

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2005

The Honorable Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Office of the President
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta 10110
Indonesia

Dear President Yudhoyono:

We, the undersigned members of Congress, commend you for changing visa policies that allowed journalists and international organizations access to Aceh following the tsunami disaster. Countless lives have been saved because of this change. We write to encourage you to continue with these positive steps by opening up access to West Papua and by addressing the following issues:

Military Operations in West Papua

We note that recently announced plans to establish a new Strategic Army Reserve (Kostrad) post in West Papua's Mimika District with plans to station up to 15,000 new military troops in West Papua, are further threatening to undermine peace initiatives. We also are deeply concerned about ongoing Indonesian military (TNI) operations in Mimika District itself. For example, we understand that a TNI patrol near the Coffee River (Kali Kopi) reportedly shot dead two Papuans in mid-March and that four other Papuans recently were killed in this area.

Despite efforts to impede access by international journalists and human rights and humanitarian workers, we are aware that operations in the highlands have resulted in numerous human rights violations since August 2004. Churches, human rights organizations, and regional parliamentarians (DPRD Papua) are reporting that thousands of villagers have been forced to flee these military operations.

We call on you to immediately end the new military operations and to halt the military build-up in West Papua as a whole.

Press reports indicate that these military operations are being financed in part by funds from international donors that were designated to help Papuans develop local governance. These reports further suggest the TNI is diverting these funds to create militia, a situation gravely reminiscent of TNI sponsorship of militia to ravage East Timor in 1999.

We urge you to promptly investigate this reported misuse of funds. We urge you to order the immediate disbanding of the militia, criminally prosecute those culpable, and repay illicitly-spent funds.

Peace Process and Human Rights

We recognize that many prominent leaders of West Papua are seeking solutions to the pressing problems in the region through dialogue and negotiation. We are aware of recent reports about the formation of a special Presidential Commission on West Papua. We believe this to be a positive development deserving of your government's full cooperation and support.

However, detaining non-violent leaders - such as Yusak Pakage and Filep Karma - is clearly limiting the possibilities for political compromise. We urge you to immediately release Pakage, Karma, and other political prisoners who are working for peace.

Restriction on Travel

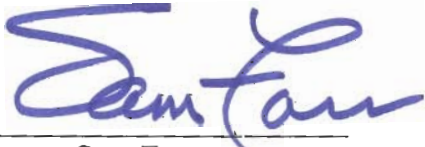
The travel permit (surat jalan) system, requiring travelers to report their own movements to local intelligence agencies, is contrary to the freedom of movement that is essential to a functional democracy. In all areas of West Papua outside of major urban centers, foreigners are required to carry surat jalan travel permits. In some localities Indonesian citizens of Papuan descent are even required to carry similar permits.

We call on you to abolish the travel permit system and allow for the freedom of movement throughout Indonesia.

Visa policies are in place that restrict access of international journalists, researchers, and NGO workers to West Papua. We urge you to abolish these visa restrictions.

Moving towards a democratic system of government with respect for human rights is the key to a sustainable peace in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Indonesia. We respect the fledging efforts you have made towards building democratic institutions and encourage your continued efforts to institute respect for human rights and rule of law as you lead your country on a path towards democracy.

Sincerely,



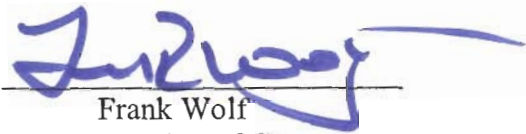
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



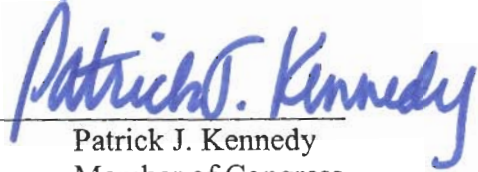
Chris Smith
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



Frank Wolf
Member of Congress



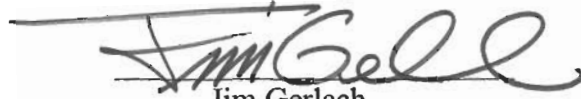
Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress



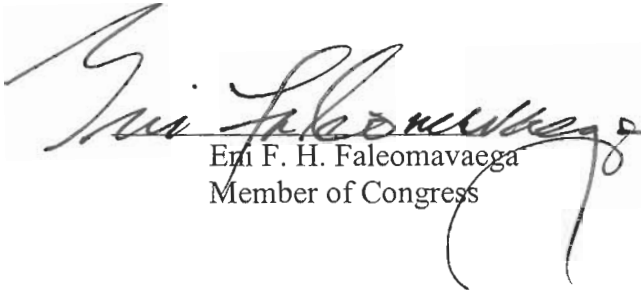
Trent Franks
Member of Congress



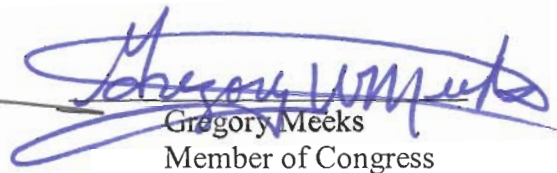
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress



Eri F. H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



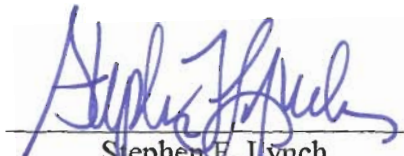
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



