

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 3, 2011

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

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We are writing to express our concern over the situation unfolding in Easter Island (Rapa Nui), where Chilean armed forces have been carrying out forced evictions of Rapa Nui natives over the past five months. We continue to be very concerned about the physical safety of all of the Rapa Nui; but right now we are especially concerned about the welfare and security of Hito clan members inside the Hanga Roa Hotel. Several sources have informed us that heavily-armed Chilean police are surrounding the hotel, 24 hours a day. We have also been alerted that the electricity has been cut off, and that there are no provisions for food or medical care. At one point, it was reported that there were 13 individuals trapped in the hotel. Of the 13 individuals, 2 were children, 6 were women, and one was elderly and medically-compromised (diabetic). Sources say the clan members have no way to communicate with anyone outside the hotel, including their defense attorneys.

We urge the State Department to quickly take a stand against these actions, as time is of the essence and Chile has threatened to evict the clan members inside the Hanga Roa Hotel on February 8, 2011. Some of the evictions carried out by Chilean troops in recent months have resulted in injuries to the Rapa Nui natives. According to news reports, an eviction on December 29, 2010, was carried out against peaceful protesters gathering at a public square. Some of these individuals suffered serious injuries, including fractures and head wounds, after police forces reportedly fired buckshot pellets at their heads. We are concerned that evictions on February 8th could lead to more injuries should Chile follow through with the eviction.

Furthermore, we hope to convey to you our understanding that the Chilean executive branch is operating unilaterally in its Rapa Nui policy. Chile's Congressional Commission of Foreign Affairs and the Human Rights Commission of the House of Representatives both requested a review of the government's policies regarding treatment of the Rapa Nui Nation. Likewise, the Chilean Supreme Court has spoken, most recently rejecting an *amparo* filed by a private party against the Hito clan. We also draw your attention to the January 12th statement of the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which expresses similar concerns regarding Chilean government policies.

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We ask the State Department to urge Chile to: 1) lower tensions on Rapa Nui Island by removing the police forces patrolling the Hanga Roa Hotel; 2) provide food, water, medicine, and other life-sustaining provisions to the individuals inside the hotel; and 3) provide the individuals the means to communicate with their supporters outside the hotel, including their defense attorneys.

Lastly, we are aware that on October 3, 2010, the Rapa Nui people requested a "precautionary measure" from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, of which Chile is a member. Because the Commission has yet to make a decision on the measure and because the number of Rapa Nui near the hotel grounds will increase in the coming days from the support of other clans, there is an even greater need to prevent the February 8th eviction. It is our hope that by taking a stand against Chile's current policy, the State Department will help to bring an end to this violence while advocating for the adoption of a peaceful and lasting solution. For your information, we have also enclosed our letter to the Honorable Sebastián Piñera, President of the Republic of Chile.

Sincerely,



DANIEL K. AKAKA
U.S. Senator



ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA
Member of Congress

Enclosure