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# 1993 Human Rights Reports

By

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## **WHY THE REPORTS ARE PREPARED**

This report is submitted to the Congress by the Department of State in compliance with sections 116(d)(1) and 502B(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), as amended, and Section 505(c) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. As stated in Section 116(d)(1) of the FAA: "The Secretary of State shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, by January 31 of each year, a full and complete report regarding the status of internationally recognized human rights, within the meaning of subsection (A) in countries that received assistance under this part, and (B) in all other foreign countries which are members of the United Nations and which are not otherwise the subject of a human rights report under this Act." We have also included reports on the few countries which do not fall into the categories established by these statutes and which thus are not covered by the Congressional requirement.

The idea that the United States has a responsibility to speak out on behalf of internationally recognized human rights standards was formalized in the 1970's. In 1976 Congress enacted legislation creating a Coordinator of Human Rights in the U.S. Department of State, a position later upgraded to Assistant Secretary. Congress also wrote into law formal requirements that U.S. foreign and trade policy take into account countries' human rights and worker rights performance and that country reports be submitted to Congress annually. When the reports were first produced in 1977, which at the time covered only countries receiving U.S. aid, 82 were compiled and published; this year, there are 193 reports.

## **HOW THE REPORTS ARE PREPARED**

The human rights reports reflect a year of dedicated effort by hundreds of State Department and other U.S. Government employees. In August 1993, the Secretary of State issued a directive which further strengthened the human rights structure in our embassies. All sections in each embassy were asked to contribute information and to corroborate reports of violations. New efforts were made to link mission programming to the advancement of human rights and democracy.

Our embassies, which prepared the initial drafts of the reports, gathered information throughout the year from a variety of sources, including contacts across the political spectrum, government officials, jurists, military sources, journalists, human rights monitors, academics, and labor union members. Gathering information can be hazardous. Foreign Service Officers often

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go to great lengths, under trying and sometimes dangerous conditions, to investigate reported human rights violations, stand up for individuals, and monitor elections.

The draft reports were then sent from each embassy to Washington, where they were carefully reviewed by the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, in cooperation with other relevant offices in the State Department. As they corroborated, analyzed, and edited the reports, Department officers drew on their own additional sources of information. These included reports by and consultations with U.S. and other human rights groups, foreign government officials, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and institutions, and experts from academia and the media. Officers also consulted with experts on worker rights issues, refugee issues, military and police issues, exile issues, women's rights issues, and legal matters. The goal was to ensure that all relevant information was included and that assessments were as objective, thorough, and fair as possible. The report will be used as a resource in making decisions on U.S. foreign policy, training, and aid allocations. It also will serve as a basis for valuable dialog and program planning on ways in which the United States can work with foreign governments and private groups to improve human rights observance worldwide.

The Country Reports on Human Rights cover internationally recognized individual, political, civil, and worker rights, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights include freedom from torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; from prolonged detention without charges; from disappearance due to abduction or clandestine detention; and from other flagrant violations concerning life, liberty, and the security of the person. Individuals have the inalienable right to change their government by peaceful means and to enjoy such civil liberties as freedom of expression, assembly, religion, and movement, without discrimination based on race, national origin, or sex. Free societies also require free trade unions. The reports assess key internationally recognized worker rights, including the right of association; the right to organize and bargain collectively; prohibition of forced or compulsory labor; minimum age for employment of children; and acceptable conditions of work.

## THE 1993 REPORTS

The 1993 Report describes a world far short of the vision we and other countries hold for it. Around the globe, people who by right are born free and with dignity too often suffer the cruelties of authorities who deprive them of their rights in order to perpetuate their own power. Yet again in 1993, children too often were denied their birthright in countries ruled by dictators or rent by armed conflict, where bullets, torture, arbitrary detention, rape, disappearances, and other abuses were used to silence those who struggle for political freedom; to crush those whose ethnicity, gender, race or religion mark them for discrimination; or to frighten and mistreat those who have no defenses. The United Nations' Charter affirms the "dignity and worth of the human person." In too many places in 1993, however, human dignity was assaulted; violence was perpetuated with impunity; those responsible for massive violations of human rights went unpunished; and political repression went unchecked.

This year, we draw particular attention to several trends evident from the 1993 reports. Armed conflict posed the most significant risk to human rights. In contrast, the historic handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yassir Arafat, the Nobel Prize-winning efforts of African Nationalist Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela and President F.W. de Klerk in South Africa to enfranchise all citizens, and the peace process in El Salvador exemplify movement toward reconciliation in places where it once seemed impossible.

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This polarity between violence and reconciliation was typical of a year in which democracy and human rights were marked both by progress and backsliding. The process of democracy moved forward in Cambodia, where successful elections were held, but backwards in Haiti, where the military continued to obstruct the return of President Aristide. At the same time, human rights abuses continued around the world. Of particular concern to us in 1993 were torture, arbitrary detention, impunity for perpetrators of abuse, and the trampling on the rights of women, children, indigenous people, and workers in many parts of the world.

Yet, in 1993, we also witnessed positive trends. Countries working together in the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) supported new democracies, mediated conflicts, and took steps to hold each other accountable for human rights abuses. Around the world, grassroots movements to promote human rights and democracy spread, as people claimed their inalienable rights and demanded accountability from their governments.

## I. ARMED CONFLICT

In Bosnia, Sudan, Burundi, Somalia, Angola, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and elsewhere, armed conflict led to massive numbers of civilian deaths, refugee flows, and human rights abuses. Many of the conflicts were stimulated by irresponsible political leaders who played on people's fears.

In many parts of the former Yugoslavia, the carnage continues. In 1993 as in 1992, all nationalities were victimized, and there were numerous violations of the Geneva Conventions. Bosnian Serb armed forces, supported by Belgrade and by Serbian paramilitary counterparts, persisted in their program of "ethnic cleansing," including laying siege to cities, indiscriminately shelling civilian inhabitants, raping and executing noncombatants, and interfering with humanitarian aid deliveries. The warfare continued relentlessly through 1993, with Bosnian government and Croat forces also committing egregious abuses.

In Sudan, both the Government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) engaged in widespread human rights abuses, including torture, forced displacement, and massacres of civilians.

In Somalia, although massive starvation was averted by international humanitarian efforts, most Somalis remained beyond the rule and protection of recognized law and social order.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's regime continued its flagrant abuses of human rights by conducting military operations against civilians, including burning and razing villages, and forcing people to abandon their homes, particularly Shi'a Arabs living in the wetlands of southern Iraq.

In Azerbaijan, the continuing conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh gave rise to human rights abuses by all sides.

In the Georgian province of Abkhazia, Abkhaz separatists launched a reign of terror after a successful offensive gave them control of the province. Many Georgian civilians and troops were subjected to torture and summary execution.

## II. RECONCILIATION

In the face of such bloodshed, 1993 was also a year in which some countries, against all odds, moved toward reconciliation. In 1964, Nelson Mandela of South Africa wrote:

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“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve.”

Thirty years later, Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk have led their country toward that ideal.

In the Middle East, there was also progress toward peace. On a warm September day in Washington, the world witnessed an historic handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yassir Arafat that stretched across years of conflict. In that moment, two men joined together their peoples' hopes for peace.

In El Salvador, once racked by civil war, the U.N. Truth Commission completed its investigations of human rights violations of the past decade and recommended specific actions to further the reconciliation process.

In Mozambique, while there have been many setbacks in the process of political reconciliation, implementation of the 1992 peace accords continued, giving Mozambicans increasingly greater protection from human rights abuses and opportunities for greater enjoyment of civil and political rights.

Although human rights violations continued in these countries, progress is being made.

### III. DEMOCRACY

In 1993, democracy continued to capture the imagination of people around the globe. There were both advances and setbacks.

In Cambodia, following the largest United Nations peacekeeping effort ever undertaken, 90 percent of voters participated in free and fair elections in May—the first in decades—thus providing the opportunity for long-term democratic evolution. The remainder of the 370,000 Cambodian refugees who had been living mostly along the Thai-Cambodian border were voluntarily repatriated under the direction of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

By contrast, in Haiti the military continued to obstruct the return of democratically elected President Aristide. Right-wing thugs closely allied with the military assassinated the legitimately appointed Justice Minister and conducted many other killings targeted against specific individuals.

In Guatemala, President Jorge Serrano was peacefully and constitutionally dismissed after he had suspended several sections of the Constitution and dissolved Congress and the Supreme and Constitutional Courts. When Congress reconvened, it elected as President Ramiro de Leon Carpio, the former Human Rights Ombudsman.

In Russia, democratic parliamentary elections were held for the second time in the country's history. Despite this, and continuing progress in the areas of civil and political rights, there were setbacks, most notably during the violent constitutional crisis in October.

In Burma, military authorities continued to refuse to implement the results of the May 1990 elections that rejected their rule.

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In Nigeria, the military overturned the results of an election, dissolved all democratic institutions, and now rules the country by decree.

In Burundi, the nation's first democratically elected president was assassinated, and a bloody conflict followed.

The starting point of democratic government is the right of citizens, through free and fair elections, to choose their government. Elections are not the sum total of democracy, of course, but they are a foundation. Democracy also requires establishing civil societies, where people can participate fully in the democratic process. The rule of law, civilian control of the military, an independent judiciary, free media, and the rights of people to free speech, association, and assembly are essential elements of democratic societies.

#### **IV. TORTURE, ARBITRARY DETENTION, AND THE IMPUNITY OF ABUSERS**

Major violations of human rights occurred not only in war-torn countries. Human rights abuses also remained widespread in countries in which violators were not held accountable. When violators can commit human rights abuses with impunity, abuses multiply.

In Iran, the Government continued to torture and execute people summarily and to restrict the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association. Minority religious groups, including the Baha'is, faced systematic repression.

North Korea remains one of the most repressive countries of the world. The Government treats individual rights as potentially subversive of the goals of the State and the party.

In Burma, the autocratic military regime reinforces its power with a pervasive security apparatus. People are arrested arbitrarily and prisoners are abused. Citizens are denied basic political rights and the rights of free speech and assembly.

Zaire is undergoing its worst human rights crisis since the end of the civil war in the 1960's. The Mobutu regime was responsible for massive human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, unlawful detentions, ethnic violence, torture, and disappearances.

In China, fundamental human rights provided for in the Chinese Constitution frequently are ignored in practice, and challenges to the Communist Party's political authority are often dealt with harshly and arbitrarily. China took some positive but limited steps in human rights areas, including releasing prominent political prisoners. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of political prisoners, however, remained under detention or in prison. Reports of physical abuse persisted, including torture by police and prison officials. This was especially the case in politically restive and minority-populated regions such as Tibet. In November, China announced that it would give positive consideration to a request from the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit China.

In Peru, the terrorist activities of the Shining Path declined following the capture of its leader in 1992. The number of extrajudicial killings and disappearances instigated or condoned by the Government also fell. Nonetheless, human rights violations continued and serious due process questions arose concerning the military trials of civilians.

In Cuba, the Government does not permit domestic or international human rights groups to function legally. Human rights activists and political dissidents are systematically harassed, beaten, and otherwise abused by police and security officials.

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In Turkey, both the Government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist forces committed human rights violations, including torture.

In Egypt, torture and other human rights violations continued. In a positive development, the country's Supreme Court acquitted 25 defendants in cases in which confessions were extracted under torture.

In Indonesia, extrajudicial arrests and detentions, as well as torture of those in custody, continued. In East Timor, no significant progress was noted in the accounting for those missing from the November 1991 shooting incident in Dili.

## **V. THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

We have paid special attention in 1992 to the problem of rampant discrimination against women. Physical abuse is the most obvious example. In many African countries, the practice of female genital mutilation continued. In Pakistan, many women in police custody are subjected to sexual or physical violence. On several continents, women and girls are sold into prostitution. In many Gulf countries, domestic servants from Southeast Asia are forced to work excessively long hours and are sometimes physically and sexually abused. In Bangladesh and India, dowry deaths continue. Marital rape in many countries is not recognized as a crime, and women raped or beaten at home often have no recourse. That female life is not valued as much as male life is apparent in countries such as China where it is reported that more female fetuses than male are aborted.

In addition to physical abuse, the political, civil, and legal rights of women are often denied. In 1993 women throughout the world were subjected to onerous and discriminatory restrictions of such fundamental freedoms as voting, marriage, travel, testifying in court, inheriting and owning property, and obtaining custody of children. All too often, women and girls find that their access to education, employment, health care, and even food is limited because of their gender.

## **VI. WORKER RIGHTS**

In far too many countries, the freedom of workers to associate, which is the paramount right on which trade unions base their ability to bargain collectively, defend their members' grievances, and protect them from unfair and unsafe working conditions, falls well short of the standards elaborated by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Restrictions on freedom of association abound. They range from outright and total government control of all forms of worker organizations to webs of legislation so complicated that full compliance is virtually impossible, giving authorities excuses to intervene at will.

In 1993, the practice of forced labor continued, as did the abuse of expatriate workers, particularly domestics. Slavery still exists in some countries, particularly in Mauritania and Sudan. Given the rising concern about the impact of international trade on worker rights standards, this year's reports focus more sharply on the presence of child labor in export industries and on minimum wage and occupational safety standards. Our reports document a number of serious bonded and child labor problems, particularly in South Asia and North Africa.

## **VII. ACCOUNTABILITY**

In the face of widespread human rights violations, the impunity of violators and absence of the rule of law, some progress was made at the international level in 1993 to develop new global institutions to promote human rights accountability.

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In February the United Nations created a War Crimes Tribunal to prosecute those responsible for gross violations of human rights in much of the former Yugoslavia. By year's end, all judges had been sworn in.

In December, following the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June, the U.N. General Assembly established the office of High Commissioner for Human Rights with a mandate to remove obstacles to citizens' full enjoyment of basic human rights.

The World Conference also recommended establishing a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. The Human Rights Commission will take up this project in 1994.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Human Rights Center had rapporteurs assess conditions in countries such as Burma, Iraq and Cuba, where human rights are largely disregarded. Other bodies, such as the Committee Against Torture, monitored compliance with U.N. treaties and conventions.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has been a significant force in holding countries accountable for adherence to human rights standards. In September the CSCE held a review conference to assess each participating state's progress in implementing its "human dimension" commitments, including to human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. The CSCE has also been active in mediating disputes, particularly through the work of its High Commissioner for National Minorities. In Latvia and Estonia, CSCE and other international factfinding missions looked into allegations of human rights abuses. While finding no systematic violations, they urged these governments to adopt an inclusive approach to citizenship and alien rights and assure the equitable and nondiscriminatory treatment of ethnic Russians living in their countries. Both Latvia and Estonia have accepted the establishment of CSCE missions to help improve intercommunal relations.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) assisted in mediation efforts in Burundi that have helped move that country toward a resolution of its constitutional and humanitarian crisis.

The Organization of American States (OAS) played an important role in defending human rights and due process, notably in Nicaragua.

## **VIII. GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY**

The willingness of nations to begin to hold each other accountable for human rights abuses is a reflection of the work of individuals to hold their own governments accountable. Around the world in 1993, grassroots movements supported the spread of human rights, freedom, and democracy. This commitment of people, acting through nongovernmental organizations, is reflected in the final Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights held in June in Vienna, that the individual—and not the state—is at the center of development. Moreover, underdevelopment can never justify human rights abuses. There is indeed an important linkage among human rights, democracy, and development: the protection of human rights and the full participation of individuals in their own political system create the necessary context for development to take place.

Human rights will not be protected without the constant vigilance of courageous individuals who promote human rights, document abuses, and hold their governments to account. These sentinels for human rights engender hope. Amidst the abuse of 1993, there is another story, that of countless men and women who stood up and said "No!" No to injustice, no to tyranny, no to torture, and no to censorship. We salute those who are working against great odds to advance human rights and democracy:

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Monique Mujawamariya who works in Rwanda and Burundi, and those like her whose bodies bear the scars of thugs as the price of documenting human rights violations;

Mansour Kikhiya of Libya, and all the “disappeared” who have been abducted because of their human rights work;

Liu Gang who sits in jail in China, and all who are imprisoned for peaceful expression of their views;

Sebastian Arcos of Cuba, and all who refuse to be silent when others are being abused;

Aung San Suu Kyi, in her fifth year of house arrest in Burma, and all who work for freedom at the price of their own liberty.

The staff of the Sarajevo daily newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*, and all who work for a free press and who demonstrate that Serb and Croat, Muslim and Jew, can work and live side by side in peace.

We salute these people, and the tens of thousands of courageous human rights workers around the world.

The year 1993 was a difficult one for human rights, a year in which setbacks outweighed advances in some parts of the world. Paradoxically, it was also a year in which the daily struggle for human rights at global, national, and local levels received more attention than ever before, a year in which the worldwide grassroots movement for human rights and democratic change gathered momentum. The year saw the community of nations reaffirm its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna on the 45th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The force of this movement was captured by Eleanor Roosevelt in an address to the United Nations in 1958:

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet, they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”