TESTIMONY OF JOYCE BARNATHAN
PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR JOURNALISTS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
"EGYPT AT A CROSSROADS"
FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman Berman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on our distressing situation in Egypt.

The International Center for Journalists is one of four American non-governmental organizations that have been indicted by the Egyptian authorities. Our programs in Egypt—and around the world—are aimed at accomplishing one key goal: raising professional standards. Journalists, media managers and citizen journalists worldwide say they benefit from what we have to offer—practical, hands-on journalism training. We aim to marry the best professional standards with the latest digital innovations.

ICFJ is a non-governmental and non-profit journalism organization, no more, no less. We do not take political positions. We clearly do not fund political activities, including protest movements or support political parties or candidates running for parliament or the presidency. (Of course, the journalists we train may cover such events.) We are not an advocacy group except to advocate for good journalism. We don't tell governments what to do. We help journalists provide accurate, contextual, responsible reports, whether on government, business, the arts or health.

For nearly three decades, we have cultivated teams of seasoned journalism experts on almost every continent with in-depth knowledge of all media platforms. We are funded mainly through private funds, but we receive about a third of our funding from the U.S. government. We cherish our integrity and maintain autonomy in every program. If there are strings attached, we aren't interested.

Now, more than any time in recent history, we are redefining what journalism means. Now, more people are participating in the news process than ever before, with consumers playing an active role in the new media ecosystem. Now, there are more digital tools for disseminating news, from cell phones to ipads to satellite TV. Now, there are more fascinating new ways to showcase information, from three-D graphics to crowd-sourced maps.

Our view is that no matter who produces the news or what platform is used to disseminate it, journalists still must uphold the highest professional standards. For that reason, our role—and that of other media development organizations—is increasingly important as the players and channels for news increase. In this

cacophony of information, people want trustworthy, credible news and we make that happen. We arm today's journalists—both professional and citizen—with the skills needed to provide responsible, ethical coverage so that citizens can make the best possible decisions in their lives. That is the case in Egypt. That is the case everywhere we work.

For this reason, we are dismayed by recent events. We have always been extremely transparent with the Egyptian government about the activities carried out in Egypt. As recently as November, we informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about all our programs in the country as part of a long registration process. Last year, our local lawyer advised us to register in Egypt as a branch of an international NGO. He told us that to get registered, Egyptian law required us to open an office and show activity, which we did.

Now, we are faced with indictments that charge five individuals—three Americans (working in the U.S.) and two Egyptians—with opening an office and sending in funds without being registered. The charges claim that funds were used for conducting political activities in a manner affecting Egypt's sovereignty and national security. We are especially concerned about the welfare of the Egyptians who work with us. Our young program officer, who simply does administrative work such as booking hotels and making travel arrangements, is facing the most onerous charges of all.

The indictment against us says nothing specifically about our programs. Right now, we have two U.S. government-funded programs in Egypt. One is an initiative to help citizen journalists produce quality local news coverage. The participants are reporting on everything from women's health to immigrant communities to local businesses. The other program helps journalists throughout the Middle East develop multimedia, public-service reporting projects.

We are proud of our programs in Egypt. We have helped journalists develop the country's first voters' guide for both print and broadcast media. Journalists we have mentored have produced award-winning stories on the environment, health and corruption. We have developed a guide to the best practices for blogging and a handbook on how U.S. and Arab journalists can improve coverage of one another's society. The Egyptian government has even officially registered a national association of citizen journalists that formed as a result of our recent program.

We always work with strong local partners who want to deepen their expertise or share resources. In Egypt, we signed contracts with established news media organizations and universities for our current programs. In these programs, the vast majority of trainers and media consultants are Arab journalists.

Of foremost concern is our staff in Egypt, whom we hired in the second half of last year. We have a strong legal team representing them, and we remain in constant

touch with them. We are heartened by the strong support we have received from many of the journalists we have trained in Egypt and beyond.

As always, we will refrain from engaging in politics over this or any other issue. We hope that a resolution for all concerned parties can be found as quickly as possible.

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

"TRUTH IN TESTIMONY" DISCLOSURE FORM

Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony and will be made publicly available in electronic format, per House Rules.

1. Name:	2. Organization or organizations you are representing:
Joyce T. Barnathan	International Center for Journalists

3. Date of Committee hearing:

Thursday, February 16, 2012

4. Have you received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?	5. Have any of the organizations you are representing received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?
☐ Yes ☒ No	☒ Yes ☐ No

6. If you answered yes to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets.

U.S. Dept. of State grant amount ($425,000)
grant period (9/28/09 – 12/31/11)

U.S. Dept. of State grant amount ($990,099)
grant period (5/31/11 – 1/31/13)

USAID grant amount ($2,125,397)
grant period (9/28/10 – 9/27/13)

7. Signature:

Joyce T. Barnathan

Please attach a copy of this form to your written testimony.