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AND OVERSIGHT
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AND SOUTH ASIA

November 17, 2010

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

As the Congressman representing the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota, I am writing to inquire about the recent FBI raids and subpoenas of a group of peace activists in Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan that occurred on September 24, 2010.

The raids targeted 14 locations, including five private residences in my district. A number of my constituents have expressed concern because they believe the raids were directed at peace activists. As a Member of Congress who represents several of those targeted during the raid, I am concerned by allegations of possible targeting of individuals who appear to be expressing their constitutional right to advocate and to organize.

Shortly after the raids, I made inquiries to the FBI field office for more information. FBI Special Agent Boelter confirmed that an investigation was ongoing. He informed me that due to the pending nature of the investigation, he was prohibited from sharing any further information. However he gave me assurance that the purpose of the searches and service of subpoenas was not to punish or to suppress protected First Amendment activity.

It is my understanding that none of the individuals whose homes were searched have been arrested or charged with any crime at this time. This is of particular concern to several constituents of mine who been subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury. They point to the fact that because no charges have yet been leveled, it gives the appearance that this process is being used to quell free speech.

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I would appreciate any additional information regarding the status of this matter that you can provide me consistent with applicable law, rules, and regulations so that I can relay this information to my constituents.

Obviously, it is sometimes difficult to balance the requirements of law enforcement and the protections of our Constitution. I am confident that you are equal to this task and I appreciate your attention to this concern.

If you would like additional information about this matter, please contact Zahir Janmohamed in my office at zahir@mail.house.gov or at (202) 225-4755.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison".

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress