

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 9:59 AM
To: H
Subject: FW: FW: Chargé receives family of slain human rights activist to express sympathy and reaffirm USG commitment to bringing killers to justice
Attachments: StateSeal.gif

FYI, I think this is a good example of how we should we respond in cases like this. Puts a very human face on these issues and allows us to demonstrate our commitment to human rights and our support for civil society organizations, plus, as Mrs. Chebeya stated our public support for her and her family provides a level of security for them. Sam Brock has done an excellent job handling the case.

jm

From: Brock, Samuel V
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:48 AM
To: McHale, Judith A
Cc: Kenna, Corley; Cedar, Andrew N; Wharton, David B; Sardar, Satrajit; Jaffee, Elizabeth E
Subject: FW: Chargé receives family of slain human rights activist to express sympathy and reaffirm USG commitment to bringing killers to justice

Judith : This is the reporting cable we did on the visit of the Chebeya family. Regards, Sam

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: SMART Core
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 06:11:49
To: Clark, Henry K; Jewett, James T; Love, Joseph; McCarthy, Patricia; Gu, Christopher K; Nelson, Phillip R; Weeks, Stephen C; Renna, Daniel M
Cc: Black, Billie J; Kesseh, Edmond; Jaffee, Elizabeth E; Ford, Kristen P; Brock, Samuel V
Subject: Charge receives family of slain human rights activist to express sympathy and reaffirm USG commitment to bringing killers to justice

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Action Office: POL, RSO, PAS
Info Office: DAO, ECON, DCM

MRN: 10 KINSHASA 956
Date/DTG: Jul 22, 2010 / 221710Z JUL 10
From: AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, KPAO, KJUS, PINR, ASEC, CG
Captions: SENSITIVE, SIPDIS
Reference: A) 10 KINSHASA 858
B) 10 KINSHASA 205
Pass Line: DEPT FOR AF/C
S/WCI
AND DRL
GENEVA FOR U.S. MISSION TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
LAGOS FOR FBI
Subject: Chargé receives family of slain human rights activist to express sympathy and reaffirm
USG commitment to bringing killers to justice

1. (SBU) Chargé met July 16 with Annie Chebeya, widow of human rights activist Floribert Chebeya, and her six children. The meeting, proposed by Under Secretary Judith McHale during her June 29 meeting with Ms. Chebeya (ref A), was a platform for the Embassy to console the family and to again urge the Congolese government to ensure that the inquiry into Chebeya's death is independent and to provide protection for the family. Chargé began by conveying to family members how much their husband and father was admired and appreciated in the U.S. because of his dedication to the cause of human rights in the DRC. Chargé characterized Chebeya's efforts to promote human rights and political liberties as similar to the efforts of U.S. civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King. Chargé emphasized that the U.S. remained committed to pressing the GDRC to conduct a transparent and independent inquiry into Chebeya's death and to punish those responsible and gave a brief summary of his efforts to date.

2. (SBU) Ms. Chebeya thanked chargé and the Embassy for their efforts. She noted that her children remained afraid to leave their home, explaining that three of them did not take their final school exams. Even though her husband had been killed some six weeks before, Ms. Chebeya believed the family would be in danger throughout the course of the investigation, which was now the responsibility of the military prosecutor. Chargé said he would meet soon with the chief military prosecutor and would press for a commitment from the authorities that the family would be safe. Mrs. Chebeya said the military prosecutor had called her and given assurances that she and the family were not in danger. Chargé asked her if the conversation had been positive and she replied that it had been and that she appreciated the prosecutor's reassurances (Note: The meeting with the military prosecutor took place later the same day; ref (b) is a report on the meeting. End note.).

3. (SBU) Ms. Chebeya noted that U.S. public support for the Chebeya family was particularly important to ensure the family's security, as the GDRC has done little to deal with those arrested in connection with the Chebeya murder, or even to begin legal proceedings. She was particularly critical of Lambert Mende, Minister of Communications and government spokesperson, who had dishonored her husband and was highly critical of civil society calls for an independent investigation during a press conference earlier in the week. Ms. Chebeya stated that Mende, "as he is so disrespectful of my husband, and he is the spokesperson for president, is most likely conveying the views of the president." Chargé said the Embassy would continue to press for an independent inquiry, and would try to determine the nature and context of Mende's comments. Chargé again cited his previous meetings with key GDRC officials and mentioned his upcoming meeting with the chief military prosecutor to urge an independent investigation and to reiterate the U.S. offer of technical assistance with the investigation. When chargé asked the children if they had any

questions, ten-year-old Fonderine asked if he would be able to help her family find the person who killed her father. Chargé said he and the United States would do everything they could to ensure justice for the Chebeya family. Chargé then presented the family with a number of books obtained from Africa Regional Services (ARS) Paris on the United States and its civil rights movement, and spoke of Dr. Martin Luther King and the fact that he had also died for the cause of human rights in his country. After the meeting the family joined the chargé and A/PAO for lunch.

