

HUMAN RIGHTS: A COMMITMENT TO ACTION



"In democracies, respecting rights isn't a choice leaders make day-by-day, it is the reason they govern."

— Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The Obama Administration is committed to promoting, supporting and defending human rights and democracy worldwide. Human rights are not only fundamental to American society, but are the birthright of all the world's people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for governments and societies to guard their citizens' basic freedoms and to offer them the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential.

Human rights, democracy, and development are interwoven and are key State Department priorities. Upholding democracy and liberty are part of the daily work of many Department Bureaus, but especially of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL).

Acting to Advance Human Rights

- The State Department conducts formal, systematic Human Rights Dialogues with various countries.
- The Department advances the Administration's engagement policy by talking to leaders in countries like Syria and Iran, and reaching out to bodies like the Organization of the Islamic Conference.
- The State Department supports the efforts of regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, and the African Union that are strengthening their institutional capacities to combat human rights abuses.
- Globally, the Department seeks to defend and promote human rights and democracy through the United Nations system. As a full member of the Human Rights Council, the U.S. works to enhance the constructiveness and objectivity of the Council.
- Complementing diplomatic efforts, DRL has vital programmatic tools for human rights and democracy promotion. It oversees \$400 million in the Human

Rights and Democracy Fund to support human rights and democracy programs around the globe. Funds go to U.S.-based NGOs working with international partners on innovative projects that build democracy.

- DRL issues the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, and the Report on International Religious Freedom, all of which carefully evaluate the progress made and progress needed of human rights and democracy worldwide.
- The Office of International Labor and Corporate Social Responsibility promotes labor rights through a variety of mechanisms, including through membership in the International Labor Organization.

The Administration's Approach to Human Rights

Accountability – A commitment to human rights starts with universal standards and with holding everyone accountable to those standards, including ourselves.

Principled Pragmatism – Promoting human rights requires pragmatism and agility, not compromising on principles, but doing what is most likely to bring practical results.

Partnering at All Levels – The U.S. supports change driven by citizens and their communities and encourages and provides support for local grassroots human rights leaders. We also partner with multilateral and regional institutions to secure human rights.

A Wide Focus – Positive change must be reinforced and strengthened over time. Where human lives hang in the balance, the U.S. will do all it can to tilt situations toward a future of hope and dignity.