
Country Reports on Human Rights Practices For 1994

By

U.S. Department of State

[The following material has been extracted from the annual State Department report to the Congress, title as above, dated February 1995. This year's 1281 page report describes human rights practices in 193 countries, and is available for purchase as Document ISBN (International Standard Book Number) 0-16-046836-1 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328, telephone (703) 512-1800. (GPO stock number is 052-070-06991-1). The excerpts which follow discuss the statutory requirements for the reports, the method of data collection and compilation, and a general overview of human rights conditions in 1994 throughout the world.]

PREFACE

1994 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

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 505(c) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. As stated in section 116(d)(1) of the FAA: "The Secretary of State shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, by January 31 of each year, a full and complete report regarding the status of internationally recognized human rights, within the meaning of subsection (A) in countries that 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." We have also included reports on several countries which do not fall into the categories established by these statutes and which are thus 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 1970's. In 1976 Congress enacted legislation creating a Coordinator of Human Rights in the U.S. Department of State, a position later upgraded to Assistant Secretary. 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's reports cover 193.

HOW THE REPORTS ARE PREPARED

In August 1995, 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. This year, 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 1994 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 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 will also 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 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 due to abduction or clandestine 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 people 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; minimum age for employment of children, and acceptable work conditions.

OVERVIEW

THE CHANGING NATURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS

During The Cold War, threats to human rights were seen as coming primarily from centralized authorities-strong governments ruling with an iron hand. In response, the human rights community developed the forms of advocacy with which we are now familiar—monitoring, reporting, publicizing cases, advocacy on behalf of individual victims of human rights abuse, and advocacy of sanctions against strong governments.

Today, in the post-Cold War world, much has changed. Human rights abuses are still committed by strong central governments. But we have become all too familiar with abuses in countries with weak or unresponsive governments, committed by ethnic, religious, and separatist extremists, as well as governments themselves, and in extreme cases fanned into genocide by cynical political leaders, and made harder to resist by enormous economic, environmental, and demographic pressures. These conflicts present us with a devastating array of new human rights problems.

At the same time, the post-Cold War environment offers opportunities for structural change both within countries and in the international community that could give internationally recognized human rights greater force than ever before. This is due in large part to the fall of Soviet Communism, but also to a powerful global movement for human rights and democratic participation. This movement has been under way for some two decades. The past 5 years have been especially dramatic, changing the political face of many parts of the world, from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to South Africa, Zambia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Chile, Mongolia, and elsewhere.

The movement for human rights and democracy is even beginning to show strength in diverse and unlikely places. As the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna dramatically demonstrated, this global movement is among the strongest grassroots forces in the world today. Increasingly assertive and effective indigenous forces are pressing worldwide for government transparency and accountability, for basic democratic freedoms, and for internationally recognized human rights.

All this is taking place at a time when states are engaging with each other in a growing range of challenges that transcend national borders—trade, the environment, security, population, migration issues that are creating powerful forces of integration in some cases and increasing conflict in others.

In this new multipolar world, the traditional human rights “sticks” of sanctions and other punitive measures directed against abusive regimes still have an important role to play. But Sanctions need to be complemented by broader means of promoting human rights in countries that are in the midst of wrenching change, and as a consequence are often mired in internal conflict.

In short, with the passing of the Cold War we find ourselves in a new international strategic environment. The human rights abuses of governments are accompanied by ethnic tension, breakdown of authority, and environmental destruction. As a result, human rights promotion must synthesize familiar forms of pressure and advocacy with long-term structural reform and the support of grassroots movements for change.

Indeed, we see a growing emphasis on multilateral action to support these movements: first, through negotiated settlements of conflict, which often include provisions for internationally supported democratic elections; second, through institutions of accountability for human rights abuses such as war crimes tribunals, truth commissions, and judicial assistance programs; and third, through scores of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance programs.

INSTITUTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The appalling slaughter in Rwanda and the “ethnic cleansing” in the former Yugoslavia have cast into high relief the new human rights problems of our age. These catastrophes have urgently demonstrated the need to develop a spectrum of institutions that will hold political leaders accountable to their constituents and to the international community as a whole.

The mass murders in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia did not arise spontaneously. They were fomented by persons who sought to gain political ends through these violent and hideous means. Unless those persons are called to account for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, justice will not be served, and reconciliation and reconstruction will not be possible. This is why the United States supported the U.N. Security Council's creation of war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

The tribunals are also necessary to lift the burden of collective guilt that settles on any society whose leaders have directed such terrible violence. The assignment of responsibility enables the international community to differentiate between victims and aggressors, and it helps expunge the cynical illusion that conflicts with an ethnic dimension are hopelessly complex and therefore insoluble. Moreover, the tribunals are essential if future crimes are to be deterred. If basic human rights can be massively violated with impunity in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the world is fair game for every conceivable form of terror.

In addition to war crimes tribunals, a spectrum of institutions of accountability have contributed to reconciliation in a number of countries. The Truth Commissions of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Haiti, the U.N. Verification Mission in Guatemala, and the National Human Rights Commissions established in India and Mexico represent new and diverse ways of providing accountability for human rights abuses. Accountability is also being furthered in a number of countries by assistance programs aimed at developing the administration of justice and the rule of law. For example, the recently established U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights placed human rights monitors in Rwanda and is planning to work with the U.S. and other countries to help rebuild the Rwandan legal system.

ARMED CONFLICT

Around the world, a number of hard-fought conflicts have moved toward long-sought resolution. A cease-fire was negotiated in Northern Ireland and is holding, despite several incidents which could have led to renewed violence. Despite increasing violence and terror, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization began to implement their Declaration of Principles through their agreement on the Gaza and Jericho areas. We also witnessed the beginnings of Palestinian self-government in these areas. For the first time, this human rights report will examine Palestinian human rights practices in areas under Palestinian jurisdiction. Israel and Jordan signed a treaty formally establishing peace. In Mozambique, a U.N.-negotiated peace accord led ultimately to elections and the installation of a new government. And in El Salvador, the U.N.-sponsored peace accord moved closer to full implementation with the dissolution of the former National Police and creation of a new civilian police force.

Even so, armed conflict continued to generate significant human rights abuse, most visibly in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia, but in many other places as well.

To prevent Chechnya's secession from Russia, Russian troops crossed into Chechnya on December 11, 1994. This action included massive aerial and artillery bombardment of civilian areas in Chechnya's capital, Grozny, resulting in a major humanitarian and human rights crisis.

In Angola, the bloody civil war which erupted anew after the failed 1993 election, raged throughout much of 1994, with perhaps 100,000 dead, mostly civilians.

Guerrilla violence and military actions continued to give Colombia one of the highest violent death rates in the world.

The Turkish Government's continued armed struggle against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (or PKK) has resulted in violence against civilians and abuses of rights within Turkey,

including the arrest and trial of Turkish parliamentarians and many other citizens for expressing their views, while the widespread use of torture in prisons and detention facilities has continued with impunity.

Since 1992 Algeria has been embroiled in civil strife, pitting armed Islamist groups and their sympathizers against the Government, with killings and other human rights abuses on both sides.

The dismal human rights situation in the Sudan further deteriorated in the face of intensified civil war, as both the Government and insurgents engaged in massacres, extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, forced conscriptions, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid.

Much of Kabul was destroyed as the Afghan civil war was renewed in early 1994. The Red Cross estimated from its clinical records that 84,000 civilians were killed or wounded in street fighting and heavy weapons attacks on Kabul alone. Over 1 million more Afghans were displaced by the fighting.

TORTURE, ARBITRARY DETENTION, IMPUNITY OF ABUSERS

Flagrant and systematic abuses of basic human rights continued at the hand of the world's authoritarian and repressive regimes, such as China, Iraq, Iran, Burma, North Korea, and Cuba. In those and other countries, denial of basic freedoms of expression, association, and religion, persecution of minorities, and the suppression of civil society remain the norm.

In a departure from a recent trend toward openness, the Indonesian Government revoked the licenses of three prominent publications. Security forces serving in East Timor and elsewhere continued to be responsible for significant abuses, and the Government prepared a draft decree which, if implemented, could severely curtail the activities of many Indonesian nongovernmental organizations.

Nigeria's military regime, which annulled that country's 1993 elections, continues to crack down on the opposition, despite a massive strike by the labor force. The regime killed and wounded protesters, employed arbitrary detention and mass arrest, perpetrated extrajudicial killings and torture, and engaged in other abuses.

In Saudi Arabia abuses including torture, incommunicado detention, restrictions on freedom of speech and religion, suppression of ethnic and religious minorities, and pervasive discrimination against women continued.

In several less thoroughly repressive countries, including some with functioning democratic institutions, significant human rights abuses occurred.

The Government of Singapore continued to intimidate opposition parties and their leaders and regularly restrict freedoms of speech, association, and assembly.

In Egypt, the Government's security services and terrorist groups remained locked in a cycle of violence; and there continued to be widespread human rights violations.

India has a longstanding democracy with a free press, independent judiciary, and active political and civic life. Nonetheless, significant human rights abuses are committed by military and security forces in areas of unrest, particularly Kashmir. These include extrajudicial killings and other political killings; torture, deaths in custody; and violence against women.

Despite the inauguration of a former human rights ombudsman as President in 1993, the human rights situation in Guatemala remained troubling, with both sides in the civil war committing major violations, including extrajudicial killing, kidnaping, and torture.

ECONOMICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

An increasingly important issue placed squarely in the public eye in 1994 was the relationship between economic development and trade on the one hand, and the promotion of human rights and democracy on the other. This was most vividly the case with regard to the U.S. decision to delink China's Most Favored Nation status from China's human rights performance.

The relationship between trade and human rights has taken on special salience as extensive networks of international trade have emerged, and as nations have lifted trade barriers that have inhibited full exchange among their peoples. The suggestion in some quarters that there is an inescapable trade-off between economic development and human rights promotion is ultimately false.

It is precisely because the United States has an interest in economic development, political stability, and conflict resolution around the world that it promotes human rights and accountable government. As President Clinton said last November on the eve of his departure for Southeast Asia, "In societies where the rule of law prevails, where governments are held accountable to their people and where ideas and information freely circulate, we are more likely to find economic development and political stability." And as we have seen in nations undergoing economic transformation, market reformers who enjoy popular legitimacy are more likely to win popular support for tough economic choices. Trade relations by themselves are no substitute for vigorous human rights advocacy. Moreover, as the world trading system grows increasingly robust, care must be taken to incorporate the promotion of worker rights into bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

Economic growth, trade, and social mobility may not be sufficient conditions for political pluralism, but they do create powerful pressures for political change. Open trade can support the movement toward freedom by strengthening independent institutions of civil society, by exposing isolated nations to the possibility of other ways of life, and because of the inescapable truth that free and open markets can only be meaningfully sustained over the long haul by open societies that respect basic rights and the rule of law.

WORKER RIGHTS

With the expansion of global trade, worker rights take on renewed urgency. The new World Trade Organization will have to face the effects of worker rights on trade.

The universal right most pertinent to the workplace is freedom of association, which is the foundation on which workers can form and organize trade unions, bargain collectively, press grievances, and protect themselves from unsafe working conditions. In many countries, workers have far to go in realizing their rights. Restrictions on workers range from outright state control of all forms of worker organization to webs of legislation whose complexity is meant to overwhelm and disarm workers.

In 1994 we continued to see practices of forced and bonded labor and child labor in a number of places. In Burma citizens are taken off the streets and pressed into slave labor. Small children work on carpet looms, in garment factories, and myriad other occupations in India, Pakistan, and in dozens of other countries around the world. Trade unions are banned outright in a number of countries, including several in the Middle East, and in many more there is little protection of worker efforts to organize and bargain collectively. Some protesting workers have paid with their

lives; others, most notably in China and Indonesia, have gone to jail simply for trying to inform fellow workers of their rights. We also see inadequate enforcement of labor legislation, especially with regard to health and safety in the workplace.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy is by definition a system which provides for the participation of ordinary citizens in governing their country, and depends for its success on the growth of democratic culture along with democratic institutions. Elections are one essential dimension of participation and accountability. Democracy's most stirring triumphs of the year were Nelson Mandela's election as President in South Africa and the restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the democratically elected Government of Haiti.

In South Africa, concerted efforts by all sides eventually brought all parties into the political process, resulting in profound structural change that has ended institutional apartheid and sharply decreased the violence it engendered. In Haiti, President Aristide was peacefully returned to power through U.S. leadership and the international communities resolute stand against the violent usurpers who had deposed him and perpetrated massive human rights abuses on the people.

Away from the headlines, democracy has also made strides in little-noticed places:

In Malawi, voters defeated former President-for-Life H. Kamuzu Banda in free elections in May.

The countries of the former Soviet bloc continued their halting transitions from closed to open societies. The newly independent states of Kazakhstan, Krgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan held elections with varying degrees of freedom and fairness and in the shadow of continuing significant human rights abuse. The picture was brighter in the countries of Central Europe, though dimmed in some places by disturbing encroachments on freedom of speech and the press.

