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COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 2002

VOLUME I

REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
U.S. SENATE

AND THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BY THE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 116(d) AND 502B(b) OF THE
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FOREWORD

The country reports on human rights practices contained herein were prepared by the Department of State in accordance with sections 116(d) and 502B(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. They also fulfill the legislative requirements of section 505(c) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

The reports cover the human rights practices of all nations that are members of the United Nations and a few that are not. They are printed to assist Members of Congress in the consideration of legislation, particularly foreign assistance legislation.

RICHARD G. LUGAR,

Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations.

HENRY J. HYDE,

Chairman, Committee on International Relations.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, March 31, 2003.

Hon. RICHARD LUGAR,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Secretary of State, I am transmitting to you the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002*, prepared in compliance with sections 116(d)(1) and 502B(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and section 505(c) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

We hope this report is helpful. Please let us know if we can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

PAUL V. KELLY,
Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs.

Enclosure.

PREFACE

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

The year 2002 offered a stern test for the advancement of human rights by the United States of America. This is not necessarily because human rights violations grew in number or severity—although there is no lack of challenge in that area—but because we have been given greater opportunity to make good on our commitment to uphold standards of human dignity and liberty.

The year began with American forces in combat in Afghanistan, and we continue to act there—with military, political and economic resources—to reverse the ill effects of the Taliban regime and the conditions that left unchecked its cruel disregard for human rights. Elsewhere in the world, we set our sights on further extending the blessings of liberty and security, and demonstrating not only that they are compatible, but also interdependent. We advanced these goals not as exclusively American aspirations, but rather as the birthright of all persons.

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002 are grounded in the conviction that we must recognize the problem and describe it with full objectivity if we are to proceed to solving it. We gain little by ignoring human rights abuses or flinching from reporting them. This year's report covers 196 countries, ranging from defenders of human rights and democracy to the worst violators of human dignity. But in truth, no country is exempt from scrutiny, and all countries benefit from constant striving to identify their weaknesses and improve their performance in this less-than-perfect world. Furthermore, the Reports serve as a gauge for our international human rights efforts, pointing to areas of progress and drawing our attention to new and continuing challenges.

In a world marching toward democracy and respect for human rights; the United States is a leader, a partner and a contributor. We have taken this responsibility with a deep and abiding belief that human rights are universal. They are not grounded exclusively in American or Western values. But their protection worldwide serves a core U.S. national interest. It is with this responsibility firmly in mind that we have prepared, and now transmit, the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002 to the U.S. Congress.

COLIN L. POWELL, *Secretary of State.*

OVERVIEW AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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 502B(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.” 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 the 82 countries receiving U.S. aid; this year 196 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 2002 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, armed forces 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, experts from academia, and the media. Officers also consulted with experts on worker rights issues, refugee issues, military and police topics, 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. There rights include freedom from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; from prolonged detention without charges; from disappearance or clandestine detention; and from other flagrant violations of the right to life, liberty and the security of the person.

Universal human rights seek 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.

Within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the editorial staff of the Country Reports Team consists of: *Editor in Chief*: Cynthia R. Bunton; *Senior Advisors*: E. Michael Southwick, Michael E. Parmly, J. Scott Carpenter, Monica Vegas Kladakos, Elizabeth Dugan; *Senior Editors*: Dan Dolan, Stan Ifshin, Jennifer

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR THE YEAR 2002

Spreading democratic values and respect for human rights around the world is one of the primary ways we have of advancing the national security interests of the United States. The defense of liberty is both an expression of our ideals and a source of strength that we have drawn on throughout our history. Democratic values have also been at the heart of America's most enduring and effective alliances, partnerships which continue to help us meet the challenges of tyranny and deprivation.

The U.S. Constitution aims to "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." We realize that liberty is not a finished product, and that the course set out for us by our Constitution requires vigilance. Our history is a narrative of a nation confronting and overcoming obstacles to freedom, and generations to come will also undoubtedly face the question of how to fulfill the promise of our founding documents.

