

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08614-2303
(609) 286-2571; (732) 350-2300

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

August 25, 2014

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

I am writing to urge you to use all appropriate resources available to the U.S. Department of State to assist in the case of Aharon Sofer, a 23-year-old exchange student in Israel and one of my constituents. On Friday, August 22nd, Aharon disappeared in Israel reportedly while hiking with a friend in the Jerusalem forest. Aharon's friend lost sight of him going down an incline at about noon local time three days ago.

Israeli police have been conducting a massive search for him since 6pm on Friday and were joined by well-known search and rescue volunteer teams. Unfortunately, no sign of Aharon has been found, and his family is desperate that the search for this young man should continue. His parents are now in Israel to determine the whereabouts of their son.

At this point, no one knows what has happened to Aharon. He may have been lost or injured and unable to return without assistance. It is also possible that he may have been kidnapped.

Whether Aharon has been lost, injured or kidnapped, it is in the interest of the United States Government to find out what happened to this American citizen. Therefore, I urge you to identify key staff within the Department and all relevant U.S. Government officials at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv who can help Aharon's family and assist Israeli authorities in the search.

I thank you in advance for your assistance and look forward to hearing from you or your designees in Washington and Israel on their efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress