



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENTS**

**Greste, Mr Peter**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 24 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Shorten, Bill, MP

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**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): Like all Australians, I and Labor are appalled by the grievous decision dealt to Peter Greste last night. Our first thoughts today must be for Peter Greste and the entire Greste family. The family was shocked by the totally devastating news. Peter's parents, Juris and Lois, have won a nation of admirers for their optimism and stoicism through this ordeal. His brothers Mike and Andrew have been strong and were among the throng in an Egyptian courtroom yesterday to hear their worst fears confirmed.

All the Grestes should know that the Australian parliament will stand with them however long it takes to resolve the decision about their beloved son and brother. We believe fundamentally in the freedom of journalists to be able to do their work. It was Thomas Jefferson who said that liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost. No journalist should be imprisoned for doing their job—for reporting the news. As long as Peter Greste and more than 200 journalists around the world languish in jail the freedom of us all is diminished.

I agree with the Prime Minister on the need for a calm approach. Moments like this stir something elemental in the spirit of all free people. These are times when passions run high but the best interests of Peter and his two colleagues will not be served by inflammatory rhetoric. It is a time for diligent, calm and focused diplomacy. That is what Australia owes the Greste family. It is the duty of all us—what we owe to a fellow Australian unjustly imprisoned far from home.

This morning I wrote to the Prime Minister to advise that Labor will be taking an entirely constructive and bipartisan approach to this most important situation. I say to the members of the government, on behalf of the Labor Party: we are ready and willing to assist your every effort. We will do what we can to assist.

I also recognise that for all our fine words, Peter Greste is still in jail in Egypt. The real challenge is to bring him home.