

Draft letter to Secretary Clinton

The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Support for Fair Elections in Sudan

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to you in connection with the Administration's hard work seeking peace in Sudan, including ongoing efforts by your Department to help ensure free, fair and credible elections to take place there next year under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, and to assure that the 2011 referendum about the secession of southern Sudan is also conducted freely and fairly. Through US AID and other sources, it is my understanding that the Administration has committed substantial sums to help provide for election monitors and proper training for such monitoring efforts in Sudan. I appreciate those efforts, which are robust.

Regrettably, despite your Department's hard work, the National Congress Party and the Khartoum government have reportedly taken many steps to make it harder to hold a fair election, including obstruction of the census, stalling on election laws, intimidation of a free press, and stirring of ethnic strife, especially in Darfur and southern Sudan. In addition, the vast size of the country, the lack of roads, and the return of many refugees also makes fair elections harder to conduct. Put simply, I am concerned that the Administration's substantial efforts to support free elections may nonetheless be insufficient in light of these obstacles, many of them created by parties trying to undo the CPA and re-start the north south civil war.

Consequently, by this letter, I am respectfully seeking the State Department's candid estimate of what percentage of Sudanese polling stations can be effectively monitored with the currently budgeted resources for FY2010 and the projected budget for FY2011, and how much more financial, equipment (e.g. vehicles), and personnel resources would be needed to assure effective monitoring of at least ninety percent of these polling stations. While ninety percent may be too high a target for the 2010 election, I ask for this information by November 1 in order to assess whether to seek additional funds for election monitoring in any FY2010 supplemental appropriation and to guide our appropriations work for FY2011 early next year.

Thank you for your work on these issues.

Sincerely,

[Senator]  
[member of Congress]