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices reflect America's diligence in the struggle to expand freedom abroad. Together with past reports, and reports to come, this compendium is a snapshot of the global state of human rights that depicts work in progress and points the way to future tasks. It is a statement of our fundamental belief that human rights are universal; they are indigenous to every corner of the world, in every culture and in every religious tradition.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Governments that rule by force and use violence against their own people often threaten and intimidate their neighbors. Driven by shaky legitimacy, these regimes rule by iron fist, putting their people and neighbors at the mercy of the cruel logic of repression. In an age when the destructive capacities of brutal regimes exceed national and even regional boundaries, addressing human rights violations—whether episodic or systemic—becomes imperative to the assurance of security throughout the international community. On a smaller scale, governments that breach their constitutional obligations and the rule of law place their societies' well-being at risk in their pursuit of stability.

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices call attention to patterns and instances of violations of basic human rights as recognized in such fundamental documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948. They serve as the starting point—not the end—of U.S. policy to ad-

vance human rights around the world. The Reports are one of the most significant tools available to the U.S. Government to help determine foreign policy strategies that promote the development of democratic systems and principles, and remedy abuse and disregard for human rights. As President Bush declared in his January 2003 State of the Union address, “We will not permit the triumph of violence in the affairs of men—free people will set the course of history.”

Governments can violate rights and punish people for exercising freedoms, but they cannot extinguish the inherent rights of all human beings. People who dare to dream of freedom are setting the course of history not only in democratic societies, but also in the repressive regimes under which many live.

- Cuba is a place where human rights are violated every day, but the Varela Project, organized by Oswaldo Paya, has proven a powerful tool for Cubans to express their yearning for fundamental freedoms. Marta Beatriz Roque’s Assembly to Promote Civil Society is providing another avenue for Cubans to express their desires for change. These and other efforts by the opposition movement are incrementally eroding the Cuban regime’s grip on power and oppression.
- In Burma, even after years of on-and-off political arrest, harassment and constant surveillance, Aung San Suu Kyi is still wholly committed to bringing democracy and a humane rule of law to the Burmese people. Her tremendous strength of character stands boldly in the face of the military regime’s disregard for human rights and democracy, a disregard that extends to abuses such as extrajudicial killings, rapes, disappearances, forced labor and forced relocations.

Their courage points the way to improving human rights—on paths that are as diverse as the countries where they live. U.S. policy is based on supporting individuals and groups committed to following universally accepted paths to freedom, equal protection, due process and the rule of law.

Promoting democratic governance is and will remain the best way to ensure protection of human rights. The United States recognizes that a world composed of democracies will better protect our long-term national security than a world of authoritarian or chaotic regimes. A democratic form of government fosters the rule of law, open markets, more prosperous economies and better-educated citizens and ultimately a more humane, peaceful and predictable world.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND LABOR

Institutional changes: In Asia, democratic politics continued to develop in East Timor, with the ratification of a constitution, election of a president, and efforts to establish governance based on the rule of law and human rights protections. Taiwan’s strides were also notable, with consolidation and improvement of civil liberties catching up to its free and open electoral system.

The push to meet European Union entry requirements resulted in positive human rights developments in aspirant countries. Turkey passed extensive human rights reform packages that covered

a broadening of laws on freedom of speech, political activity and association, and fair trial. At the same time torture, although illegal, was still a serious problem and restrictions on freedom of the press remained.

Other positive developments in Europe included the first general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be conducted by local (not international) authorities since the Dayton Peace Accords. Macedonia also reaffirmed the strength of its democracy through peaceful elections while its parliament laid the legal groundwork for improving civil and minority rights by completing nearly all of the constitutional and legislative actions related to the Framework Agreement.

In the Middle East, several positive steps were taken. In May, the first open municipal council elections were held in Bahrain, and in October women joined men in exercising their right to vote for the first time in nearly 30 years to elect a national parliament. Morocco saw its first open elections in September, and in Qatar, a new constitution has been drafted and municipal elections are scheduled for April 2003. Female candidates will participate for the second time.