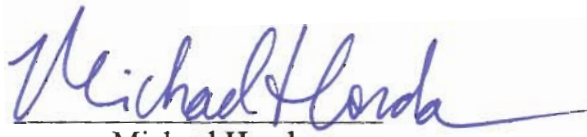
Nita Lowey
Member of Congress



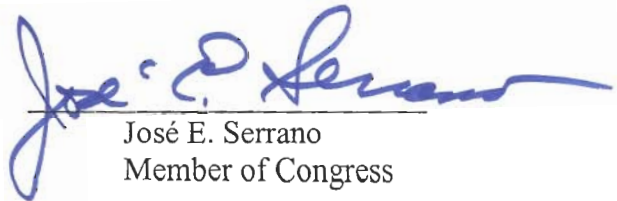
Diane Watson
Member of Congress



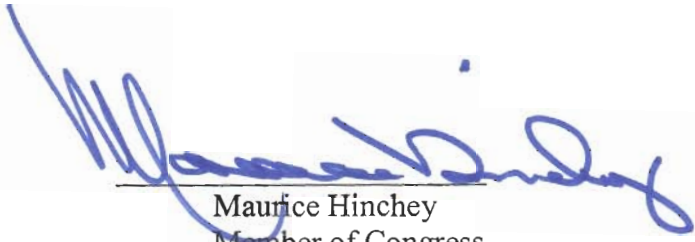
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



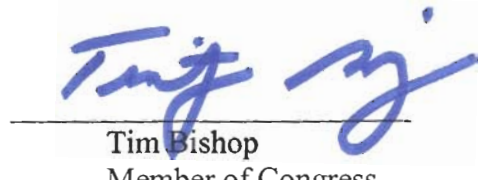
Michael Honda
Member of Congress



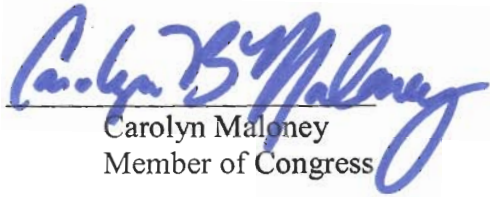
José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



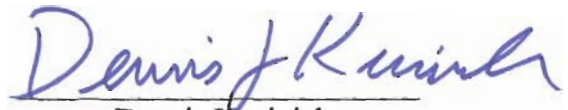
Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress



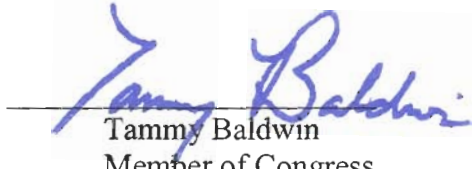
Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress



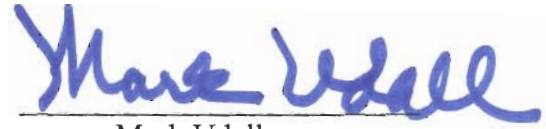
Lane Evans
Member of Congress



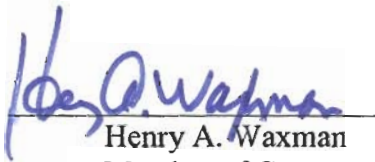
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Mark Udall
Member of Congress



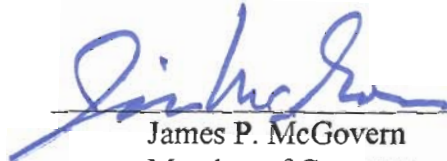
Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



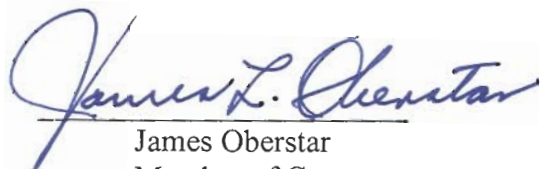
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



David Wu
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



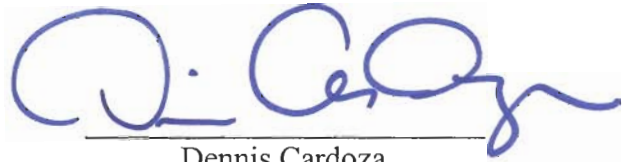
James Oberstar
Member of Congress



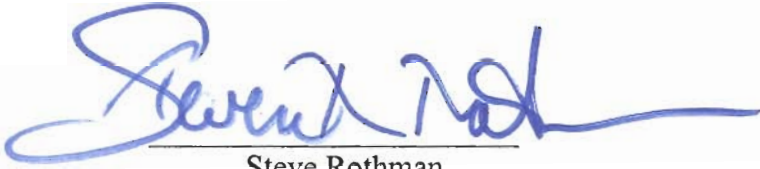
Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



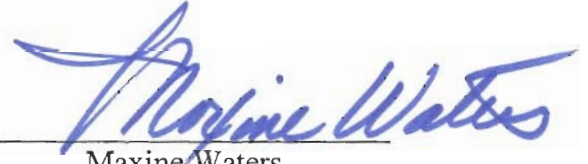
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



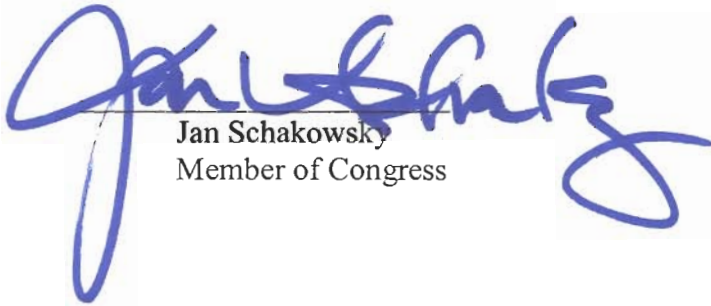
Dennis Cardoza
Member of Congress



Steve Rothman
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Cc: U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, B. Lynn Pascoe
Indonesian Ambassador to the United States, Soemadi Djoko Moerjono
Brotodiningrat
Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, Chris Hill