

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

August 5, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

Despite widespread acknowledgement that the conflict in Darfur is having profoundly negative repercussions in eastern Chad, we believe that too little attention and too few resources have been devoted to Chad's internal conflicts and weak governance. As you know, Chad is consistently rated one of the world's most corrupt countries by Transparency International and least developed countries by the UN Development Program. The Fund for Peace's 2008 Failed States Index ranked Chad the fourth country most at risk of state failure. While Chad is home to vast oil reserves that could provide significant revenue, economic development has been undermined by corruption and instability.

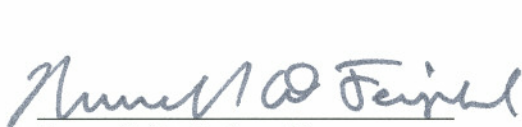
The attempted coup staged by Chadian rebels in February 2008 – with support from the Sudanese government – once again exposed the precarious position of the current government in N'Djamena and the volatile political environment. Fighting between the rebels and the government has increased in eastern Chad throughout this year, while rebels based in Sudan have conducted cross-border attacks. Increased banditry and criminality have also complicated the security situation. Approximately 185,000 Chadians have been internally displaced since 2005 as a result of fighting, in addition to the 250,000 refugees who have fled Sudan.

We were pleased by the State Department's press statement on June 16, 2008, acknowledging this increased violence and urging dialogue between rebel factions and the Government of Chad. However, words should be followed by concrete actions to encourage an inclusive national dialogue as part of a comprehensive peace process that incorporates the immediate need to protect civilians while also focusing on long-term governance concerns. It is essential that the United States, in coordination with regional and international stakeholders, develop a robust, long-term strategy for Chad that addresses the internal causes of the conflict and lays the groundwork for good governance, economic accountability and lasting security.

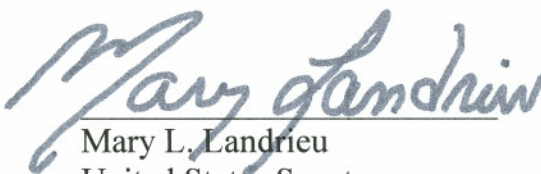
The renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) in September presents an opportunity to press for such a comprehensive approach. In April and June 2008, the UN Secretary-General reported that lasting peace and security require real dialogue between the Government of Chad and the armed and un-armed opposition groups. Because peacekeeping alone is insufficient to facilitate such dialogue, we urge the U.S. to push for expanding MINURCAT's mandate to include support for political efforts toward stabilization and reconciliation. This includes supporting initiatives to deploy necessary staff and providing adequate resources to establish a political framework that can end the violence, demobilize militias, and promote voluntary return and reconstruction for internally displaced persons and refugees.

We also urge the United States to play a more active role in encouraging such a comprehensive peace process. Sustained diplomatic efforts, in coordination with regional and international leaders, are needed to help build momentum for inclusive negotiations. Simultaneously, we encourage the State Department to press for greater accountability and transparency of industry involving Chad's natural resources. The pursuit of good governance and lasting stability in Chad is critical not only for regional stability, but also for our national security.

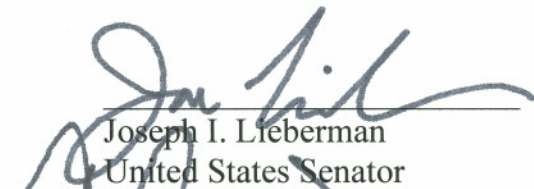
Sincerely,



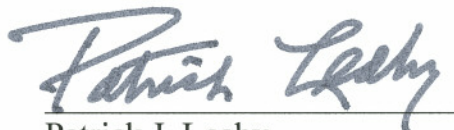
Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator



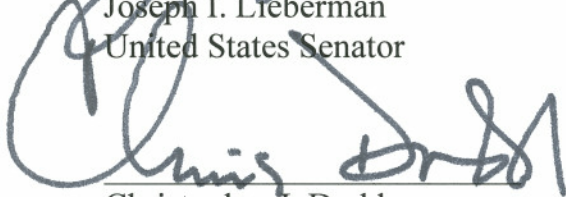
Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator

CC: Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi E. Frazer