Statement Supporting Reform of Security Laws that Hinder Charity

We come together in support of American security by seeking elimination of counterproductive barriers to legitimate charitable work found in outdated U.S. counterterrorism measures. These laws and policies have hindered the transformative power of the American charitable community's work in conflict zones and trench on precious First Amendment freedoms of speech and association, and Fifth Amendment guarantees of due process.

Laws governing “material support” to designated terrorist organizations sweep too broadly, criminalizing life saving humanitarian aid to civilians, efforts at peacebuilding and speech advocating only lawful, nonviolent activity, even where it furthers no terrorist acts whatsoever. In addition, the laws give the executive branch broad discretion to place groups on terrorist lists without affording them adequate notice and a meaningful opportunity to defend themselves.

It is imperative that constitutional and human rights principles guide the U.S. government's approach to national security rules and policies. We oppose terrorism and are committed to upholding our values. We call on the U.S. government to work with us to update U.S. law by:

1. Reforming the prohibition on material support to respect charitable access in order to provide basic humanitarian aid to civilians, and to protect free speech, association and peacebuilding.

2. Reforming the process for placing groups and individuals on terrorist lists to ensure that they have sufficient notice and a meaningful opportunity to respond to the charges against them, and to ensure that the system includes sufficient checks and balances on executive discretion.

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Organizations who have endorsed the Statement Supporting Reform of Security Laws that Hinder Charity (June 21, 2011):

3D Security Initiative  
ACLU- DC  
Alliance for Peacebuilding  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Association of University Professors  
Appleton Foundation  
Asian Law Caucus  
Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for International Policy  
The Constitution Project  
Defending Dissent Foundation  
DownsizeDC.org  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Fourth Freedom Forum  
Freedom and Justice Foundation  
Fund for Constitutional Government  
The Fund for Global Human Rights  
Grantmakers Without Borders  
Grassroots International  
International Center for Not for Profit Law  
International Center for Religion & Diplomacy  
International Justice Network  
Islamic Relief USA  
KinderUSA  
Life for Relief & Development  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Muslim Legal Fund of America  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
The Rutherford Institute  
Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund

To find out more about why these groups have signed on the Statement Supporting Reform of Security Laws that Hinder Charity or to learn how the Administration or Congress can implement these reforms, please contact:

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