In Russia, a new Criminal Procedure Code that took effect in July permitted for the first time the application of existing Constitutional provisions that only upon a judicial decision could individuals be arrested, taken into custody or detained. The changes appeared to be having an effect on police, prosecutorial behavior and the judicial system, although there were reports of non-compliance in some regions.

The Chinese also continued to carry out some structural reforms in the areas of the rule of law and democracy. Direct elections at the village level took place in several provinces and pressure to move them to higher levels grew. Economic reform has led to legal reform, and legislatures continued experimenting with public hearings to incorporate public opinion into policy.

Political rights: In 2002 six nations in the western hemisphere—The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Jamaica—held elections for their chief of state or government. The Organization of American States, which adopted a democracy charter in 2001, put its collective commitment into action in 2002 with vigorous efforts to resolve the political crisis in Venezuela.

In Africa, Kenya's free election and peaceful transfer of power in December signaled hope for the consolidation of democratic politics there. A political crisis during the first half of 2002 in Madagascar was eventually resolved, and legislative elections were held. In Swaziland, respect for rights and rule of law took steps backward with a government declaration that it would not abide by court decisions.

In 2002 China continued to commit serious human rights abuses in violation of international human rights instruments and at year's end, a spate of arrests of political dissidents and the imposition of the death sentence on two Tibetans, the continued detentions of Rebiya Kadeer, Wang Youcai, Qin Yongmin and others, and restrictions on religious freedom and repression of some ethnic minorities were particularly troubling.

Zimbabwe's government has used a systematic campaign of violence and intimidation against stated and perceived supporters of the opposition, even to the extent of routinely and publicly denying food to these individuals. The Government manipulated the composition of the courts and repeatedly refused to abide by judicial decisions, which undermined the judiciary.

In Eurasia, several republics of the former Soviet Union resisted positive change. In Turkmenistan the human rights situation deteriorated markedly after an attack on President Niyazov's motorcade in November, leading to serious violations of due process under the law including widespread arrests and forced evictions of suspects' families, use of torture, threats of rape and summary trials. In Kazakhstan the government's poor human rights record worsened, including selective prosecution of opposition leaders and a pattern of media harassment suggesting an attempt to silence media critics. While there were positive steps in the first half of 2002, such as registration of the first human rights NGO and abolition of prior censorship of the media in Uzbekistan, there were also setbacks that are a cause of concern, including at least four deaths in detention due to torture. The Kyrgyz Republic held a regional by-election in October, judged by independent monitoring groups to be marred by irregularities such as multiple voting and lax standards of voting eligibility. Harassment of media and civil society continued and police killed six unarmed protesters.

Pakistan's military regime began the process of restoring elected civilian governance at the national and provincial level in October. Observers deemed the elections to be flawed, but the new government seems reasonably representative.

Internal and other conflicts: Throughout 2002, Sri Lanka made progress in implementing a cease-fire agreement between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil-Eelam (LTTE). Prisoners have been exchanged, roadblocks reduced, internally displaced persons returned, and investigations into abuses by security forces have increased. There were unconfirmed reports that LTTE continued to commit extrajudicial killings, but observers believe the number decreased in 2002. There were also reports that LTTE continued to conscript children.

In Nepal, the Maoist campaign included killings, bombing, torture, forced conscription of children and other violent tactics. Government forces were accused of killing civilians and abusing others suspected of Maoist sympathies.

The war in Sierra Leone was officially declared over in January, and the Revolutionary United Front was disarmed. Remarkably peaceful presidential elections were held in May although there were reports of election irregularities.

Elsewhere in Africa, conflicts continued to fuel human rights abuses. In Cote d'Ivoire, a coup attempt and ensuing civil unrest sparked violations by government and rebel forces. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, major abuses continued. Rwanda withdrew its troops by October, and Uganda only had 1,000 troops left in the country at year's end.