Democracy is not a one-time event but a process of governance and of history. As President Aristide said upon his return to Haiti, "The true test of a democracy is its second free election when power is transferred freely and constitutionally." These important milestones in democratic development were passed in a number of countries.

Several Latin American countries such as Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil, which were formerly ruled by the military, held new rounds of elections and inaugurated new presidents in 1994, further consolidating their democracies.

After Nepal's second parliamentary election since its democratic revolution in 1990, an opposition party formed a coalition government and peacefully assumed power.

There were significant setbacks for democracy as well. The long-delayed return of democracy to Nigeria was again blocked by a military dictatorship's refusal to accept the outcome of elections. In Gambia, the military overthrew the elected civilian Government. In Burma, the military regime continued its refusal to abide by the results of the 1990 elections, keeping Nobel Peace Prize Winner Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest and silencing all opposition.

CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

As countries make the transition from authoritarian government to open societies, few issues become more crucial than the civilian control of the military and law enforcement authorities. Indeed, in many countries, human rights abuses and democratic setbacks resulted from the inability

of civilian authorities to control armed forces and security services. In other countries, there were examples of progress.

In Argentina the Senate rejected the promotion of two navy commanders because of their admitted role in torture during the years of military rule. In Guatemala, the Congress held hearings on the killing of a student by security forces during rioting in November, marking a step forward in congressional oversight.

In Sri Lanka, the Government set up regional commissions to investigate allegations of disappearances and began prosecution proceedings against accused extrajudicial killers.

While members of Colombia's security forces and guerrilla groups continue to commit serious human rights abuses, the new administration has taken a number of steps aimed at reducing the incidence of official abuses and punishing those who commit them.

In Nigeria, on the other hand, the military regime that seized power after annulling the free and fair elections of 1993 continued to ride roughshod over the opposition and ruin hopes for political or economic progress.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN

This year saw an increased international focus on women's human rights and the advancement of the status of women. The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in September 1994, the World Summit for Social Development, to take place in Copenhagen in March 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995 encourage greater attention to and understanding of human rights abuses against women. Unfortunately, such abuses persisted in 1994.

Of particular concern is the problem of violence against women. In early 1994, the U.N. Human Rights Commission established a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to examine its causes and consequences. The 1994 Human Rights Reports document that physical abuse of women, including torture, systematic rape, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, harassment, exploitation and trafficking of women, and female feticide continued throughout the world.

In addition to physical abuse, the political, civil and legal rights of women continue to be denied. In 1994 women in many countries were subjected to discriminatory restrictions of their fundamental freedoms regarding voting, marriage, travel, property ownership and inheritance, custody of children, citizenship, and court testimony. Women also faced sex-based discrimination in access to education, employment, health care, financial services including credit, and even food and water.

LOOKING FORWARD

The emergence of nongovernmental human rights organizations around the world is one of the most hopeful and arresting developments of the post-Cold War era. These organizations hold the key to the future if nations are to begin to hold each other accountable for human rights abuse. They have an especially vital role to play in the growth of human rights and democracy, precisely because they arise in, and reflect, the unique features of their respective societies. With the changing times, grassroots groups have taken on new roles, such as election monitoring, active negotiation as part of democratic transitions, serving as ombudsmen, and creating institutions of accountability and reconciliation.

Human rights violations span the globe, and no region has a monopoly on abuses.

The drive for realization of basic rights is a universal work-in-progress, and the story is not always grim. My counterpart in the Russian Government, Vyacheslav Bakhmin, was a Soviet prisoner of conscience on whose behalf I once campaigned. He, like other human rights activists in scores of countries, risked their lives to bear witness, and are now using their freedom to reform and rebuild their societies.

One of those activists-turned-leaders, Vaclav Havel [President, Czech Republic], has powerfully expressed what it means to make a commitment to human rights in this complex new world, where the triumph of freedom can so quickly be overshadowed by the horror of genocide, where the inauguration of Nelson Mandela can take place in the same month as the mass murders of Tutsis in Rwanda.

I am not an optimist because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist, because I am not sure everything ends badly. Instead, I am a realist who carries hope, and hope is the belief that freedom and justice have meaning . . . and that liberty is always worth the struggle.

John Shattuck
Assistant Secretary for
Democracy, Human Rights and Labor