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# ***PERSPECTIVES***

## **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2000**

**By**

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Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 2001**

### **Preface**

For the past quarter of a century, these reports have grown in breadth and stature every year. As such they reflect our country's deep and abiding commitment to universal human rights and the unprecedented growth in democracy, freedom, and human rights throughout the world.

The year 2000 saw many improvements in human rights from the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria and Ghana to the defeat of an entrenched dictator in Serbia and the election of a new president in Mexico. At the same time, the continued deterioration of conditions in China and Cuba and the abusive policies pursued by the regimes in Iraq and Sudan and a number of other countries offer proof that the battle to promote universal human rights is far from finished. We who believe in human freedom and the rule of law must not lose sight of the challenges that lie before us.

This year's report covers 195 countries. No country, our own included, can claim a perfect human rights record; nor should any seek exemption from international scrutiny. Each nation must be accountable for the way it treats its citizens. The purpose of these reports, therefore, is to provide to the best of our ability a comprehensive and accurate report on the human rights conditions in every country.

The interest in these annual country reports can be seen in the hundreds of thousands of hits our web site at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) will receive from every part of the world over the next few days, and in the countless discussions, both public and private, that will follow. The report for the year 2000 thus takes its place within the context of a new and revolutionary era of global human discourse. It is my deepest hope, therefore, that these reports can stimulate new dialogue and provide new encouragement for all countries to strengthen their commitments to universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### **Overview**

#### **Why The Reports Are Prepared**

This report is submitted to the Congress by the Department of State in compliance with sections 116(d) and 502(b) of the *Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA)*, as amended, and section 504 of the *Trade Assistance Act of 1974*, as amended. The law provides that the Secretary of State shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, by February 25 "a full and complete report regarding the status of internationally recognized human rights, within the meaning of subsection (A) in countries that receive assistance under this part, and (B) in all other foreign countries which are members of the United Nations and which are not otherwise the subject of a human rights report under this Act."

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We have also included reports on several countries that do not fall into the categories established by these statutes and that thus are not covered by the congressional requirement.

The responsibility of the United States to speak out on behalf of international human rights standards was formalized in the early 1970s. In 1976 Congress enacted legislation creating a Coordinator of Human Rights in the Department of State, a position later upgraded to Assistant Secretary. In 1994 the Congress created a position of Senior Advisor for Women's Rights. Congress has also written into law formal requirements that U.S. foreign and trade policy take into account countries' human rights and worker rights performance and that country reports be submitted to the Congress on an annual basis. The first reports, in 1977, covered only countries receiving U.S. aid, numbering 82; this year 195 reports are submitted.

### **How The Reports are Prepared**

In August 1993, the Secretary of State moved to strengthen further the human rights efforts of our embassies. All sections in each embassy were asked to contribute information and to corroborate reports of human rights violations, and new efforts were made to link mission programming to the advancement of human rights and democracy. In 1994 the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs was reorganized and renamed as the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, reflecting both a broader sweep and a more focused approach to the interlocking issues of human rights, worker rights, and democracy. The 2000 human rights reports reflect a year of dedicated effort by hundreds of State Department, foreign service, and other U.S. government employees.

Our embassies, which prepared the initial drafts of the reports, gathered information throughout the year from a variety of sources across the political spectrum, including government officials, jurists, military sources, journalists, human rights monitors, academics, and labor activists. This information-gathering can be hazardous, and U.S. foreign service officers regularly go to great lengths, under trying and sometimes dangerous conditions, to investigate reports of human rights abuse, monitor elections, and come to the aid of individuals at risk, such as political dissidents and human rights defenders whose rights are threatened by their governments.

After the embassies completed their drafts, the texts were sent to Washington for careful review by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, in cooperation with other State Department offices. As they worked to corroborate, analyze, and edit the reports, the Department officers drew on their own sources of information. These included reports provided by U.S. and other human rights groups, foreign government officials, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and institutions, and experts from academia and the media. Officers also consulted with experts on worker rights issues, refugee issues, military and police matters, women's issues, and legal matters. The guiding principle was to ensure that all relevant information was assessed as objectively, thoroughly, and fairly as possible.

The reports in this volume will be used as a resource for shaping policy, conducting diplomacy, and making assistance, training, and other resource allocations. They also will serve as a basis for the U.S. government's cooperation with private groups to promote the observance of internationally recognized human rights.

The country reports on human rights practices cover internationally recognized individual, civil, political, and worker rights, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights include freedom from torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; from prolonged detention without charges; from disappearance or clandestine

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detention; and from other flagrant violations of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person.

Universal human rights aim to incorporate respect for human dignity into the processes of government and law. All persons have the inalienable right to change their government by peaceful means and to enjoy basic freedoms, such as freedom of expression, association, assembly, movement, and religion, without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or sex. The right to join a free trade union is a necessary condition of a free society and economy. Thus the reports assess key internationally recognized worker rights, including the right of association; the right to organize and bargain collectively; prohibition of forced or compulsory labor; the status of child labor practices and the minimum age for employment of children; and acceptable work conditions.

## **Introduction**

### **The 25th Edition of the Country Reports**

For the past quarter of a century, the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* have chronicled the ebb and flow of human rights, bearing witness to the conditions that affect people's lives in every nation of the world. Yet despite all the suffering or perhaps because of it the cause of human rights is stronger now than ever. The expansion of democracy and human freedom that the world has experienced over the past twenty-five years has many causes.

This expansion rests on the fundamental belief that there are rights and freedoms to which every human is entitled no matter where he or she resides. This idea is so powerful and so universal that it gains strength with every passing year. The primary focus of the *Country Reports* always has been events in the countries that the reports cover. If newspapers are the first drafts of history, the reports are surely the second drafts, carefully researched cross-sections of the good and bad that transpire around the world every year. But the reports are not just history. They are documents backed by the full weight of the American people and government. They speak for those who have no voice, bearing witness for those who have not had access to free trials, nor have enjoyed other fundamental human rights and protections. As the reports have done since their first appearance in March 1977, they represent the nation's commitment to respect for universal human rights and its interest in promoting these rights in every country of the world. The reports are a tangible manifestation of the Department of State's intense focus on human rights issues.

### **The Year in Review**

The year saw a number of advances in human rights, democracy, and fundamental freedoms. The Yugoslav people voted Slobodan Milosevic out of office in September, ending more than a decade of authoritarian rule and offering hope for a new, more tolerant and democratic era in Yugoslavia. Nigeria continued to make progress in its transition to democracy, while a peaceful transfer of authority took place in Ghana following generally free and fair elections. Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a peace accord in December, ending a conflict that created at least a million internally displaced civilians in both countries. The election of Vicente Fox marked the first time in modern Mexican history that a member of an opposition party was elected president. Peru's decision to renew its acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights appeared to represent a renewed commitment to the rule of law. And South Korean President Kim Dae Jung's engagement policy led to some easing of tensions with North Korea.

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United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan reiterated the United Nations' support for the promotion of human rights and instructed its agencies to place emphasis on both reporting and programming initiatives that strengthened respect for human rights. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia continued to try alleged war criminals, including a war crimes trial based on charges of rape and other sexual violence. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda also continued to try persons for genocide-related crimes. At the regional level, a number of institutions continued to work to strengthen democratic norms and practices. The Organization of African Unity denied a seat at its summit to Côte d'Ivoire due to its 1999 coup. The Organization of American States (OAS) sent a mission to Peru in the wake of elections that international and domestic observers deemed to be seriously flawed. The government subsequently announced new elections that are scheduled to take place in April 2001. The OAS mission also sponsored a dialogue among government, opposition politicians, and civil society representatives aimed at reforming the country's beleaguered democratic institutions. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe engaged in active and public human rights reporting in Kosovo and monitored elections in a number of countries. A number of member states of the Council of Europe began to publish reports of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

At the international level, the global spread of democracy was affirmed in both governmental and non-governmental arenas. The governments of over 100 countries that have chosen a democratic path and that represent every region of the world, level of development, and various historical experiences, convened a June ministerial meeting in Warsaw, Poland, under the rubric of a Community of Democracies. Participants endorsed the Warsaw Declaration, which committed their governments to uphold democratic principles and practices. The community of democracies meeting sought to enhance cooperation among participating governments through several avenues, including an informal caucus at the U.N. General Assembly to share information and support democracy-related issues and resolutions within the U.N. system.

