

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 25, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary,

We are writing to encourage you not to overlook the plight of Ms. Hawa Abdullah, an illegally detained Darfur community and women's rights activist.


Hawa Abdullah is a member of the Fur tribe and a staff member of the African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). She was removed from a house in a village outside the Abu Shouk IDP camp by GOS security forces (NISS) on May 6, 2011, and taken to El Fasher and then to Khartoum. As the accompanying Human Rights Watch statement explains, she is being held in Khartoum, at an undisclosed location, without having been charged, and without having access to legal counsel or family. A government supportive newspaper article features a photograph of her after her arrest, looking in possible poor health, holding a Christian bible with the message that she has been "christianizing" in the camps. We understand that this is a possible capital offense under Sudanese law. Hawa's friends vehemently deny the accusation, but believe that her life is in great danger now that these charges have been aired.

A second UNAMID staff person, so far unidentified, is said to have been taken away with Hawa. The Darfur Bar Association has vigorously protested her detention as has Ibrahim Gambari, head of the UNAMID mission in Sudan. Under the Status of Forces agreement, which the Sudanese government signed, the Government of Sudan is obligated to first bring any suspicions of criminal activity by UNAMID personnel to the attention of the UN command.

We realize that there are serious and complex geopolitical and strategic issues faced by the U.S. and the international community in Sudan as the July 9<sup>th</sup> Independence date approaches, but the case of an individual or individuals can be a touchstone for a whole society. President Obama recently spoke very pertinently of balancing our interests with our values in foreign policy. For these reason, we felt it was imperative to bring this particular situation to your attention, as we are sure it is not a singular event.

We are at a critical point in the future of Sudan, and it must be made known that these types of civil rights violations will not be accepted. I urge you to do everything possible to ensure the safety, fair treatment, and release of Ms. Abdullah as quickly as possible. Thank you for your time on this important matter. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

CC: Ambassador Dane Smith  
Ambassador Princeton Lyman