

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2007

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed  
Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government  
Dhaka  
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Dear Dr. Ahmed:

We write to share our support for political, electoral, and institutional reforms in Bangladesh. We also want to express our strong concern over the ongoing state of emergency and the slow progress towards free and fair elections in Bangladesh.

We are troubled that the indoor ban on political activity was not lifted, as planned, on May 8<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to the resumption of safe, outdoor political action. Freedom of assembly, like freedom of the press, is essential to any democracy.

We applaud efforts in Bangladesh to address corruption, which is a major impediment to economic development and poverty alleviation. We believe it is critically important that any anti-corruption campaign be implemented in conjunction with Bangladeshi law and international standards. Due process and respect for human rights should be fundamental components of the effort. We are particularly concerned about custodial deaths in the course of the anti-corruption campaign - it is vital that such deaths, and all custodial abuses, be prevented.

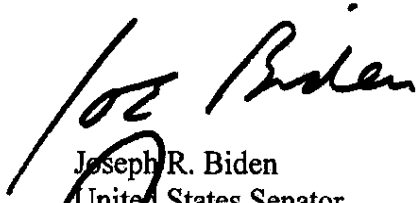
Moreover, we are concerned by the lack of progress towards free and fair elections in Bangladesh. We understand that elections, originally scheduled for January 22, 2007, have been postponed until the end of 2008 at the latest. However, there is a need for a public roadmap outlining reforms, including correcting the voter list, to ensure that the election is free, fair, transparent and credible.

As friends and supporters of Bangladesh, we believe that the timely improvement of political conditions is in the national interest of both of our countries. With this in mind, we respectfully urge you to:

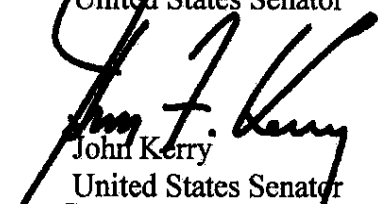
- 1) promptly lift the state of emergency and restore full civil and political rights to all citizens of Bangladesh; and
- 2) announce, within the next two months, a roadmap towards free and fair elections to be held as soon as possible, with input of the political parties and civil society leaders, so that a democratically-elected government can be restored as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of these important requests.

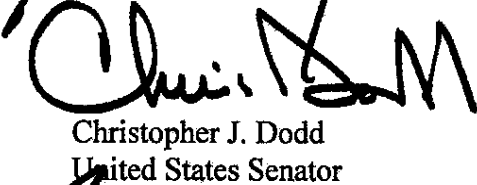
Sincerely,

  
Joe Biden

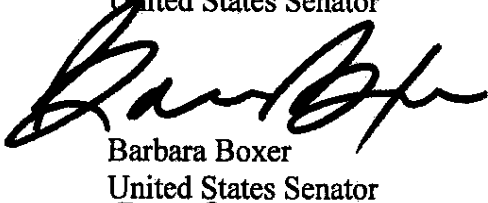
Joseph R. Biden  
United States Senator

  
John Kerry

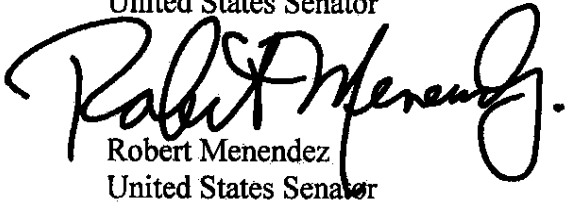
John Kerry  
United States Senator

  
Christopher J. Dodd

Christopher J. Dodd  
United States Senator

  
Barbara Boxer

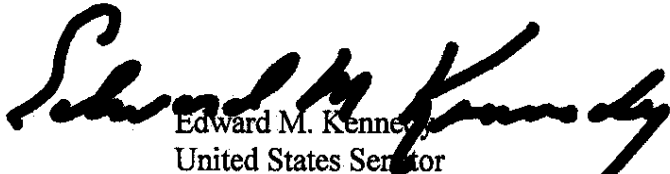
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez

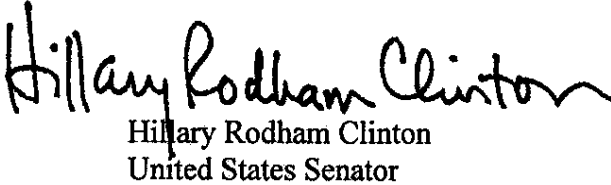
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

  
Chuck Schumer

Chuck Schumer  
United States Senator

  
Edward M. Kennedy

Edward M. Kennedy  
United States Senator

  
Hillary Rodham Clinton

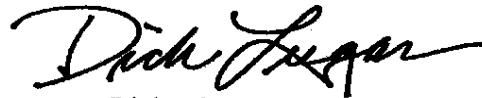
Hillary Rodham Clinton  
United States Senator

  
Frank R. Lautenberg

Frank R. Lautenberg  
United States Senator

  
Joseph I. Lieberman


Joseph I. Lieberman  
United States Senator

  
Dick Lugar

Richard G. Lugar  
United States Senator

  
Norm Coleman

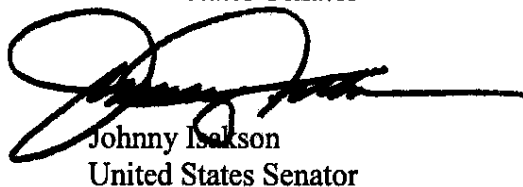
Norm Coleman  
United States Senator

  
John E. Sununu

John E. Sununu  
United States Senator

  
Russ Feingold

Russ Feingold  
United States Senator

  
Johnny Isakson

Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator