

**Statement of Herro Mustafa Garg  
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Egypt  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
October 19, 2023**

Chairman Merkley, Ranking Member Young, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored and humbled to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me to undertake this role. I have tremendous respect for this committee and have seen first-hand your strong commitment to advancing our national interests. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to consult closely with you in advancing a U.S.-Egypt partnership reflecting our interests and values.

My family and I came to the United States as refugees from the Kurdistan region of Iraq when I was three. We had little more than the shirts on our back and hopes and dreams. My parents sacrificed so much for me and my siblings to be able to pursue that American dream. That is why I am particularly honored to appear before this committee as the first American Ambassador of Kurdish descent. The approach of thinking big and maintaining optimism are what have shaped me into the person I am today and, if confirmed, will guide my vision for achieving success for America in Egypt. Family is extremely important to me, and I am blessed to have the love and support of my family members who are here today.

It is with great pride that I have dedicated twenty-five years to public service, much of this in the Middle East. My work has promoted regional security and peace, energy security, rule of law, and economic growth. I studied Arabic in Jordan, worked in the UAE, Lebanon, and Iraq, and helped advance U.S. priorities in the Middle East at the White House under both Republican and Democratic Administrations. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing that extensive experience to this important role in Egypt.

Senators, the remarks I had prepared to deliver earlier this month are different than the remarks I am delivering today. The unprecedented scale of brutality unleashed by Hamas on October 7 has led to an escalation, with mounting deaths of Israeli and Palestinian civilians and over 30 nationalities still searching for or mourning the loss of loved ones. This is truly a tragedy that underlines the importance of having confirmed ambassadors in place throughout the region, to elevate our ability to maintain sustained engagement and advancement of U.S. national interests.

Egyptians like to refer to their country as "Om el Donia," the Mother of the World. We are witnessing in real time Egypt's vital role as we strive to protect American citizens, secure the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, prevent harm to civilians, and prevent the conflict from spreading. We are partnering with Egypt on a crucial vision for addressing urgent humanitarian needs in Gaza and enabling the safe passage of Americans and those who are at immediate risk through the Rafah crossing. Equally important is the U.S.-Egypt partnership on an affirmative vision for a Middle East region focused on peace and security, negotiating a two-state solution between the Israelis and Palestinians, and furthering regional integration.

Bilateral security cooperation with Egypt, underwritten by Foreign Military Financing assistance over four decades, is an investment in self-reliant, capable, and accountable Egyptian Armed Forces aligned with U.S. priorities and values. If confirmed, I will implement this cooperation while continuously reflecting that the U.S.-Egypt relationship will be strongest with tangible and lasting progress on protecting human rights and respect for fundamental freedoms, in particular, releases of political prisoners and reforms to pre-trial detention. I pledge to consistently raise these important concerns with the Government of Egypt, to prioritize engagement with Egyptian civil society, and to support those working to build a prosperous and secure future for all Egyptians.

As this ongoing cooperation reflects, the U.S.-Egypt partnership is multifaceted and constantly adapting to meet present challenges. Today, Egypt, as the world's largest wheat importer is on the frontlines of the global repercussions of Putin's brutal aggression, grappling with spiraling food prices and renewed agricultural supply disruptions since Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Egypt and the United States have stood together in support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a shared urgency to achieve a just and lasting peace. From my service as Ambassador to Bulgaria, I know well how vital our partnerships are to address Russia's destabilizing role.

Amid the costs of Russia's war, the Government of Egypt developed a comprehensive economic reform plan that won support from the IMF last year and, with U.S. backing, unlocked agreement on a \$3 billion support package. If implemented, these reforms would stabilize foreign exchange markets and facilitate private sector-led growth. If confirmed, I will support implementation of these crucial steps to help Egypt weather this crisis, improve the investment climate, and promote even stronger commercial ties for U.S. firms with Egypt, our largest export market in Africa.

The U.S. Embassy in Cairo is among the largest in the world, with a talented and dedicated team of American and local staff that, if confirmed, I would be proud to lead. The safety and security of the Embassy team and U.S. citizens in Egypt will always be my foremost priority.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.