4. (SBU) Many Kinshasa newspapers reported favorably on the meeting, after receiving a press release (para. 6. below) and photographs taken at the meeting that were distributed by the Public Affairs Section. Some dailies, including the independent *Le Potentiel*, the pro-opposition *Le Phare*, and the pro-government dailies *L'Observateur*, *Le Forum des As*, *Le Palmares*, and *Uhuru* printed the press release verbatim with a photograph. The title of one article read, "U.S. Embassy Pleads for the Safety of Chebeya's Family." Meanwhile, *Forum des As* noted that "*The U.S. Chargé compared Chebeya's struggle to that of Martin Luther King*," and *Le Phare* carried a front-page lead that read "U.S. Chargé Comforts Chebeya's Family." *Le Palmares* has also a front-page lead that cites the U.S. offer to provide technical assistance in support of the investigation into Chebeya's killing. Two of these articles are available on line at: <http://www.groupeavenir.cd/spip.php?article33863> and http://www.lepotentiel.com/afficher_article.php?id_article=98577&id_edition=5036

5. (SBU) Comment: The meeting with the Chebeya family served two purposes: (1) to comfort a grieving family whose members continue to suffer weeks after the death of their husband and father, and (2) to publicly reiterate USG commitment to the family's security and to calls for an independent investigation. As the local press has reported extensively on past embassy comments and actions in connection with Floribert Chebeya's death, we believe our public diplomacy efforts to highlight our concerns over the investigation and the family's safety will continue to receive continued media coverage. As our public comments have also received the attention of GDRC officials, who have tried to assure us they are taking the Chebeya matter seriously, we hope our efforts, in concert with those undertaken by other members of the international community, will help to ensure that the GDRC fulfills its commitment to conduct an independent inquiry and also provide for the family's security. End comment.

6. (U) Following is English text of embassy press statement on chargé's meeting with the Chebeya family:

Begin press release

United States Embassy Kinshasa
July 16, 2009

Chargé d'Affaires Samuel Brock hosted Ms. Annie Chebeya, widow of the human rights activist Floribert Chebeya, and her children at a lunch at the Ambassador's Residence on Friday, July 16. During the lunch, Brock highlighted to the Chebeya family the important work and life of their deceased husband and father, and how much Americans admired and appreciated his life's work in defense of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Brock also reaffirmed U.S. calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure the personal safety of the Chebeya family, and to assist local authorities in determining the facts surrounding Floribert Chebeya's death and bringing those responsible to justice.

Among several gifts presented to the Chebeya children were books on the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King. Brock told the Chebeya family: "Martin Luther King gave his life so that his people could be free. Martin Luther King had a dream that all people would be equal. He was murdered and left behind a widow, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, and four children, aged 15 to 5. He did not live to see the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president of the United States. Floribert Chebeya had a dream that the Congolese people would live in a country that respects human rights. We share that dream, and we intend to continue our work with the government and the people of the Congo to help make it happen. Floribert Chebeya will not be forgotten, not by the Congolese people and certainly not by his loving family. But he will also live in the minds of fair-minded people everywhere, including in the United States where he was much admired. His life and work inspire others to continue in the fight for justice. We will also do all we can to make sure that you, his family, are safe. Finally we again urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to insure that a comprehensive, professional, and transparent investigation be conducted into

the death of your husband and father, Floribert Chebeya, and we reiterate to your Government the offer of U.S. Government technical assistance and expertise in carrying out its criminal investigation of this murder.”

End press release

Signature: BROCK

Drafted By: KINSHASA:Sardar, Satrajit

Cleared By: ECON:Jaffee, Elizabeth E

Approved By: EXEC:Brock, Samuel V

Released By: KINSHASA:Sardar, Satrajit

Info: LAGOS, AMCONSUL *ROUTINE*; GENEVA, USMISSION *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE *ROUTINE*; RWANDA COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

Attachments: Metadata.dat

Action Post:

Dissemination Rule: POL, RSO, PAS

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