



Jacob Blaustein Institute
for the Advancement of Human Rights



BAHÁ'Í
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY

October 6, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to commend the United States for the positive role it played at the recently concluded fifteenth session of the UN Human Rights Council. We saw a number of significant accomplishments at this session that could not have been achieved without your personal leadership and substantial efforts here in Washington, at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, and at posts worldwide.

We were heartened to see that the United States was the principal sponsor of a resolution creating a new mandate for freedom of peaceful assembly and association that will be crucial in addressing the growing global threats to this fundamental freedom. Adoption of the resolution was an important step to help protect civil society, an issue which you so eloquently highlighted in your speech at the 10th Anniversary High Level Democracy Meeting of the Community of Democracies in Krakow, Poland. At the same time, U.S. support for a new special procedures mechanism to examine, country by country, laws that discriminate against women, will help ensure that the promises of the Beijing World Conference are realized.

Energetic U.S. diplomacy was also crucial for the Council to renew the special mandates for Sudan and Somalia, two countries which face grave challenges to the protection of human rights. The U.S. delegation also steered the Council to debate sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The ability of the Human Rights Council to continue to address human rights situations in a meaningful way in particular countries is critical for it to maintain its credibility as body dedicated to both the promotion and protection of human rights.

While very serious obstacles remain to the effective functioning of the Council, the efforts at the fifteenth session were substantial achievements for a body that often evokes such widespread criticism. You have shown that progress can be made in the Council when the United States begins to invest resources in multilateral diplomacy and to build broad, cross-regional coalitions.

We hope these results and others to come will present strong arguments in favor of a policy of stronger engagement with the United Nations' primary human rights body, and a greater concentration of skilled and knowledgeable personnel on these issues here and in UN forums.

We thank you for your leadership on the Council and urge you to continue U.S. efforts in support of human rights. We understand the difficulty of operating within the Council structure and appreciate the efforts, both public and private, in which the United States has engaged to improve the human rights record of the body.

We look forward to continued cooperation on these and other important issues in the future.

Sincerely,

Bani Dugal
Principal Representative, Bahá'í International Community

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Director of Policy and Programs, Human Rights First

Cc: Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, United States Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council
Betty King, United States Ambassador to Geneva
Susan Rice, United States Ambassador to the United Nations
Esther Brimmer, Assistant Secretary of State, International Organization Affairs
Michael Posner, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
Samantha Power, Director of Multilateral Affairs, National Security Council