At the same time these positive trends took place, China's poor human rights record worsened during the year, as the authorities intensified their harsh measures against underground Christian groups and Tibetan Buddhists, destroyed many houses of worship, and stepped up their campaign against the Falun Gong movement. China also sharply suppressed organized dissent. In Burma the military continued its severe repression, holding Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for much of the year, detaining her supporters, imprisoning many religious believers, and coercing numerous persons, including children, into forced labor. North Korea's situation remained among the worst in the world. The government stifled all dissent and widely curtailed freedom of religion, political prisoners were held in forced labor camps, and malnutrition remained widespread. In Afghanistan the Taliban continued to be a major violator of human rights, severely restricting women's and girls' access to education, medical facilities, and employment. Iraq remained under the complete domination of one of the world's most repressive regimes, as security forces routinely executed, tortured, beat, raped, or otherwise intimidated and abused any perceived political opponents. Cuba's overall human rights record remained poor, as the government retained tight surveillance over anyone considered a potential opponent. The human rights situation in Belarus worsened in a number of areas, as the Lukashenko regime took severe measures to neutralize political opponents and repressed all calls for democracy. Turkmenistan remained one of the most totalitarian countries in the world, as the Committee on National Security maintained tight control over the country, and a personality cult centered around President Saparmurat Niyazov continued. In Israel and the occupied territories, following the outbreak of violence in September, Israeli security forces sometimes used excessive force in contravention of their own rules of engagement, killing approximately 300 Palestinians and injuring thousands in response to violent demonstrations and other clashes in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Palestinian security forces and members of Fatah's Tanzim killed numerous Israeli soldiers and civilians in the cycle of violence.

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Continuing internal conflict marred the human rights situation in a number of countries. In Colombia both paramilitary and guerrilla groups continued to commit acts of violence and other serious abuses in many parts of the country, with numerous massacres of civilians and the murder, kidnaping, and intimidation of human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, and other targeted groups. War, exacerbated by external intervention, continued to wrack the Democratic Republic of the Congo, enabling perpetrators of human rights violations to enjoy virtual impunity in large portions of the country. The Government of Sudan continued its bombing of civilian population centers, support for slave taking, and forced religious conversions, while preventing international humanitarian assistance from reaching large portions of the country. Numerous credible reports of human rights abuses by Russian forces in Chechnya, which included extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape, provoked widespread condemnation and calls for accountability; the Chechens committed numerous abuses as well, such as the execution of prisoners. In Indonesia security forces were responsible for numerous instances of indiscriminate shootings of civilians, torture, beatings, and other abuses in Aceh, Irian Jaya, and elsewhere, and the government was ineffective in deterring social, interethnic, and interreligious violence in the Moluccas and Sulawesi.

## **Developments in Human Rights, Democracy, and Labor**

### **1. Global Democratic Trends**

The year witnessed new strides towards the globalization of democracy. Many, if not most, governments, civil society leaders, and multilateral institutions now pursue and promote open economies and freer societies. A majority of people in the world now live in democratic countries or countries that have begun to implement some democratic and political reforms. The overall trend remains one of positive, incremental change, despite some reversals.

Elections bolstered democratic transitions in Croatia, Ghana, Mexico, Suriname, and Yugoslavia during the year. An active civil society and increasingly independent media helped to ensure the success and transparency of these elections. Setbacks included continuing conflict in the Middle East and Africa, a coup in Fiji, and a breakdown of the government and law and order in the Solomon Islands. In China, despite widespread government abuses, important aspects of civil society continued to develop. Seriously flawed elections took place in other countries, most notably in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Haiti.

On the non-governmental side, increased global networking among organizations and private citizens mirrored the growth of active civil societies at the national level. The World Forum on Democracy, held jointly with the Warsaw Community of Democracies Ministerial in June, brought together an unprecedented international gathering of scholars, civic, religious, labor, and business leaders to assess the challenges to democracy. The Forum provided to the ministerial assembly recommendations that included convening the informal caucus of democracies that was launched at the United Nations in the fall. Representatives of non-governmental organizations from over 80 countries also met in São Paulo during November to consider how to meet the challenges to democracy. They developed a list of practical steps non-government organizations could take in their own countries to support the democratic process.

### **2. Integrity of the Person**

In Algeria reports of abuses such as torture and arbitrary detention continued to decrease during the year; however, extrajudicial killings by security forces and terrorist groups claimed the lives of many hundreds of persons. The torture of political opponents is widespread in Uzbekistan. Cameroon's security forces reportedly killed many dozens of persons over a six month period in the city of Douala, and the abuse of detainees throughout the country remained

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endemic. The brutality associated with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone abated somewhat; however, there continued to be reports of serious abuses, such as extrajudicial killings, rapes, and beatings in the 60 percent of the country that the government does not control. The RUF also committed human rights abuses in Guinea. The Libyan government resorted to intimidation to control the political opposition, as security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals who frequently were held incommunicado or tortured.

