

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 16, 2023

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Power,

I write in advance of your trip to Chad to urge you to use this opportunity to support its population by increasing the presence and engagement of the United States Agency for International Development. For decades, Chadians have faced a raft of security, political, and development challenges, including terrorist threats on two borders, climate change and the impact of refugees from neighboring Sudan, and successive authoritarian regimes.

Chad's current junta, led by General Mahamat Deby, came to power in a coup in April 2021. In October 2022, eighteen months after Deby short-circuited Chad's legal line of succession, suspended the constitution, and dissolved parliament, Deby's security forces killed as many as 218 pro-democracy protesters and arrested or disappeared hundreds more. Instead of cutting security assistance or sanctioning junta members responsible for the massacre, torture, and disappearance of hundreds of civilians, the administration invited General Deby to Washington to participate in the December 2022 U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit.

Through successive administrations, the United State has failed to balance support for development, diplomacy, and defense in Chad appropriately. I am concerned that the administration's hesitance to cut security assistance to an abusive, undemocratic regime, and the absence of a USAID Mission or even any USAID Direct Hire Foreign Service personnel on the ground in Chad, continues this trend. It signals to Chadians that as long as the junta is willing to partner with the United States to counter terrorism or Russian influence, the United States will tolerate human rights abuses and closed political space at the Chadian people's expense.

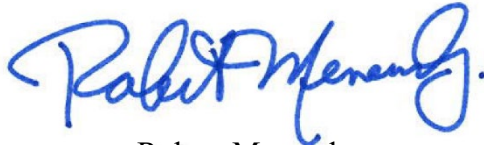
Chad ranks 190 out of 191 countries on the 2023 Human Development Index and, according to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Early Warning Project, ranks 4th in the world for the risk of mass killing. A strong USAID presence in Chad would make clear our commitment to the Chadian people—as opposed to the military junta. And it would begin to properly balance U.S. security and diplomatic efforts, as called for in the *Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2022*, which I led in the Senate.

I urge you to increase the level of democracy assistance for Chad to respond to the needs of civil society. We must improve and enhance the resilience and capability of civilian actors in the face of the coup, the military junta's recourse to deadly force, and General Deby's refusal to adhere to African Union principles prohibiting him from standing in eventual elections. While you are

visiting, I encourage you to meet with women lawyers and civil society representatives as well as the leaders of the political opposition to hear what they experienced in October 2022, listen to their recommendations, and factor in their suggestions to future USAID programming. I also strongly encourage you to assign Direct Hire Foreign Service personnel to Chad in order to design a robust program aimed at supporting democracy, human rights, and good governance. Finally, knowing your commitment to atrocity prevention and accountability, I encourage you to press your State Department counterparts to explain why the Department has yet to impose targeted, individual sanctions on junta and security force members implicated in the horrific, heart-breaking violence of October 2022 under either Section 7031(c) or the Global Magnitsky Act.

The United States can have an important, positive impact on the trajectory of democracy and development in Chad, but only if the administration correctly aligns our policy and our resources. I urge you to take action to do so upon your return from this critically important trip.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Chairman