

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2005

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

Dear Madam Secretary:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the recent developments in Western Sahara and the extreme crackdown by the Moroccan government on peaceful protestors since late May 2005. We respectfully request that your office raise the cases listed with the highest level of the Moroccan government, urge the immediate cessation of torture of those arrested, and urge the immediate release of those imprisoned for peacefully proclaiming their views.

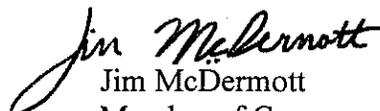
As you may know, accounts reveal that since late May, there have been a number of peaceful protests in the contested territory of Western Sahara. Unfortunately, the Moroccan government has arrested and imprisoned a number of protestors. Some of those arrested have even been sentenced to 15-20 years in prison simply for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs. In addition, there are numerous reports of torture of those arrested resulting in concern about the health of those in prison. Regrettably, no humanitarian organizations or international observers have been allowed into Western Sahara to meet with the arrested protestors.

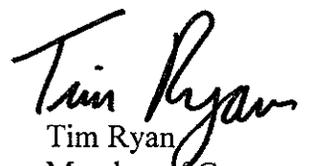
Madam Secretary, the current actions by the Moroccan government against peaceful protestors is a reminder of the urgency of finding a final, just and lasting solution to this conflict that respects the right of self determination. In addition to the request above, we respectfully request that you press the King of Morocco to uphold the commitments of Morocco regarding the implementation of a free, fair and transparent referendum for self determination. Further, we urge the U.S. Administration to impress upon the Moroccan government the need to protect the right of free expression through peaceful means.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress

  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

  
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne  
Member of Congress

Ted Poe  
Member of Congress