### **3. Press Freedom**

Freedom of the press remains nonexistent in such countries as Cuba, Iraq, Libya, and Turkmenistan. There were severe restrictions on the press in Sudan, Uzbekistan, and China, except in Hong Kong. The disappearance of Ukrainian Georhiy Gongadze, whose alleged remains were found late in the year, raised serious concern about press freedom in Ukraine. In Russia Kremlin efforts to gain control over a major independent television network posed a threat to hard-won press freedom as well. In Iran dozens of newspaper offices were closed, and a number of Iran's most prominent journalists and editors were arrested or harassed as hard-line elements within the government sought to silence their critics. However, there was some easing of press restrictions in Syria, and the press in a number of countries in North Africa continued to demonstrate more freedom.

### **4. Religious Freedom**

The year saw the continuation of religious repression and discrimination in every region of the world. Based on the *Department's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2000* (issued in September and covering the period July 1999 through June 2000), all five countries designated as "countries of particular concern" by the Secretary of State in 1999, Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, and Sudan were redesignated. This designation reflects the particularly severe violations of religious freedom by the governments of those countries. In each the situation remained serious; in some notably China, religious repression increased.

In Uzbekistan, despite the release of some religious prisoners, the government continued to incarcerate and abuse others because of their religious beliefs and practices. In particular some Muslims were vulnerable to mistreatment because of their alleged association with terrorists. The government of Turkmenistan failed to allow non-Sunni Muslims and non-Russian Orthodox Christian believers to register, despite earlier promises to do so, and continued its crackdown on Protestant worshipers and its suppression of practitioners of other faiths for not being registered. In Russia there were concerns about the uniform implementation by local officials of federal regulations requiring the reregistration of religious groups and organizations. In Georgia there was increased discrimination against some religious minorities, including Jehovah's Witnesses. In Laos some religious prisoners were released, but the practice by certain local officials of forcing Christians to sign renunciations of their faith continued, as did the harsh treatment of Christians in prison.

In Saudi Arabia non-Muslim public worship is prohibited, and the government detained and subsequently deported several persons whom it considered to have violated the prohibition. The government supports the Sunni Muslim majority, and discrimination against members of the Shi'a minority persists. Pakistan's blasphemy law continued to be abused and directed against the country's religious minorities, in particular the Ahmadiya and Christian communities. In Europe some states have adopted or are considering discriminatory legislation or policies that tend to stigmatize expressions of religious faith by certain groups by wrongfully associating them with dangerous "sects" or "cults."

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On a more positive note, religious life in a number of countries of the New Independent States continued to progress during the year, as some governments tried with varying degrees of success to bring local and regional officials into line with national policy. In Azerbaijan the treatment of religious groups continued to improve, as it has since President Aliyev's public commitment to religious liberty in 1999.

## **5. Women**

The year saw women's human rights attract more international attention than in the past, but actual gains worldwide were limited. In Egypt women were granted the right to divorce on grounds of incompatibility. In Rwanda a law was passed that improves women's rights in inheritance, family matters, and credit. Despite some progress made in these and other areas, serious problems remain. In many parts of Africa, female genital mutilation continued to damage the physical and psychological health of women and girls. Societal discrimination prevented women in many countries from taking advantage of economic opportunities. In Afghanistan the Taliban's restrictions on education and work continued to confine women to the home. Traditional patriarchal societies continued to devalue women and girls. In China coercive family planning practices continued to harm women and female children, despite some government experimentation with noncoercive practices. In a number of countries in the Middle East and South Asia, so-called honor killings and dowry deaths continued to be major problems.

Violence against women remained a pervasive problem, cutting across social and economic lines. Domestic and sexual violence against women is found on every continent. While governments publicly condemned violence against women, too few took concrete steps to address it.

## **6. Children**

Children are among the most vulnerable of any group in society and face particular threats to their human rights. Around the world, children face dangerous and unhealthy conditions, working in factories, fields, and sweatshops, as domestic servants, or, in some cases, as prostitutes. The trafficking of children for forced labor, prostitution, and pornography is a growing and lucrative business for criminals. In many cities large numbers of street children lack shelter, food, education, and support and are vulnerable to many forms of abuse, despite the best efforts of governments and non-government organizations. In countries such as Colombia, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, armed rebels force children to serve as soldiers or recruit them with promises or threats. In many countries, children are denied access to education, in some cases because they cannot afford the fees for books and uniforms, in others because they must work to support their families, thereby severely reducing their chances for a better life. Many governments deny girls the opportunity to attend school or complete their schooling.

Some improvements in the lives of children took place during the year, as some governments took steps to aid children and strengthen protection of their rights. For example, in Venezuela some 500,000 children attended school for the first time when the government prohibited registration fees. The government of Tunisia sponsors an immunization program that targets preschool age children and reports that over 95 percent of children are vaccinated. At the end of the year, the Moroccan UNICEF chapter and the National Observatory of Children's Rights began a human rights awareness campaign regarding the plight of child maids that received widespread media exposure. The Minister of Justice in Benin established a National Commission for Children's Rights, which held its initial session in July; the Benin government also has made serious efforts to combat child abuse and trafficking in children. In March several government agencies in the Philippines signed a memorandum of agreement on the handling and treatment of children involved in armed conflict, which treats child insurgents as victims to be

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rescued and rehabilitated, rather than as enemies to be neutralized and prosecuted. The United Nations opened two important documents for signature during the year: the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child Concerning Children in Armed Conflict* and the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child Concerning the Sale of the Child*. Non-government organizations also are extremely active in the field of children's rights throughout the world, advocating legal reform and providing services.

## **7. Worker Rights**

During the year, there were countervailing negative and positive trends affecting worker rights. Among the positive developments, over fifty countries ratified the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (Convention 182), the most rapid international approval for any convention in the organization's 81-year history. The U.S. *Trade and Development Act of 2000* encouraged international community ratification of the convention by linking ratification to continued eligibility for Generalized System of Preferences status. The act also incorporated worker rights criteria into trade preference eligibility for African and Caribbean Basin programs.

For the first time, the ILO adopted a resolution that called for measures to secure compliance with fundamental worker rights. In November the ILO's governing body judged that the government of Burma had not taken effective action to deal with the "widespread and systematic" use of forced labor. It called on all ILO member states to take appropriate measures to ensure that Burma does not perpetuate or extend its system of forced or compulsory labor.

Among negative trends during the year was the impunity with which a dramatically increasing number of trade unionists were killed, tortured, and intimidated in Colombia. Elsewhere a growing trend toward the negotiation of individual contracts between companies and workers and the resort to the formation of "cooperatives" in place of trade unions deprived workers of the protection afforded by union representation and of protection under national labor legislation.

## **8. Trafficking in Persons**

Trafficking in persons poses a serious challenge to human rights. This rapidly growing global problem affects countries and families on every continent. Traffickers prey upon women, children, and men from all walks of life, and of every age, religion, and culture. Traffickers particularly exploit women and children who suffer from poverty and are marginalized within their own societies, the most vulnerable segments of the population. Trafficking has grown significantly in recent years and serves as one of the leading sources of revenue for international criminal organizations in part because it is low-risk and high-profit. In some countries, local police and immigration and customs officials are involved or complicit in trafficking. Traffickers deprive their victims of their basic human dignity, subject them to inhuman and degrading treatment, and treat them as chattel that can be bought and sold into forced and bonded labor across international and within national borders. Victims often find themselves in a strange country, unable to speak the language, and without identification or documentation. Many are subject to violent and brutal treatment by their captors. Some come from countries in which the police and other authorities are a source of repression rather than a source of help, and they are reluctant to seek assistance. Many are threatened with retribution against themselves or their families should they try to escape. Many victims face additional risks from dangerous working conditions, including the threat of harm from exposure to dangerous pesticides or sexually transmitted diseases.

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The underground nature of trafficking makes it difficult to quantify. Reliable estimates range from 700,000 to 2 million persons trafficked globally each year. Victims are trafficked into sweatshop labor, prostitution, domestic servitude, unsafe agricultural labor, construction work, restaurant work, and various forms of modern-day slavery. Governments around the world have taken steps to combat these heinous practices, enacting legislation to criminalize trafficking and strengthen penalties against it, and taking steps to aid victims. In December eighty-one countries signed the *Trafficking in Persons Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, supplementing the U.N., *Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*. More countries are expected to sign the *Trafficking Protocol* in the coming months. Non-government organizations are especially active in the anti-trafficking field; their efforts globally include awareness campaigns, the provision of medical and psychological support and shelter for victims, as well as job training.

## 9. Corporate Responsibility

In recent years, partnerships among governments, businesses, and civil society to promote human rights, support civil society, and address corporate responsibility needs have expanded. Two of the best-known examples are the Sullivan Principles and the U.N. Global Compact, which encourage corporations, on a voluntary basis, to recognize international human rights, labor, and environmental standards. During the year, a group of major oil, mining, and energy companies, human rights and corporate responsibility organizations, and an international trade union federation worked with the U.S. and British governments to forge a set of voluntary principles on security and human rights. The principles provide a mechanism for a continuing dialogue on important security and human rights issues.

### History of the Human Rights Reports

The first edition of the *Country Reports* was a product of its times. While the United States had been at the forefront of the international human rights movement since the end of World War II and the creation of the United Nations, the Cold War and the gradual ending of colonialism dominated the first decades of that movement. However, the early 1970s gave rise in the Congress and throughout the country to new concepts and measures of accountability. An important force behind this changing environment was an ever-growing community of non-government organizations whose global outlook, commitment to human rights, and access to the media helped shape public opinion and government decision making. In 1973 Representative Donald Fraser held hearings on human rights in the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations. That same year, a sense of Congress resolution was passed urging the Nixon Administration to link U.S. foreign assistance programs to respect for human rights within those recipient countries. The Congress amended the *Foreign Assistance Act* three years later to require the Secretary of State to transmit to Congress “a full and complete report” every year concerning “respect for internationally recognized human rights in each country proposed as a recipient of security assistance.”

Thus in March 1977, the first volume of *Country Reports* was submitted to Congress. The report covered eighty-two countries. Because it focused on nations with whom the United States had formal security assistance programs, most of them were longstanding allies and friends. The initial report was brief only 143 pages and at the end of each entry was a rating, taken from *Freedom House*, judging whether the country was free, partly free, or not free.

Like any innovation, the new report had its critics. To some the very existence of such a document harmed relations with the very nations with which the United States had established the best ties. To others the report fell short of full disclosure. Such criticism has helped improve the

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reports ever since. They now cover virtually every country of the world and include a level of detail that would have stunned earlier readers.

For the 1978 report, thirty-three additional countries that received U.S. economic assistance were added to the original eighty-two. The next year, the *Foreign Assistance Act* was amended again to require an entry on each member of the United Nations. The 1979 report thus expanded to 854 pages and covered 154 countries, including for the first time discussions of Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China.

By then the basic format of the report had been established, although it would undergo many modifications over time. The first section was *Respect for the Integrity of the Person*, and it included, as it still does, subsections on torture; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or imprisonment; denial of fair public trial; and invasion of the home. The second section was entitled *Government Policies Relating to the Fulfillment of such Vital Needs as Food, Shelter, and Health Care*. Third was *Respect for Civil and Political Liberties*. This section included separate subsections on freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly, freedom of movement within the country for travel and immigration, and freedom to participate in the political process. Fourth was *Government Attitude and Record Regarding International and Non-governmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights*.

In 1980 a subsection was added on disappearances. The following year's report saw a recasting of the section on fulfillment of vital needs as *Economic and Social Circumstances*. The 1982 report added subsections on political and extrajudicial killing and disappearances and expanded the discussions on freedom of speech and the press, peaceful assembly, religion, movement, and the political process. The following year, the *Right of Citizens to Change Their Government* was added. In 1986 a new section entitled *Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Language, or Social Status* was introduced, along with another section on the Status of Labor.

In 1989 a subsection was added on the use of excessive force and violations of human rights in internal conflicts. The labor section was revised to include specific discussions of the right of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, minimum age for employment of children, and acceptable conditions of labor. The 1993 report saw an expansion of the discrimination section to include specific discussions of the rights of women, children, the indigenous, people with disabilities, and national, racial, and ethnic minorities. In 1993 the reports appeared on the Department of State's web site for the first time, an event that dramatically increased the number of individuals who had immediate access to them. Additional coverage on refugees and asylum was added three years later. In 1997 the subsection on forced and bonded child labor was upgraded substantially. In 1998 the report was published for the first time in two volumes.

Later in 1998, Congress passed the *International Religious Freedom Act*, which mandated annual reports on the state of international religious freedom in every country. The first of these reports appeared in September 1999, the same year that Congress requested that a new section be added to the reports on trafficking in persons. The reports that year also included a new focus on access to political prisoners and genocide.