

United States Department of State



# SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY: THE U.S. RECORD 2002-2003





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# PREFACE



U.S. policy to protect human rights springs from American ideals and our sense of national interest. But even more important than our high aspirations and purposes is the work and will that Americans have put into achieving them. From the signing of the Declaration of Independence, to the fight against slavery and racial inequality, to standing up to totalitarian menaces, Americans have proved capable of turning vision into action. And much work remains to be done.

This combination of idealism and practical policy implementation has become a hallmark of our foreign policy in the area of international human rights. We are proud to present to you *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2002-2003* – a report that for the first time in a systematic way captures the tireless work of the U.S. Government to promote democratic structures and respect for human rights. This document complements our annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* in substance and spirit, and details how we are applying the high standards of the *Country Reports* to the actions we are taking to decrease the number and severity of human rights abuses worldwide.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War emboldened us to think of a 21<sup>st</sup> century world of ever-expanding democracy and human rights. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the threats they exposed challenged us to strengthen our efforts to overcome the obstacles to building such a world. We are answering that call to action, because liberty and rule of law help prevent terrorism from thriving. We are committed to building on our ongoing efforts and continuing to work in partnership with the international community to anticipate and respond to pressing needs wherever they may arise.

By sharing what we are doing to prevent human rights abuses and advance democracy in every region of the world, *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2002-2003* also identifies promising approaches for all who are working toward a future in which brutality, tyranny and repression claim fewer and fewer victims and no longer possess the ability to fuel violent extremism in all its forms – where peace, equality and freedom are nurtured and protected by all. I hope you'll share this report with others who – like you – believe we can achieve this vision together

**Colin L. Powell,**  
**Secretary of State**