Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



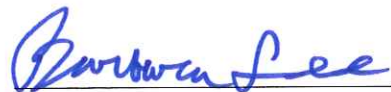
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



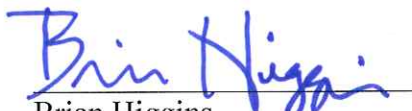
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



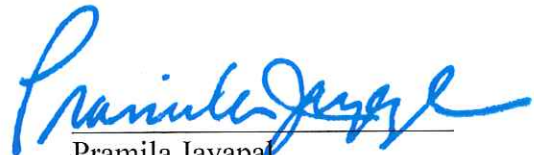
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



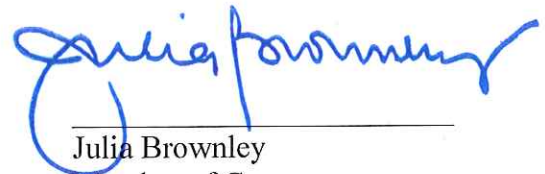
Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



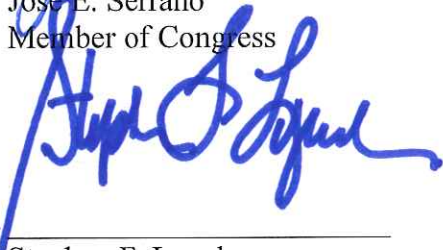
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



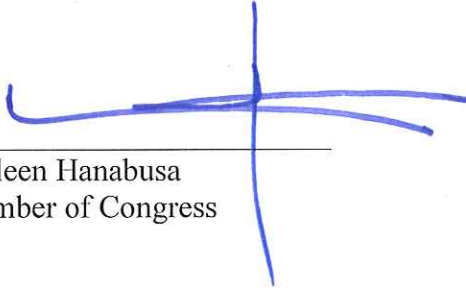
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

A stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line intersected by several horizontal strokes.

Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress