
1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

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[The following is a report released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2000]

Introduction

The Third Globalization Transnational Human Rights Networks

Today, all the talk is of globalization. But far too often, both its advocates and its critics have portrayed globalization as an exclusively economic and technological phenomenon. In fact, in the new millennium, there are at least three universal languages: money, the internet, and democracy and human rights. An overlooked “third globalization,” the rise of transnational human rights networks of both public and private actors, has helped develop what may over time become an international civil society capable of working with governments, international institutions, and multinational corporations to promote both democracy and the standards embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In Davos recently, President Clinton noted that “Since globalization is about more than economics, our interdependence requires us to find ways to meet the challenges of advancing our values.” In 1999 the United States continued to meet that challenge. As a leader in promoting democracy and human rights around the world, the United States played an essential and catalyzing role in the process of creating transnational human rights networks. Just this past year, President Clinton and Secretary Albright helped forge international solutions to the crises in Kosovo and East Timor by encouraging a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors to join together in public-private networks to promote international justice. The United States is committed to the long-term project of helping such networks develop into an international civil society, an effective partnership of governments, international agencies, multinational corporations, and non-governmental organizations (non-governmental organizations) that will support democracy worldwide and promote the standards embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The great American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. acknowledged “the interrelatedness of all communities and states . . . caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” What Dr. King understood, even forty years ago, was the need in an increasingly interdependent world, for governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to work together as agents of change. But what Dr. King could not fully envision was an era in which these growing national networks would face both the profound opportunities and the challenges posed by globalization.

Traditionally, networks have evolved out of communities of like-minded individuals who gather around shared interests and values. Often they begin as informal conversations, over dinner tables and conference tables, which help individuals identify a shared set of values and standards upon which they can base their behavior. They help generate what de Tocqueville called “habits of the heart,” those characteristics of human nature that encourage otherwise isolated individuals to connect with one another into a broader community. At times, private networks coalesce into a single non-governmental organization. More frequently, however, they remain loose coalitions

of membership-based citizens' lobbies, labor unions, foundations, academics, professional associations, religious bodies, and other groups that share a desire to identify solutions to a single problem.

Such networks developed at the neighborhood, the community, and at times the national level. But today, new kinds of networks linked by air transport, telecommunications, the global media, and the Internet are helping create transnational communities of shared institutions, shared ideas, and most importantly shared values. We are rapidly moving toward a global network of government officials, activists, thinkers, and practitioners who share a common commitment to democracy, the universality of human rights, and respect for the rule of law.

Not surprisingly, the emergence of global telecommunications and commercial networks, the two other new "global languages" has served as an important driving force behind this trend. Just as the Berlin Wall once stood as a physical barrier to movement and the free spread of democracy, governments that abuse human rights also seek to build walls that will stop the free flow of information. But the global information revolution has perforated such walls: e-mail, the internet, cell phones, and other technologies have helped activists from around the globe to connect with one another in ways that were impossible only ten years ago. The internet has created a world in which traditional hierarchical, bidirectional models of authority have been replaced by non-hierarchical, multidirectional systems that naturally feed the growth of transnational networks. Similarly, the global commercial revolution has multiplied contact points between open and closed societies. As corporations, banks, international financial institutions, and private investors engage with transitional societies, they increasingly serve as transmission belts for human rights norms and advocates for human rights improvements.

Increasingly, some of the most successful transnational networks are those that partner with, respond to, or support government initiatives on behalf of democracy and human rights. Perhaps the best example of the power of such public-private network partnerships can be found in the developments over the past year in Kosovo and East Timor. In the days and weeks leading up to both NATO's decision to use military force to stop Serb atrocities in Kosovo and the United Nations' decision to use military force to stop militia and army human rights abuses in East Timor, transnational networks of human rights activists played a key role. During and after the Kosovo crisis, networks of human rights advocates and humanitarian relief workers worked closely with governments, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and NATO and KFOR forces to document allegations of war crimes and violations of humanitarian law. In both Kosovo and East Timor, non-governmental organizations are working with U.N. missions to build networks to support reconstruction, document human rights abuses, and support justice initiatives.

When non-governmental groups worked with intergovernmental agencies and national governments in Kosovo and East Timor, their efforts enriched government policy-creation efforts, and governments in turn helped guide and coordinate the work of non-governmental organizations. As a result of this public-private collaboration, governments successfully pooled their military and financial resources to halt the atrocities, and the international community began the hard work of rebuilding badly damaged societies.

Transnational human rights networks of governments and non-governmental actors have also worked closely together to secure the adoption of a wide range of declarations, international treaties, conventions, and protocols addressing key human rights issues. Many of these networks emerged from the world human rights conferences that took place in the 1990s. At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, non-governmental organization activists worked with democratic governments to combat efforts made by dictatorships to distort the conferences' final declarations. Both

conferences also led to the creation of permanent confederations of non-governmental organizations, which have continued to work in partnership with democratic governments. More recently, these organizations and governments have worked together to secure agreements on eliminating the worst forms of child labor and ending the use of child soldiers.

Transnational networks have played an important role in shaping the robust debate over how to guarantee international justice. While various actors in the international community do not yet agree fully on how best to address past human rights violations, particularly in the context of difficult democratic transitions, a great deal of concrete progress nonetheless has been made. As recently as the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, most governments (and many non-governmental organizations) regarded efforts to establish international judicial mechanisms to promote justice as remote or even utopian. Yet seven years later, the world has witnessed the establishment of International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Indeed, there also has been active and sometimes controversial domestic civil and criminal litigation against former dictators.

Each of these developments took place in part because like-minded governments worked with non-governmental organizations to create a public-private network through which “the international community” could address critical human rights concerns. To be sure, no international consensus yet exists on many international justice issues, including the establishment of an International Criminal Court. However, the critical achievements of transnational human rights networks have been to place international justice issues on the agenda and to search for forums in which justice ultimately can be reached.

The United States continues to be a leader in the formation of new transnational human rights networks. For example, the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Department of State recently hosted a roundtable on justice and reconciliation at which visiting Indonesian officials drew on the experiences of five other countries: El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, and South Korea, that have confronted the human rights abuses of prior authoritarian regimes while making the transition to democracy. Participants focused on the advantages and disadvantages of a range of mechanisms for promoting justice and reconciliation: truth commissions, noncriminal sanctions, criminal accountability, and compensation for victims. Other recent successful efforts at human rights networking began at a private-public conference at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington to discuss the design of an atrocities prevention information and action network and at a public-private Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) supplemental Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti issues.

In a number of critical areas, the Department of State has appointed special representatives to take the lead on building and working with existing human rights and civil society networks. As 1999 ended, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Eizenstat, in his role as Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State on Holocaust-Era Issues, catalyzed efforts by the German government and German industry to capitalize a multi-billion dollar foundation to make payments to those who worked as forced and slave laborers for German companies during the Nazi era and to others who were injured during World War II. He also helped stimulate the work of the historical commissions of 19 nations, including the United States, to examine their roles during the war and their relationship to Holocaust-related assets.

Others have played an equally important role. Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Alan Larson has worked with a wide range of civil society groups in the Department’s advisory group on international economic policy and the transatlantic consumer dialog. He also plays an active role in bringing the private business sector together with other civil society groups to address issues ranging from foreign economic policy to corporate responsibility. Robert Seiple, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, has worked closely with advisory

groups and religious organizations, as well as the Commission on International Religious Freedom, to develop strategies to expand religious freedom worldwide. David Scheffer, Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, has undertaken similar efforts along with governments, intergovernmental entities, and non-governmental organizations dedicated to accountability and justice for past abuses and prevention of future atrocities. Joseph Onek, the Department of State's Global Rule of Law Coordinator, has built partnerships with bar associations, ministries of justice, judicial and prosecutorial training centers, and legal academics to promote rule of law and legal institutions worldwide. Theresa Loar, the Department's Senior Coordinator on Women's Issues and Director of the President's Interagency Council on Women, has worked closely with existing global networks to promote women's rights as human rights leading to the fifth anniversary of the Beijing Women's Conference. Sandra Polaski, the Secretary's Special Representative for International Labor Affairs, has strengthened the connection between the Department of State and the international labor movement by regularly convening the Secretary's Advisory Committee on International Labor Diplomacy and expanding the international labor function within the Department of State.

Over the past two years, public-private transnational networks also have helped advance and promote the cause of democracy, as both a fundamental human right in itself and as a means to greater protection for a wide range of human rights. One of the most startling political changes of the post-Cold War era has been the explosion in the number of democracies worldwide: by most counts the number of democratic governments expanded fourfold in the last quarter of the 20th century, from thirty in 1974 to some 120 today. The U.S. government's democracy-promotion efforts have played an important role in bringing about this fundamental revolution in the way most nations are governed.

In 1999 U.S. democracy-promotion strategy set out upon four new paths: priority-setting; resource-matching; standard-setting; and network-building. First, in an effort to give greater priority in U.S. support to countries that are at critical transition points in their movement toward democracy, Secretary of State Albright designated four countries, Colombia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Ukraine, as "democracy priority" countries. Second, the secretary used her legislatively enhanced authority over the Agency for International Development to gain greater oversight over the assistance budgeting process, thereby seeking to channel more resources directly to the democracy priority countries. Third, to make clear that the right of democratic governance is not simply a privilege or a luxury, the United States introduced a resolution at the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva that explicitly reaffirmed that each individual has not just a hope of, but a right to, democratic governance; the resolution passed by a margin of 51-0, with only two member countries abstaining.

Fourth and finally, an impressive series of gatherings has helped lay the groundwork for creating a worldwide community of democracy activists and practitioners. In Mali, African governments and democratic activists met with aid officials from donor nations to discuss democratic development. In India, the world's democratic non-governmental organizations gathered in the first meeting of the "Worldwide Movement for Democracy" to discover shared values that transcend regional, cultural, or religious differences. In Yemen, small and emerging democracies met to identify common concerns. In Romania, new and restored democracies agreed on an agenda of action to support democracy in international fora. In the Republic of Korea, activists gathered at separate events to discuss the interrelationship between democracy and economic growth and the need for a network of Asian democrats. In Austria, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay, women from government and non-governmental organization communities gathered at Vital Voices conferences to promote greater political participation for women in democratic dialog.

In the first months of 2000, U.S. democracy-promotion efforts have expanded in two new directions. First, as challenges to democratic governance have emerged in Paraguay, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, and Pakistan, the global democratic network has worked to develop common strategies not just to promote "democratic advance," but also to combat "democratic backsliding."

Second, to develop a full-fledged intergovernmental dialog among those nations of the world committed to pursuing a democratic path and to explore how best to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, the foreign ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic, Chile, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, and the United States have agreed to convene in Warsaw, Poland, in June 2000 a meeting of the "Community of Democracies." This intergovernmental gathering should provide an unprecedented opportunity for established, emerging, and aspiring democracies to exchange experiences, to identify best practices, and to formulate an agenda for international cooperation in order to realize democracy's full potential. Concurrent with the ministerial meeting, a number of distinguished thinkers and path-breaking promoters of democracy from around the world will gather in Warsaw to discuss complementary issues and ideas. These representatives of intellectual life and civil society will present to the ministerial meeting their ideas as to how governments and citizens can better work together to strengthen and preserve democracy, thereby helping to strengthen the public-private regime dedicated to democracy-promotion and preservation.

Transnational human rights and democracy networks also can play an influential role in securing change within international institutions. In recent years, the World Bank, Regional Development Banks, and the United Nations Development Program, with the support of the U.S. government, all actively have sought out dialog with a wide range of human rights and democracy groups to integrate respect for human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law into their vision of human development. Much of the work of the U.N. Commissions on Human Rights and the Status of Women now takes place on the margins of the formal sessions, in informal networking among governments, and between non-governmental organizations and governments. Other U.N. bodies, such as UNICEF, UNIFEM, and the offices of the U.N. High Commissioners for Refugees and Human Rights frequently seek out the counsel of networks of like-minded governments, non-governmental organizations, and regional organizations, such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, and the Organization for African Unity.

In addition in areas ranging from environmental protection to human rights, corporations have begun to meet regularly not only with unions but with broader transnational human rights networks to identify how they can work together to solve problems. Corporate social responsibility increasingly has been accepted as a core tenet of global corporate citizenship, generating gatherings from Davos to San Francisco to London, as well as new networks of concern, including the new Global Sullivan Principles, the Fair Labor Association, the Worker Rights Consortium, the SA 8000 initiative, the "No Sweat" Initiative, and the Apparel Industry Partnership.

The U.S. government has sought to encourage this trend by interacting and building alliances with multinational corporations that share a commitment to establish a public-private network devoted to human rights advancement. In partnership with American companies, we have developed a set of voluntary model business principles; we also have worked with the business and labor communities as well as the International Labor Organization to promote 1998's declaration on core labor standards. We are working closely with the garment and footwear industries, trade unions, and community activists to combat the still-too-pervasive reality of sweatshop labor at home and abroad. Most recently, we have been exploring new ways to work together with community activists, human rights non-governmental organizations, and corporations working in the extractive industries to promote human rights, support democratic

institutions, and strengthen the rule of law, particularly in the three democracy-priority countries of Colombia, Indonesia, and Nigeria.

In every area, the work of the U.S. government in democracy, human rights, and labor is increasingly being done not in isolation, but in partnership: not just with other public entities, such as governments and intergovernmental organizations and international financial institutions, but with private entities, such as human rights and humanitarian non-governmental organizations; the media; labor unions; religious organizations; and corporations and commercial entities. As the new millennium unfolds, these transnational human rights networks will only expand and flourish. As international commerce and telecommunications continue to bind the world's peoples together, the United States will remain committed to using the universal language of human rights to build public-private networks to promote democracy and human rights worldwide.

The Year in Review

Perhaps because there was no defining moment like the collapse of the Berlin Wall, few analysts noticed that 1999 saw as profound a positive trend toward freedom as 1989. Thanks to democratic elections in Indonesia and Nigeria, two of the world's most populous states, more people came under democratic rule than in any other recent year, including 1989. In addition, the NATO intervention in Kosovo and the international intervention in East Timor demonstrated that the international community has the will and the capacity to act against the most profound violations of human rights.

Yet these significant gains in democracy and human rights cannot overshadow the fact that the past year also saw a number of profound challenges to human rights. Serbia's expulsion of over 850,000 Albanians, the Indonesian military's complicity in the militia rampage through East Timor, and the horrors perpetrated by rebels in Sierra Leone all show that the world still has a long way to go before it fully adheres to the precepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, the coup in Pakistan and popular dissatisfaction in Latin America clearly demonstrate that the road to democratic governance is not without its problems and challenges. And despite the gains in Nigeria and Indonesia, too many authoritarian governments continue to deny basic human rights, including the right to democracy, to their citizens. The following sections highlight key developments over the past year in human rights, democracy, and labor.

A. Developments in Human Rights

1. The Right to Democratic Dissent

Article One of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Defenders states that "Everyone has the right. . . to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms." All too often, we take this principle for granted. Yet each year, dedicated human rights activists and democratic dissidents around the world lose their lives defending this remarkable, transforming idea. In a large number of the countries covered in this report, human rights defenders and democratic dissidents face harassment, imprisonment, disappearances, or torture; in some cases, the risk comes from government sources. In many others, however, the risk is from non-governmental insurgent, terrorist, or criminal elements.

Certain countries seem to take particular pleasure in restricting the right to democratic dissent. Take Serbia, where the government of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic initiated a brutal and indiscriminate police and military crackdown against ethnic Albanian opponents in Kosovo and sought to limit and suppress dissent closer to home. The Kosovo campaign ended only after the international community intervened militarily. Before and during the conflict, Kosovar Albanians known to oppose the regime were murdered, raped,

disappeared, expelled, or detained in Serbian prisons. In addition over 850,000 Kosovar Albanian civilians were expelled forcibly to neighboring Albania, Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Severe violations of human rights, though less dramatic, also characterized the situation in the Serbian heartland, where the regime muzzled independent voices and forcibly dispersed citizens peaceably protesting government policies.

Similarly in Cuba, the regime of Fidel Castro continued to suppress opposition and criticism. Cuban authorities routinely harass, threaten, arbitrarily arrest, detain, imprison, and defame human rights advocates and members of independent professional associations, including journalists, economists, doctors, and lawyers, often with the goal of coercing them into leaving the country. The government denied political dissidents and human rights advocates due process and subjected them to unfair trials. Many remained in prison at year's end. Although the government sought to discourage and thwart foreign contacts with human rights activists, it did publicly state before the Ibero-American Summit in November that visiting delegations were free to meet with any person in the country, and about twenty dissidents met with nine different delegations, including three heads of state. Prior to the summit, however, authorities temporarily detained a number of human rights activists to prevent them from preparing for meetings with the visiting leaders.

In Asia, dissidents and defenders face a range of challenges. In China, authorities broadened and intensified their efforts to suppress those perceived to threaten government power or national stability. Citizens who sought to express openly dissenting political and religious views faced widespread repression. In the weeks leading up to both June 4th, the 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre, and October 1st, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, the government moved against political dissidents across the country, detaining and formally arresting scores of activists in cities and provinces nationwide and thwarting any attempts to use the anniversaries as opportunities for protest. Authorities targeted members of the China Democracy Party (CDP), which had already had three of its leaders sentenced to lengthy prison terms in December 1998. Beginning in May, dozens of CDP members were arrested in a widening crackdown, and additional CDP leaders were convicted of subversion and sentenced to long prison terms in closed trials that flagrantly violated due process. Others were kept detained for long periods without charge. In addition both leaders and followers of the popular Falun Gong spiritual movement faced harassment, beatings, arrest, detention, and in some cases, sentences to prison terms for protesting the government's decision to outlaw their practice. Many not formally arrested reportedly were sentenced administratively, without trial, to up to three years in re-education-through-labor camps. By year's end, almost all of the key leaders of the CDP were serving long prison terms, and only a handful of dissidents nationwide dared to remain active publicly.

In North Korea, government repression is so severe that no organized opposition to the regime is known to exist. The government regards almost any independent activity including listening to foreign broadcasts, writing letters, and possessing "reactionary" printed matter crimes against the state. In Burma, the military junta intensified its systematic use of coercion and intimidation to restrict further freedom of association. Authorities undertook a sustained, systematic campaign to destroy the National League for Democracy (NLD) without formally banning it, pressuring thousands of NLD party members to resign and closing NLD offices throughout the country. Hundreds of pro-democracy activists remain in jail. Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has had to constrain her activities as a result of threats from the junta, which has severely restricted her freedom of movement.

Dissidents and defenders in the former Soviet Union also faced problems. In Belarus, two well-known opposition leaders disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Government security forces closely monitored human rights activists and arbitrarily arrested, detained, and

beat political opponents and average citizens. Similarly in Uzbekistan, security forces arbitrarily arrested or detained human rights activists, pious Muslims, and other citizens on false charges. At least one human rights activist died in prison, allegedly after not receiving adequate medical care. In Turkmenistan, opposition figures and human rights activists regularly face arbitrary arrest, prolonged pretrial detention, unfair trials, and interference with privacy.

In the Middle East, dissidents and defenders had to contend with similar difficulties. In Iraq, the regime of Saddam Hussein continued to commit widespread, serious, and systematic human rights abuses, summarily executing actual and perceived political opponents. In Syria, the government uses its vast powers to quash all organized political opposition.

Defenders and dissidents in Africa also faced severe challenges. In Sudan, despite the adoption of a new constitution through a referendum in June 1998, the government continues to restrict most civil liberties, including freedom of assembly, association, religion, and movement. Government security forces regularly tortured, beat, harassed, arbitrarily arrested, and detained opponents or suspected opponents of the government, and they did so with impunity. Government forces also were responsible for extra judicial killings and disappearances. In Equatorial Guinea, the government encouraged the illegal kidnaping and involuntary repatriation of political opponents living abroad. There are no effective domestic human rights non-governmental organizations, and in April the government promulgated a new law that further restricted non-governmental organizations and precluded them from functioning in the area of human rights.

A growing trend around the world is the threat posed to democratic dissent by non-governmental insurgent, terrorist, or criminal forces. In Colombia, for example, paramilitary forces, some with links to the armed forces, were responsible for the murder of numerous human rights activists as well as threats against many others. Guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia murdered three American human rights activists who had traveled to that country to work with indigenous leaders. In Sri Lanka, human rights defender and Tamil parliamentarian Neelan Tiruchelvam was killed by a suicide bomber believed to be linked with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Some countries saw improvements in the treatment of defenders and dissidents. In Indonesia, domestic human rights organizations continued to play a significant and increasing role in securing improved human rights conditions, although some non-governmental organizations reported monitoring and interference by the authorities. In April the parliament repealed the 1963 Anti-Subversion Law, although it subsequently incorporated six crimes specified in that law into the criminal code. In March, the Habibie government freed 52 political prisoners, and in December the Wahid government freed 196 more. However, activists working in East and West Timor, Aceh, and Papua (Irian Jaya) continued to face significant restrictions on and interference in their activity.

A number of governments took the positive step of releasing prominent defenders and dissidents. In Turkey, the government suspended for six months the sentence of former Human Rights Association Chairman Akin Birdal, citing medical reasons stemming from injuries Birdal sustained during a May 1998 attempt on his life. However, Birdal is subject to reimprisonment to resume his sentence in March 2000 and also faces many other charges. In Tunisia, the government released on early parole Tunisian Human Rights League Vice President Khemais Ksila, who was arrested in September 1997 and convicted on charges of defamation of the public order, dissemination of false information, and inciting the public to violence. In Morocco, political dissident Abraham Serfaty, who had been exiled since 1991, was allowed to return. In Bhutan, the government released dissident and former government official Tek Nath Rizal, who had been held for nearly ten years. In Russia, retired Russian naval captain and environmental activist Aleksandr Nikitin was acquitted of espionage charges, but his legal difficulties and official harassment

continue. The passport and visa services office has refused to issue him an international passport, and the local tax police have called him in for questioning, claiming that he owes personal income tax on all funds that western organizations raised and spent on his legal defense.

2. Human Rights in Countries in Conflict

Civilians continue to endure human rights abuses, war crimes, and violations of humanitarian law in those countries facing internal insurgencies or civil war. Throughout the world, insurgents, paramilitary forces, and government security, military, and police forces used murder, rape, and inhumane tactics to assert control over territory, to secure the cooperation of civilians, and to silence opposition voices. As was the case in previous years, tens of thousands of civilian men, women, and children continued to die not only from conflict, but also from premeditated campaigns intended to instill terror among civilian populations.

Africa continues to be the locus of many of the world's worst conflicts. In Sierra Leone, rebel forces committed numerous egregious abuses, including murder, abduction, deliberate mutilations, and rape. Pro-government militias also committed abuses, albeit on a lesser scale. The rebels continued their particularly vicious practice of cutting off the ears, noses, hands, arms, and legs of noncombatants including small children and elderly women. Rebel forces abducted missionaries, aid workers, U.N. personnel, and journalists; ambushed humanitarian relief convoys; raided refugee sites; and extorted and stole food. They abducted children to use as soldiers and other civilians to serve as forced laborers, sex slaves, and human shields. After the May cease-fire, insurgents continued to commit abuses, although significantly fewer were reported.

Continued civil conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo saw government forces lose control of more than half the country's territory to rebels, who were often supported by troops from other African countries. Government security forces increasingly used arbitrary arrest and detention throughout the year and were responsible for numerous extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, beatings, rapes, and other abuses. Rebel forces also committed serious abuses, including murder, disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, rape, extortion, robbery, harassment of human rights workers and journalists, and recruitment of child soldiers.

In Angola, fighting between government and rebel forces led to numerous, serious human rights abuses by both sides. In Burundi, government forces killed both rebels and civilians, including women, children, and the elderly. Rebel forces also attacked and killed civilians. Rebel attacks on the military often generated army reprisals against civilians suspected of cooperating with the insurgents. At year's end, the army forcibly relocated an estimated 330,000 Hutus in "regroupment" sites in an effort to stop rebel attacks. In Uganda, insurgent groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army and Allied Democratic Forces, killed, tortured, maimed, raped, and abducted many persons (including children).

Other parts of the world were not immune to conflict. In Serbia, government military and security forces forcibly expelled over 850,000 Kosovar Albanians from their homes. Many women were raped in the process. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is in the process of investigating reports of 11,000 persons killed and buried in 529 mass graves and has indicted Yugoslav Federal President Slobodan Milosevic and several other senior government officials for war crimes and crimes against humanity. At the conclusion of the conflict, the international community assumed responsibility for the administration of Kosovo, since then it has had to contend both with Kosovar Albanian reprisals against the Serbian population and Serb attacks against Albanians in the remaining Serb enclaves.

In Russia, the seizure by armed insurgent groups from Chechnya of villages in the neighboring republic of Dagestan escalated by year's end into a full-fledged attack by Russian forces on separatists in Chechnya, including the Chechen capital of Grozny. The Russian attack included air strikes and the indiscriminate shelling of cities predominantly inhabited by civilians. These attacks, which in turn led to house-to-house fighting in Grozny, led to the death of numerous civilians and the displacement of hundreds of thousands more. There are credible reports of Russian military forces carrying out summary executions of civilians in Alkhan-Yurt and in the course of the Grozny offensive. As this report was going to press, there were credible reports that Russian forces were rounding up Chechen men of military age and sending them to "filtration" camps, where they allegedly were tortured. The Russian government has a duty to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks but must comply with its international commitments and obligations to protect civilians and must not engage in extrajudicial killing, the blocking of borders to prevent civilians from fleeing, and other violations in the name of internal security. Chechen separatists also reportedly committed abuses, including the killing of civilians.

Afghanistan suffered its 20th consecutive year of civil war and political instability. Both the ultraconservative movement known as the Taliban (which controls roughly 90 percent of the country) and the United Front for Afghanistan (also known as the Northern Alliance) committed serious human rights abuses, particularly against women and girls, in the areas they occupied and during their attempts to conquer territory. Both also were responsible for the indiscriminate bombardment of civilians. Years of conflict have left an estimated 2.6 million Afghans living outside the country as refugees, while another 250,000 are internally displaced.

In Indonesia, civil conflict and violence continued or worsened despite the country's relatively successful struggle to move from dictatorship to democracy. A variety of motives drove the violence. Dissatisfaction that had remained pent up under the long-time rule of Soeharto boiled over under successor governments. Anger at Indonesian military, security, and police units only fed widespread popular support for independence in East Timor, Aceh, and Papua (Irian Jaya). In Aceh, military forces and police committed numerous abuses, including extrajudicial killings, excessive force, disappearances, rape, arbitrary arrest, and detention without trial. Military forces sometimes resorted to force in order to disrupt peaceful demonstrations. Thousands of Acehnese residents fled their villages during various security crackdowns against separatist groups. In addition, dozens of low-level civil servants, police, and military personnel were murdered and abducted, most likely by separatists. In Ambon and throughout Maluku, fighting between Moslems and Christians left more than 1,000 dead by the end of the year. In West Kalimantan, more than 200 persons died in fighting pitting Madurese immigrants against indigenous Dayak and Melayu groups.

In East Timor, paramilitary units supported by or under the control of the Indonesian military went on a rampage of violence, looting, and destruction after a United Nations-sponsored referendum saw more than 78 percent of Timorese vote for independence. Elements of the Indonesian security forces and the prointegration militias (which were armed and largely supported by the military) were responsible for numerous extrajudicial killings. In September hundreds of persons were killed in a wave of military-sponsored militia violence after the announcement of the proindependence vote. Over 250,000 East Timorese fled the violence. Violations included summary executions, massacres, rapes, deportations, and the destruction of property. Both an International Commission of Inquiry and an investigative commission established by the Indonesian Human Rights Commission subsequently concluded that the Indonesian military failed to stop, colluded in, or participated in the violence. In the early part of the year, pro-independence groups also committed serious abuses, including killings.

In Sri Lanka, the government's conflict with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continued to result in serious human rights abuses by both sides. Government

security forces committed extrajudicial killings and at least fifteen individuals disappeared from their custody. The government did begin to investigate allegations that as many as 400 Tamils killed by security forces were buried in multiple graves in the town of Chemmani. Two exhumations recovered fifteen bodies, but authorities have not yet sought criminal indictments against security forces in relation to the killings. LTTE forces were responsible for extrajudicial executions, disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and detentions. LTTE attacks and suicide bombings killed close to one hundred civilians, and at least fourteen persons who were found guilty of offenses by the LTTE's self-described courts were executed publicly.

In Colombia, despite the government's efforts to negotiate an end to hostilities, widespread internal armed conflict and rampant political and criminal violence persisted. Government security forces, paramilitary groups, guerrillas, and narcotics traffickers all continued to commit numerous serious abuses, including extrajudicial killings and torture. Throughout the country, paramilitary groups killed, tortured, and threatened civilians suspected of sympathizing with guerrillas in an orchestrated campaign to terrorize them into fleeing their homes. These groups were responsible for numerous massacres. Guerrillas regularly attacked civilian populations, kidnapped numerous individuals, committed massacres and summary executions, killed medical and religious personnel, and forcibly recruited civilians (including children). The government took important steps toward ending collaboration by some security force members with the paramilitaries. President Pastrana, Vice President Bell, and members of the military high command declared repeatedly that collaboration whether by commission or omission by members of the security forces with paramilitary groups would not be tolerated. The President removed from service four generals and numerous mid-level officers and noncommissioned officers for collaboration, for failing to confront paramilitaries aggressively, or for failing to protect the local population.

3. Religious Freedom

In September the Department of State delivered to Congress the first annual report on international religious freedom. The Department carries a statutory responsibility to prepare these reports annually. The report sought to create a comprehensive record of the state of religious freedom around the world and to highlight the most significant violations of this right. The report demonstrates that violations of religious freedom, including religious persecution, are not confined to any one country, religion, or nationality. Throughout the world, Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and other believers continue to suffer for their faith.

Too much of the world's population still lives in countries in which religious freedom is restricted or prohibited. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes remain determined to control religious belief and practice. Other regimes are hostile to minority or "unapproved" religions. Some tolerate, and thereby encourage, persecution or discrimination. Still other governments have adopted discriminatory legislation or policies that give preferences to favored religions while disadvantaging others. Some democratic states have indiscriminately identified minority religions as dangerous "sects" or "cults."

The International Religious Freedom Act also required the President or his designee (in this case the Secretary of State) to use the annual report on international religious freedom and other resources to identify those countries where the government has engaged in or tolerated "severe" or "particularly severe" violations of religious freedom. In October Secretary Albright informed Congress that she was designating five "Countries of Particular Concern": Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, and Sudan. The Secretary also informed Congress that she was identifying as particularly severe violators the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the government of Serbia. This last action was not taken under the auspices of the International Religious Freedom Act

because the United States does not regard the Taliban as a government or Serbia as a country as envisioned by the act.

In Burma, the government arrests and imprisons Buddhist monks who promote human and political rights. Security forces destroyed or looted churches, mosques, and Buddhist monasteries in some insurgent ethnic minority areas. In some insurgent Chin ethnic minority areas, security forces used coercive measures to induce Christians to convert to Buddhism.

China continued to restrict freedom of religion and intensified controls on some unregistered churches. Unapproved religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic groups, continued to experience varying degrees of official interference, repression, and persecution. The government continued to enforce 1994 State Council regulations requiring all places of religious activity to register with the government and come under the supervision of official, “patriotic” religious organizations. In some areas, authorities guided by national policy made strong efforts to control the activities of unapproved Catholic and Protestant churches; religious services were broken up and church leaders or adherents were harassed, fined, detained, and at times, beaten. According to reports, there were instances of torture. At year’s end, some remained in prison because of their religious activities, while others remained unaccounted for. In Tibet, the government expanded and intensified its “patriotic education campaign” aimed at controlling monasteries and expelling supporters of the Dalai Lama, increasing pressure on Tibetan Buddhists. Controls on religious freedom in Xinjiang also remained tight. The government also launched a crackdown against the Falun Gong spiritual movement in July. Tens of thousands of Falun Gong members reportedly were detained in outdoor stadiums and forced to sign statements disavowing the Falun Gong before being released.

In Iran, the government committed numerous human rights abuses based in part on religion. Religious minorities, in particular Baha’is, continued to suffer repression by conservative elements of the judiciary and security establishment. Thirteen Jews were arrested in February and March on suspicion of espionage on behalf of Israel, an offense punishable by death, leading to charges of anti-Semitism. In Iraq, the government of Saddam Hussein has conducted a campaign of murder, summary execution, and protracted arbitrary arrest against the religious leaders and adherents of the Shi’ a Muslim population. Security forces have murdered senior Shi’ a clerics, desecrated mosques and holy sites, and arrested untold numbers of Shi’ a. In Sudan, discrimination and violence against religious minorities persisted. Government security forces harassed and detained persons on the basis of their religion. Eyewitnesses reported aerial bombardments of Christians, Muslims, and animists in the Nuba Mountains. Government-supported forces conducted raids, abducted persons, including women and children, and sold them into slavery. Many non-Muslims were converted forcibly to Islam.

In Afghanistan, the ultraconservative movement known as the Taliban, which controls about 90 percent of the country, enforced their interpretation of Islamic law through punishments such as public executions for adultery or murder and amputations of one hand and one foot for theft. Taliban militiamen often judged accused offenders and meted out punishments, such as beatings, on the spot. In Serbia, a predominantly Christian Orthodox country, authorities employed killing, torture, rape, and the forced mass emigration of Kosovar Albanians, who are overwhelmingly Muslim, in an effort to drive them from the country.

Other countries also saw significant violations of religious freedom. In Saudi Arabia, neither the government nor society in general accepts the concept of separation of religion and state. The religious police enforce adherence to Islamic norms, intimidating, abusing, and detaining citizens and foreigners. In Pakistan, both the pre- and post-coup governments, as well as sectarian groups, continued to discriminate against religious minorities, particularly Ahmadis and Christians. Three Ahmadis sentenced in 1997 to life in prison for blasphemy remain

incarcerated. Religious and ethnic-based rivalries resulted in numerous killings and civil disturbances. In India, there was widespread intercaste and communal violence.

In Uzbekistan, the government harassed and arrested hundreds of Islamic leaders and believers on questionable grounds, citing the threat of extremism. While the government tolerated the existence of some Christian denominations and even facilitated their registration, its laws still have the potential to limit the activity of some evangelical Christian groups. In Vietnam, the government arbitrarily arrested and detained citizens for the peaceful expression of their religious views. The government significantly restricts the operation of religious organizations other than those approved by the state.

In countries such as Indonesia, the problem was not government repression, but communal violence. In Maluku province, fighting principally involved Muslims and Christians (mostly Protestants). More than a thousand died and tens of thousands were displaced. Clashes began in the provincial capital of Ambon in January, then spread to neighboring islands. Economic tensions between native Christians and Muslims who migrated to Maluku in recent decades were a significant factor. Christian and Muslim communities in Maluku blamed each other for initiating and perpetuating the violence. Exhaustive mediation efforts, including an initiative launched by the Indonesian military in April, failed to secure a durable peace.

In Azerbaijan, the news was better. President Aliyev publicly took law enforcement and security officials to task for the harassment of religious believers. He also pledged that such abuse would not continue and that violators would be punished. The government rescinded deportation orders for foreign religious workers, secured the reinstatement of believers who had lost their jobs, and prosecuted members of a local police force accused of harassment.

4. Press Freedom and the Information Revolution

Attacks on independent media, whether print, broadcast, or electronic, remained commonplace. Journalists continued to risk harassment, arrest, and even death to report the news. Murder remained the leading cause of job-related deaths among journalists worldwide. A wide range of governments throughout the world continue to utilize a variety of tools, including licensing, limits on access to newsprint, control over government advertising, jamming, and censorship, to inhibit independent voices. The growth of new, internet-based media did help facilitate public access to a wide range of information, but some governments continued to develop means to monitor e-mail and internet use and restrict access to controversial, political, news-oriented, and human rights web sites. Other governments have chosen to prohibit internet access or limit it to political elites.

In China, control and manipulation of the press by the government for political purposes increased during the year. After authorities moved at the end of 1998 to close a number of newspapers and fire several editors, the press and publishing industries were more cautious. Nonetheless, the press continued to report on cases of corruption and abuse of power by some local officials. As part of its crackdown against the Falun Gong, the government used the state-controlled media to conduct a nationwide propaganda campaign. By some estimates, as many as 8.9 million Chinese citizens had access to the internet, but the government increased its efforts to try to restrict information available on the internet and to monitor usage.

In Cuba, the Castro regime continued to tightly control access to information. In February the National Assembly passed the Law to Protect National Independence and the Economy, which outlaws possession and dissemination of "subversive" literature or information that could be used by U.S. authorities in the application of U.S. legislation. The government has not yet charged anyone under the new law, but many independent journalists have been threatened

with arrest, some repeatedly. National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon told foreign correspondents that even reporters working for accredited foreign media could be sentenced to up to twenty years in prison under the new law. The government continued to subject independent journalists to internal travel bans, arbitrary and periodic brief detentions, small acts of repudiation, harassment, seizures of office and photographic equipment, and repeated threats of prolonged imprisonment. The government tightly controls access to computers, limiting access to the internet to certain government offices, selected institutes, and foreigners.

In Serbia, the government of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic continues to harass and detain journalists and shut down their newspapers and radio stations. At least one journalist was murdered under suspicious circumstances. In Serbia's sister republic of Montenegro, however, the government worked to provide a hospitable working environment to independent media, including media that were harassed, threatened, or shut down by Serbian authorities.

In Ethiopia, fewer journalists were detained than in previous years, but at least eight remained in detention at year's end. Some forty-five journalists obtained bail during the year but still are subject to trial. In Peru, the government inhibits freedom of speech and of the press. Journalists faced increased government harassment and intimidation and practiced a great degree of self-censorship.

In Ukraine, the government increasingly interfered with freedom of the press, most notably in the period before the October presidential elections. Government authorities stepped up pressure on the media, particularly broadcast outlets, through tax inspections and other measures. In Russia, journalists complained of increasing governmental interference. In mid-January 2000, Russian authorities detained Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty correspondent Andrey Babitskiy and held him incommunicado, but they did not make public his detention until the end of the month. On February 3, the government claimed that Russian forces had turned Babitskiy over to Chechen forces in exchange for Russian soldiers; neither Babitskiy's wife nor his employer has heard from him since, and his whereabouts remain unknown.

In Turkey, Parliament suspended for three years the sentences of writers and journalists convicted of crimes involving freedom of expression through the media. By the end of the year, twenty-five had been released. However, the law did not apply to crimes committed through speech, and human rights observers and some released writers said the conditions for the suspension amount to censorship. Limits on freedom of speech and of the press remained a serious problem. Authorities banned or confiscated publications and raided newspaper offices, and security forces occasionally beat journalists. Police continued to interfere with the distribution of some Kurdish newspapers, and radio and television broadcasts in Kurdish remained illegal. Although Kurdish music recordings were widely available, bans on certain songs and singers persisted. The Committee to Protect Journalists estimated at year's end that at least eighteen journalists remain in prison.

5. Women

The plight of women in Afghanistan continued to be the most serious women's human rights crisis in the world today. Taliban discrimination against women and girls remained both systematic and institutionally sanctioned. The Taliban imposed strict dress codes and restricted women from working outside the home except in very limited circumstances such as health care and humanitarian assistance. They also severely restricted women's and girls' access to many levels and types of education. The impact of Taliban restrictions is most acutely felt in cities such as Kabul and Herat, where there are a number of educated and professional women.

Elsewhere, women continue to face a wide range of human rights abuses. On a daily basis, women faced violence, abuse, rape, and other forms of degradation by their spouses and by members of society at large. Women suffer domestic violence in most if not all countries around the world. Many governments still fail to act against “honor killings,” domestic violence, and even rape. In Nigeria, for example, the law allows a husband to “chastise” his wife, as long as it does not result in “grievous harm.” In China, many women contended with domestic violence. Coercive family planning practices sometimes included forced abortion and forced sterilization. Trafficking and prostitution continued. In India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, dowry-related violence remained a serious problem. In Egypt, India, Iran, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and a number of other societies where religion and tradition play a predominant role, societal and cultural constraints kept women in a subordinate position.

In Kuwait, women do not have the right to vote or seek election to the National Assembly. Although the ruling Amir issued a decree in May which sought to give women the right to vote, to seek election to the National Assembly beginning with the parliamentary election scheduled for 2003, and to hold cabinet office, the Parliament vetoed it on constitutional grounds. Subsequent identical legislation introduced by members of parliament was defeated by a two-vote margin.

Female genital mutilation, which has negative, life-long health consequences for women and girls, continues to be practiced in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, and to varying degrees in some countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, Oman, and Yemen. Trafficking of women and children remains endemic in many parts of the world; in response, the Department of State has for the first time established a separate section in each country report to highlight U.S. concern about this serious problem (see Section C.2 below).

6. Protection of Minorities

In some states, majorities in power choose to mistreat or persecute those not like themselves. However, persecution and discrimination is not confined to states but also can be present in societies. Much remains to be done on the national level, and far too many governments do not grant individuals their rights because of race, sex, religion, disability, language, or social status. In many cases, such repression inevitably leads to violence and separatism.

In China, for example, particularly serious human rights abuses persisted in minority areas, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang, where restrictions on religion and other fundamental freedoms intensified. Some minority groups, particularly Tibetan Buddhists and Muslim Uighurs, came under increasing pressure as the government clamped down on dissent and “separatist” activities. In Tibet, the government expanded and intensified its continuing “patriotic education campaign” aimed at controlling the monasteries and expelling supporters of the Dalai Lama. In Xinjiang, where violence between the government and separatist forces has escalated since 1996, authorities tightened restrictions on religion and other fundamental freedoms in an effort to control independence groups.

In Serbia, discrimination and violence against Kosovar Albanians, Muslims, Roma, and other religious and ethnic minorities worsened during the year. The Milosevic regime’s oppressive policies toward Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians imperiled prospects for inter-ethnic cooperation and encouraged a separatist insurgency. In response, the regime launched a brutal police and military crackdown against the insurgents, which escalated into a full-fledged campaign of ethnic cleansing against civilians. As many as 850,000 Kosovars fled the province for squalid camps in neighboring states. After diplomatic intervention failed to resolve the matter, NATO forces began an air campaign against the Serbian regime. In June Serbia withdrew its forces from Kosovo, and the international community assumed responsibility for the province’s

administration. Since then, international peacekeeping forces have had to contend both with Kosovar Albanian reprisals against the Serbian population, and Serb attacks against Albanians in remaining Serb enclaves.

Although the erection of a wall to separate Roma from their neighbors in the Czech city of Usti nad Labem captured international attention, the problems facing Roma and Sinti populations in Europe went far beyond the building of a wall. Both populations suffer disproportionately from poverty, unemployment, and other socioeconomic ills. In many countries, particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe, they face prejudice, discrimination, and abuse.

7. The Holocaust: Completing the Historical Record

Spearheaded by Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat in his capacity as Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State on Holocaust-era issues, the United States promoted further international recognition of the need for justice and remembrance for the victims of the greatest human rights violation of the 20th century, the Holocaust. German industry and government pledged DM10 billion to capitalize a foundation that, among other things, will make payments to those who worked as forced and slave laborers for German companies during the Nazi era. Nineteen nations, including the United States, have established Holocaust Commissions to review their own involvement with Holocaust-era assets. Consistent with the 1998 Washington Conference on Art Principles, millions of dollars worth of art stolen by the Nazis are being returned to rightful owners. At the Stockholm International Forum in January 2000, the United States, along with over 40 other governments, made an unprecedented common political commitment to strengthening Holocaust education, remembrance and research activities, and to opening archives bearing on the Holocaust.

B. Developments in Democracy

1. Democracies Under Threat

In *The Third Wave*, his seminal study of democratization, Samuel Huntington warned that the wave of democratization that began with Portugal in 1974 (and continues today) might suffer significant reversals in countries where conditions for democracy are weak. Over the past year, the number of democracies around the world continued to grow, but a small number of countries on the path to democracy saw reversals or threats to democratic governance.

This trend was particularly notable in Latin America, where elected governments in Ecuador and Paraguay confronted attempted coups or instability, and an elected government in Peru undermined democratic governance by concentrating power in the executive. In Ecuador, what could have been a disastrous coup became instead an unfortunate but ultimately constitutional succession. Indigenous activists, with the support of elements of the military, occupied the Ecuadorian Congress building, demanded the resignation of President Jamil Mahuad and attempted to replace him with a three-person junta that included an indigenous leader, a former Supreme Court judge, and a military officer. To end the institutional crisis, President Mahuad asked Ecuadorians to support Vice President Gustavo Noboa as his constitutional successor. The National Assembly confirmed the change in presidents the same day.

In Paraguay, President Raul Cubas Grau, a protege of retired general and coup plotter Lino Oviedo, sought to undercut the constitutional authority of the legislative and judicial branches. In March Cubas' foe, Vice President Luis Maria Argana, was assassinated, allegedly by Oviedo supporters. On March 28, after widespread demonstrations against Cubas and Oviedo, Cubas resigned, and Oviedo fled Paraguay. Senate president Luis Gonzalez Macchi assumed the presidency, forming a national unity government that included, for the first time in fifty years, the

two major opposition parties. By the end of the year, however, the government faced economic difficulties, rural unrest, and increasing opposition.

In Peru, a dominant executive branch often uses its control of the legislature and the judiciary to the detriment of the democratic process. The Constitutional Tribunal has not functioned effectively since 1997, when Congress removed three of its members for opposing an interpretation of a law permitting President Fujimori to run for a third consecutive term. In Venezuela, President Hugo Chavez Frias, the leader of an attempted coup in 1992, was elected president on a promise of radical reform, including constitutional change through the election of a National Constitutional Assembly (ANC). In April, voters overwhelmingly approved his referendum, giving the ANC a six-month mandate to rewrite the constitution. The ANC, which was dominated by Chavez's political party, drafted a new constitution, which was approved by voters in December. At year's end some observers remained concerned that too much power was being concentrated in Chavez's hands.

In other parts of the world, the main threat to democracy came from the military. In Pakistan, Army Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the elected civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in an October bloodless coup. Musharraf, in consultation with senior military commanders, designated himself Chief Executive, and suspended the constitution, the National Assembly, the Senate, and the provincial assemblies. Despite repeated promises to restore democracy, Musharraf at year's end had not established either a timetable or milestones; his decision early in 2000 to require judges to swear a loyalty oath to the military (rather than the constitution) further distanced his regime from a return to democratic rule.

In Côte d'Ivoire, retired General Robert Guei took over the government after a mutiny that began in December evolved into a major military revolt and culminated in the dismissal and forced departure of President Henri Konan Bedie. The Guei regime arrested numerous government ministers and military officers; by year's end, it had released all except fourty. Guei has pledged to rewrite the constitution, clean up government corruption, and hold fair and transparent elections.

2. Free and Fair Elections

According to Freedom House, there were 120 democracies at the end of 1999, a net increase of three over the previous year, and the largest number ever. As noted above, however, this trend away from dictatorship saw several reversals, most notably in Pakistan. Although Indonesia and Nigeria, two of the world's most populous states, made great strides toward democratic rule, a number of other states saw tainted or flawed elections stall their transitions to democracy.

Indonesia made significant progress in its transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. In June, the country held its first pluralistic, competitive, free, and fair parliamentary elections in forty-three years. A new parliament and People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) were installed on October 1st. In accordance with constitutional procedures, the MPR subsequently elected, in a transparent balloting procedure, Abdurrahman Wahid as President, and Megawati Soekarnoputri as Vice President.

In Nigeria, the military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar completed its transition to democratic civilian rule with the election and subsequent May inauguration of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo as President. In accordance with Abubakar's transition program, members of the new civilian government were chosen in four elections held over a three-month period. Elections for local government leaders were held in December 1998, those for state

legislators and governors in January, and those for national legislators and president in February. The elections, most notably the presidential election, were flawed, but most observers agreed that the election of Obasanjo as President reflected the will of the majority of voters. Several states saw limited gains. In Tunisia, the October presidential and legislative elections marked a modest step toward democratic development, with opposition presidential candidates allowed to participate in the presidential race for the first time in Tunisia's history. However, the campaign and election processes greatly favored the ruling party, and there was wide disregard for the secrecy of the vote. In Niger, President Ibrahim Mainassara Bare, who overthrew a democratically elected government in 1996, was assassinated in January by members of his presidential guard. A group of military officers led by Major Daouda Malam Wanke asserted control over the government and announced a nine-month transition to a democratically elected government. In July citizens voted to approve a new constitution. In November they voted for a new National Assembly and for a new president; Tandja Mamadou was elected president with sixty percent of the vote in an election that was considered by international observers to be generally free and fair.

Other countries were not as successful in their transitions. In Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko's legal term as president expired in July. He had extended arbitrarily his term of office until 2001 after the illegal 1996 constitutional referendum. In Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev was elected in January to a new seven-year term in an election that fell far short of international standards. Parliamentary elections held in October were an improvement over the presidential election but still fell short of international standards. In Azerbaijan, the country's first-ever municipal elections held in December, were marred by a nearly universal pattern of interference by local officials, which allowed them to control the selection of the election committees that supervised the election. In Armenia, irregularities marred both the May parliamentary elections and the October local elections. OSCE observers categorized the parliamentary elections as a step toward compliance with OSCE commitments, but said that they still failed to meet international standards.

In Haiti, a prolonged stalemate between President Rene Preval and the opposition-controlled legislature prevented the holding of elections in autumn 1998 to replace the Parliament as legally required. Preval announced that he would not recognize Parliament's decision to extend its incumbents' mandates until new elections could be held, thereby leaving the country without a functioning legislative branch for over a year. In March, Prime Minister Alexis formed a cabinet after negotiations with the five-party opposition coalition. Due to the absence of a parliament, the new ministers took office without being confirmed. The international community is assisting Haiti in preparations for new elections, scheduled for March and April 2000, with the goal of restoring the lapsed democratic institutions.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni, elected to a five-year term in 1996 under the 1995 constitution, continued to dominate the government. The 1995 Constitution formally extended the one-party movement form of government for five years and severely restricted political activity. Although Museveni supporters remained in control of the legislative branch, parliament acted with increasing independence and assertiveness during the year. A national referendum on whether to allow multipartyism again is scheduled for 2000.

3. Civil Society

In many nations, civil society—that broad array of non-governmental organizations, clubs, societies, trade unions, and political parties that are the domestic counterparts to transnational networks—played an increasingly influential role. Although some critics have warned that the emergence of the Internet culture would stunt social interaction, civil society groups showed no sign of slowing down at year's end, and as noted above, many were taking

advantage of technological developments to establish new transnational networks of common interest and concern.

Many governments continue to seek means to limit, repress, or shut down the growth and development of civil society, which they regard as a profound threat to their authoritarian rule. In Belarus, for example, government restrictions prevent an embryonic civil society from developing further. The security services infringed on citizens' privacy rights and monitored closely the activities of opposition politicians and other segments of the population. Restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, and peaceful assembly continued, and the government did not respect freedom of association.

In Iraq, then-U.N. Special Rapporteur for Iraq Max Van der Stoel noted in his February and October reports that freedom of speech, press, assembly, movement, and association do not exist. The government effectively has eliminated the civil rights to life, liberty, and physical integrity and the freedoms of thought, expression, association and assembly. In Cuba, the government denied citizens the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association. Authorities routinely harass, threaten, arbitrarily arrest, detain, imprison, and defame members of independent associations, including human rights advocates, journalists, economists, doctors, and lawyers, often with the goal of coercing them into leaving the country.

In China, an unknown number of persons, estimated at several thousand, have been detained for peacefully expressing their political, religious, or social views. Persons or groups seeking to promote political change, monitor human rights, or in any way challenge the authority of the Communist Party were repressed, their leaders often harassed, beaten, and jailed. At the same time, most average citizens went about their daily lives without significant interference from the government, enjoying looser economic controls, increased access to outside sources of information, greater room for individual choice, and more diversity in cultural life. Social groups with economic resources at their disposal continued to play an increasing role in community life. Pilot experiments with contested local village elections continued.

In Malaysia, a U.N. special rapporteur reported that the government systematically curtailed freedom of expression. Government restrictions and proliferating slander and libel suits stifled freedom of speech, and the government significantly restricted freedom of movement, association, and assembly. The government prohibited some peaceful gatherings, prevented students from participating in some political activities, and regularly and harshly criticizes domestic non-governmental organizations that venture into the political arena.

In Turkey, which has an active and growing civil society movement, the government still continued to limit freedom of assembly and association, and police harassed, beat, abused, and detained a large number of demonstrators. The Saturday Mothers, who had held weekly vigils in Istanbul for more than three years to protest the disappearances of their relatives, discontinued their gatherings this year in the face of ongoing police harassment, abuse, and detention of the group's members. In general, the government continued to harass, intimidate, indict, and imprison individuals for ideas that they had expressed in public forums. However, there were some signs of a growing tolerance for civil society: State Minister Irtemcelik and President Demirel met with non-governmental organizations, and one office of a human rights non-governmental organization reopened in October after being closed for five years.

4. Rule of Law

All too often, authoritarian governments insist that they respect the rule of law when in fact they abuse the law to justify their rule. In far too many countries—Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, for example—absolute

rulers use the legal system to serve their own interests. Without the rule of law, these leaders violate human rights with impunity, suspend democracy, void contracts, and engage in corrupt practices. Governments that respect the rule of law have transparent and fair legal systems that feature professional and independent judges who act as final arbiters of the law.

In China, abuses included instances of extrajudicial killings, torture, and other mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, arbitrary arrest and detention, lengthy incommunicado detention, and denial of due process. In many cases, particularly in sensitive political cases, the judicial system denies criminal defendants basic legal safeguards and due process. A number of statutes passed in recent years hold the potential to enhance citizens' rights. If fully implemented, these laws would bring criminal laws closer toward compliance with international norms. However, the new statutes are violated routinely in cases involving political dissidents.

In Malaysia, police continued to use certain provisions of the legal code to detain some individuals without trial or charge. Prolonged pretrial detention occurs in some cases. The police were criticized for reports of physical abuse of prisoners and other citizens, although the number of police extrajudicial killings declined during the year. Many observers expressed serious concern about the decreasing independence and impartiality of the judiciary and about apparently politically motivated selective prosecution by the attorney general.

In Pakistan, rule of law problems were rampant both before and after the October coup. The judiciary was subject to executive and other outside influence and suffers from inadequate resources, inefficiency, and corruption. The former Sharif government used special antiterrorism courts to try the crimes of murder, gang rape, child molestation, and "illegal" strikes. After the coup, General Musharraf illegally detained a number of political figures from the Sharif government and their families.

In Algeria, the authorities did not always respect defendants' rights to due process, and security forces committed extrajudicial killings, tortured detainees, and arbitrarily detained many individuals suspected of involvement with armed Islamist groups. However, there were no reports of new disappearances during the year in which the security forces were suspected. Prolonged pretrial detention and lengthy trial delays are problems, as are illegal searches and infringements on citizens' privacy rights.

In Peru, arbitrary arrest, prolonged pretrial detention, lack of due process, and lengthy trial delays remained problems. In July, the government announced its withdrawal from the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights after the Court determined that Peru had failed to provide due process in the case of four Chileans convicted by a military tribunal of treason. In Haiti, the judiciary remained plagued by understaffing, inadequate resources, and in many cases, corrupt and untrained judges. Judicial dockets remain clogged, and fair and expeditious trials are the exception rather than the rule. In a number of key cases, the executive branch continued to detain persons in defiance of release orders issued by judges. The five-year-old Haitian National Police continues to benefit from international assistance, but it is grappling with problems of excessive use of force and other human rights abuses, including a marked increase over last year in the number of extrajudicial killings. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention also remained problems.

Several countries saw positive developments in the rule of law. In Israel, a September decision by the High Court of Justice resulted in a significant reduction in the number of abuses committed by members of the security forces during the interrogation of security prisoners. In Cambodia, the government withdrew a draft non-governmental organization law that had been

criticized for its potential to place non-governmental organizations under arbitrary and severe restrictions on their ability to operate.

In Colombia, the Pastrana administration took measures to initiate structural reform and strengthen the rule of law. In July, the regional “anonymous” court system was abolished and replaced with a new specialized jurisdiction. In August, Congress passed a military penal reform bill that, while not yet implemented, is expected to correct some of the worst abuses in the military justice system and to be of great help in the fight against impunity. Thanks to the diligent efforts of the Prosecutor General’s Human Rights Unit, a number of security force members were investigated, prosecuted, and convicted of past human rights violations. Impunity, although still widespread, is no longer total. Nonetheless, the civilian judiciary remains inefficient, overburdened by a large case backlog, and undermined by intimidation.

C. Developments in Labor

1. Worker Rights

Throughout the year, the impact of globalization on worker rights was the subject of serious discussion in many international forums. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial in Seattle saw a transnational network of human rights, environmental, and labor organizations focus debate on public concern that workers and their families, particularly in developing countries, receive a fair share of the benefits derived from the global economy. In response, the United States sought to win support for a proposal calling for establishment of a working group in the WTO that would examine the relationship between trade and labor. On several occasions in Seattle, President Clinton strongly urged both the WTO and the international community to remember that free trade cannot come at the cost of excluding workers.

Despite the fact that Seattle did not lead to a new round of negotiations, a number of positive developments did take place during the year. In June, member nations of the International Labor Organization (ILO) unanimously adopted a landmark convention on the prohibition and immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labor. By this action, member nations pledged to ban a number of abuses, including child slavery; bonded labor; work that is inherently harmful to the health or morals of children, such as dangerous work or child prostitution; and the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under eighteen for use in armed conflict.

President Clinton traveled to Geneva to support the adoption of the convention, and worked with Congress to ensure that the United States was one of the first countries in the world to sign and ratify it. In January 2000, governments again met in Geneva to adopt a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that prohibits governments and insurgencies from using child soldiers. It is expected that the protocol will be formally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly later this year. President Clinton has indicated that the United States is committed to a process of speedy review and signature and to working with the Senate to ensure ratification.

Notwithstanding the growing international consensus in support of worker rights, certain governments continued to violate core worker rights in defiance of their obligations under the ILO’s Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Trade unions continued to face harassment and closure, many workers continued to face discrimination, and bonded and forced labor remained significant problems.

Despite the new convention, child labor remained a severe problem in many parts of the world. According to the ILO, more than 250 million children under the age of fifteen work around the world, many in dangerous conditions. The ILO’s International Program on the

Elimination of Child Labor, to which the United States is by far the largest contributor, made some progress, but much more remains to be done.

Another problem common to many parts of the world is the misuse, mistreatment, and abuse of domestic labor. In much of the Middle East and parts of Europe, Asia, and the Americas, workers who travel from developing countries to work as domestic servants, as well as native-born workers, must contend with poor working and living conditions, minimal or nonexistent wages, violence, and sexual assault. Although some governments have taken steps to minimize abuses, many domestic workers find they must tolerate terrible working conditions to support their often far-off families.

Workers in a number of countries faced significant violations of their rights. In China, the government continued to restrict tightly worker rights. The Communist Party controls the country's sole official union, and independent trade unions are illegal. The government continued to detain and arrest independent labor activists, sentencing at least seven to terms ranging from one to ten years. Neither the constitution nor the labor law provides for the right to strike. Forced labor is a serious problem, particularly in penal institutions. Some prisons contract to perform manufacturing and assembly work, while others operate their own companies. A 1999 directory of Chinese corporations published by a foreign business-information company listed at least two prisons as business enterprises. The government also maintains a network of reeducation-through-labor camps, whose inmates are required to work. There have been reports that products made in these facilities are exported. Most anecdotal reports conclude that work conditions in prison factories are similar to those in other factories, but conditions on the penal system's farms and in mines can be very harsh.

In Burma, the government continued to restrict worker rights and ban unions. The forced use of citizens as porters by the army remained a common practice. Forced civilian labor remained widespread, although its use on major infrastructure projects has declined due to the use of soldiers. Child labor including forced child labor remained widespread. In Vietnam, the government continues to restrict worker rights. Child labor is a problem and there were some reports of forced child labor. In Indonesia, enforcement of labor standards remained inconsistent and weak in some areas. Forced and bonded child labor remained a problem, particularly on fishing platforms, despite government efforts to reduce the problem. In Thailand, forced labor and illegal child labor are problems.

In the former Soviet Union, Belarus in particular stands out for its repression of the rights of workers. In Russia, workers face long delays in receiving their wages, as do pensioners. Conditions of work are health and even life threatening in many industries. Workers do have the right to join unions, but plant managers frequently work with the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, the successor to Communist trade unions, to destroy new unions. Court rulings have further limited the right of association by ruling that collective action based on nonpayment of wages is not a strike and that individuals who participate in such actions are not protected by the law. The Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory labor, but there were credible reports of soldiers being "sold" by their superior officers to perform work for private citizens or organizations.

In Guatemala, poverty, the legacy of violent repression of labor activists and others, the deep hostility of many in business and the military towards trade unions, and a weak labor inspection and labor court system continued to constrain worker rights and limit enforcement of standards. In one case in which vigilantes abducted union leaders, physically abused them, and forced them to resign from their jobs and union positions, none of the vigilantes has been arrested, although more than a dozen suspects have been indicted on charges ranging from coercion to illegal detention. While the constitution bars employment of minors under the age of fourteen,

child labor remains a serious problem. Most child labor occurs in agriculture, domestic service, construction, stone quarrying, and family businesses. According to the Guatemalan Labor Ministry, 3,000 to 5,000 children are employed in the illegal cottage fireworks industry. This dangerous employment violates ILO Convention 182 banning the worst forms of child labor.

In Colombia, the government, under strong international pressure, bowed to the demands of its unions, agreeing to the dispatch of a special ILO team to investigate killing and kidnaping of trade unionists and other worker rights violations. Physical intimidation of trade unionists, including killings, remains a very serious problem.

In India, the use of forced and bonded adult and child labor, though illegal, continues. While programs sponsored by the ILO and private groups have moved many children from, for example, carpet looms to classrooms, enforcement of child and bonded labor laws is spotty. Dalits and tribals, who constitute the majority of India's bonded labor, continue to face widespread discrimination. In Pakistan, child and bonded labor remains a serious problem. Thousands of families work in debt bondage, with children born into a life of bonded labor. While the government has worked with the ILO to move children from work to school in several industries, enforcement of the laws against bonded and child labor has been inadequate. In Bangladesh, the government failed to keep promises it had made to the international community with regard to worker rights, notably affording workers freedom of association and the right to organize in export processing zones. However, the government has worked constructively with the ILO on a program to reduce child labor.

2. Trafficking of Persons

Trafficking in persons is a growing global problem that touches countries on every continent. The insidious reach of this modern-day form of slavery hurts women, children, and men from all walks of life, and of every age, religion, and culture. Traffickers rob their victims of basic human rights. They exploit and trade in human hopes and dreams to profit from inhuman suffering and misery. Victims are treated as chattel to be bought and sold across international and within national borders. This human tragedy rips the fabric of communities and tears families apart.

The trafficking industry is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world. Profits are enormous, generating billions of dollars annually and feeding into criminal syndicates' involvement in other illicit and violent activities. Trafficking in persons is considered the third largest source of profits for organized crime, behind only drugs and guns. Trafficking cases appear in many forms. In some cases, traffickers move victims through transit countries using drugs, violence, and threats to ensure cooperation. In other cases, economically desperate parents sell their child to traffickers. Many times, trafficked victims begin their journey voluntarily and unwittingly fall into the hands of trafficking schemes.

In Russia and Ukraine, for example, victims who yearn for economic independence within economies that offer few jobs, are lured by advertisements promising well-paying jobs abroad. However, once victims arrive in countries of destination, they are held captive and forced into bonded labor, domestic servitude or the commercial sex industry through threats, psychological coercion and severe physical brutality, including rape, torture, starvation, imprisonment, and death.

The majority of trafficking victims are girls and women. The reasons for this are linked to the economic and social status of women in many countries. Not all victims are women, however. Boys are frequently trafficked for prostitution, pornography, and in at least one country, used as camel jockeys. Men from a number of countries such as China are trafficked overseas to

work in restaurants or in sweatshops in the garment industry. They travel to their destinations in rickety boats or cargo containers before becoming indentured servants to pay their “debts.” If they try to leave employment, they risk violence or the extortion of their family members back home.

The underground nature of trafficking makes it difficult to quantify. The most reliable estimates place the level of trafficking at one to two million persons trafficked annually. As this report documents, trafficking into the commercial sex industry is merely one form of a broader range of trafficking exploited by organized criminal enterprises.

The problem is particularly widespread in South Asia. India and Pakistan are significant countries of origin, transit, and destination. Poor economic conditions in Nepal, Bangladesh, and rural areas of India result in women and children being trafficked into major cities for the sex trade and forced labor. In many cases, girls from poverty-stricken families are sold to traffickers by parents or relatives. Women who seek to return home often face stigmatization. Many are HIV positive. While criminal laws against trafficking exist, inadequate enforcement and lax penalties do little to stem trafficking patterns.

In East Asia, many women are coerced into prostitution under the guise of overseas employment contracts. In Thailand, women from hill tribes and neighboring countries are especially vulnerable to exploitation because of their inability to speak Thai. In Burma, women and children in border areas and from the Shan ethnic minority are particularly susceptible to being forced by traffickers into neighboring countries to work as prostitutes. In the Philippines, some women are lured into entering employment contracts overseas by unethical recruiters. Once they arrive at their destination, the women are subjected to work in the sex entertainment industry or suffer abuse at the hands of foreign employers or husbands.

The range and scope of trafficking in Africa remains largely undocumented. Officials in Europe, however, report an active and growing market from trafficking in women and children from Nigeria. There is evidence that Nigerian crime syndicates may use threats, physical injury, and legal coercion to stop women forced into the sex trade from escaping. Inside Nigeria, there is an active trade in child laborers, some exported to neighboring countries, from the Niger Delta region.

Trafficking also exists in the Western Hemisphere. Forced prostitution is also a problem in the Dominican Republic, where there are disparities in law enforcement. In Brazil, the sexual exploitation and prostitution of children is a serious problem. Prostitution rings foster a sexual tourism industry that exports children from the Amazon region to large urban centers and major cities.

Conclusion

The events of the past year have demonstrated the undisputed and growing power of transnational public-private networks in promoting democracy, human rights, and labor. Traditionally, “norm entrepreneurs” have been individuals whose role in society or government has given them the ability to influence the direction of policy. Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, Vaclav Havel, Pope John Paul II, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Eleanor Roosevelt are but a few of the human rights advocates who instantly come to mind. Such individuals still have an important role to play, but increasingly, public and private networks of transnational actors are becoming “norm entrepreneurs” in and of themselves—networks capable of mobilizing popular opinion and political support at the national and international level in order to secure international recognition and acceptance of new principles, standards, or approaches to complex human rights problems.

These transnational networks increasingly wield influence comparable to the power of individual nation-states, in their capacity to spotlight abuses, mobilize shame, generate political pressure, and develop structural solutions. But recent history also teaches that such networks cannot succeed without involving democratic governments dedicated to the same human rights goals. As President Clinton noted in Davos recently, all sides need to “lower the rhetoric and focus on results.” No transnational network can firmly or permanently entrench human rights, democracy, or the rule of law in unfamiliar soil without forging partnerships with democratic governments and other domestic and international members of the emerging human rights community. These partnerships, which cross public and private, institutional and national lines, will be increasingly challenged to work together and prod one another to yield creative and enduring solutions to emerging problems. As this new century unfolds, the United States will continue to be a leader in creating and partnering with such transnational networks to seek democracy and human rights for all the world’s peoples.