

Preface

Today, the eyes of the world are focused on the Middle East and North Africa, where people are demanding that their governments live up to the guiding principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that all people are "born free and equal in dignity and rights." The promise of this principle is the driving power behind every movement for freedom, every campaign for democracy, every effort to foster development, and every struggle against oppression. We are inspired by the courage and determination of these activists, and we see in their struggles the true manifestation of a universal yearning for dignity and respect. We stand with them and with all citizens, activists, and governments around the world who peacefully work to advance the causes of democracy and human rights.

As President Obama has said, we are guided by a simple idea, "... freedom, justice and peace for the world must begin with freedom, justice, and peace in the lives of individual human beings." This idea represents values we cherish in the United States, but they are not ours alone. Our belief in the universal principles of freedom, justice, and peace guides us on a daily basis as we work to make human rights a human reality. The world has witnessed that without meaningful steps toward representative, accountable, and transparent governance, the gap between people and their leaders will only grow. We will continue to promote, support, and defend democracy, in its many forms, knowing that it is the best political system for allowing individuals to enjoy their human rights.

The 2010 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* provide a record of the state of human rights in the world and raise awareness of the progress made in 2010, the ground lost, and the work that remains. This year marks the thirty-fifth year we have reported to Congress on human rights around the world. These reports were initially envisioned as a tool to help guide the United States in its foreign policy, but they have grown to be something much greater. Other governments, individuals, and organizations now use the human rights reports as essential sources of information about conditions in countries around the world. For activists, many of whom confront a shrinking space in which to operate and do so at great personal risk, these reports also provide evidence that the world is being made aware of their struggle.

As I travel the world, I make a point of meeting with those people working to advance the cause of human rights within their own countries. I am consistently impressed by the power of the human spirit, and the unwavering commitment of

these brave individuals. Their work inspires us and confirms the importance of holding governments, including our own, accountable for the treatment of their citizens.

Once each year we submit the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* to Congress, but advancing freedom and human rights is a daily priority for the men and women of the Department of State, both in Washington and in our embassies overseas. Through these reports, through our diplomacy, and through our example, we will continue to press for the universal human rights of all individuals. Now is the opportunity for us to support all who are willing to stand up on behalf of the rights we cherish.

In that spirit I hereby transmit the Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010* to the United States Congress.

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State