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AND CONSUMER CREDIT

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

September 19, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I write to urge the Department of State to press the government of Bahrain to drop charges against Maryam Al-Khawaja and allow her to return home. On August 30<sup>th</sup> Maryam, a prominent human rights activist, was detained at the airport in Manama while attempting to visit her father. Her arrest appears to be a coercive measure to deter her and others from their fight for human rights and democracy in the region.

Maryam Al-Khawaja, a Danish-Bahraini citizen, is the co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR), an independent non-profit that provides support and protection to human rights defenders in the Gulf region. Ms. Al-Khawaja has been an advocate for human rights for decades. Her father, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, a leading human rights activist, has been on a hunger strike in protest of arbitrary arrests and detentions in Bahrain.

Al-Khawaja's detention has been condemned by more than 155 civil society organizations in over 60 countries. A group of independent United Nations experts has also called for Maryam's release. We must continue our commitment to defend those who defend the human rights of others.

Dropping the charges and allowing Ms. Al-Khawaja to leave the country will be a good-faith effort signaling Bahrain's desire to return to their commitment to improving human rights. I ask that you do all you can to help her release.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Keith Ellison