After 27 years, peace came to Angola in February. The former UNITA rebel movement has disarmed and is transitioning into an unarmed political party, and the government—working with the

opposition—is beginning to move the country toward new elections. The massive human rights violations of the civil war have come to an end, although an increase of abuses in Cabinda Province is worrisome. The primary focus will now be on the civil and political rights necessary for the conduct of free and fair elections as well as the establishment of the rule of law throughout the country.

Eritrea's record worsened through 2002. However, all recorded Ethiopian prisoners of war (POWs) from the former conflict were released. Ethiopia also released the last of the Eritrean POWs during 2002.

In the Chechnya conflict, Russian forces and Chechen rebels continued to commit serious human rights violations. Government forces committed extrajudicial killings and at times used indiscriminate force, which resulted in civilian casualties. A number of government "cleansing" operations involved extensive abuses of civilians. Chechen rebels increased their killings of civilian officials and militia associated with the Russian-appointed Chechen administration. On October 23, approximately 41 members of Chechen terrorist groups took more than 750 persons hostage in a Moscow theater. The terrorists killed one hostage; another 128 hostages died in the rescue effort.

Integrity of the person: Colombia showed signs of progress, with generally good elections and a declaration by paramilitary forces that they would negotiate peace in 2003. But problems remain serious, particularly extrajudicial killings. The Dominican Republic made strides in reducing the number of extrajudicial killings. The police chief was replaced and prosecutions—in civilian courts—of human rights offenders increased.

Not surprisingly, many human rights abuses occurred in nations that have non-democratic forms of government. Testimony to the U.S. Congress in mid-2002 revealed systematic and egregious violations of human rights in North Korea, including torture, summary executions and the use of prison labor under incredibly inhumane conditions.

Iraq's Republican Guard and other members of the security apparatus committed widespread and systematic human rights abuses including killings, torture, disappearances, rapes and imprisonment of Iraqi political opposition and ethnic and religious minorities.

In Cambodia, incidents of extrajudicial killings began to increase as the country prepares for 2003 elections amidst a culture of impunity and with serious shortcomings in the government's investigations.

Freedom of the press: Harassment and vandalism were common tools used to threaten press freedom in 2002. Legal harassment was also common: In the Kyrgyz Republic, opposition newspapers were periodically refused printing services by the government-owned press and journalists faced libel suits filed by government officials. Similar bureaucratic tactics were used to pressure NGOs and opposition political organizations. On the other hand, the Kyrgyz government registered the Media Support Center, which is intended to provide an independent printing facility and training for journalists. In Kazakhstan, violence and harassment of journal-

ists continued, and selective prosecutions of opposition figures chilled the climate of free speech. In Russia, direct and indirect government actions further weakened the autonomy of the electronic media, which is the public's primary source of information. Controls on reporting of the conflict in Chechnya and terrorist incidents elsewhere in Russia raised concerns about the ability of the press and public to have adequate access to information about government actions. In Ukraine, the killing of prominent journalist Heorhiy Gongadze remained unsolved. Although an investigation officially continued, there was a lack of transparency and the authorities refused to cooperate with foreign investigators whom they had invited to assist with the investigation.

The closing down of pro-reform publications and jailing of journalists, editors and publishers in Iran continued. A dissident academic was sentenced to death for questioning the Islamic system, a decision that sparked widespread student demonstrations and finally resulted in the government granting a retrial. When a poll found that the overwhelming majority of Iranians supported dialogue with the United States and almost half agreed with U.S. policy vis-a-vis Iran, the regime closed the polling institutes and arrested the pollsters.

Religious freedom: These issues are discussed in depth in the annual Report on International Religious Freedom, published in October 2002, but the Country Reports also highlight important developments.

In Afghanistan there was dramatic improvement over the past year, but respect for human rights varied widely in different parts of the country. The reappearance of the Taliban's Department of Vice and Virtue, in the form of the new authority's Department of Accountability and Religious Affairs, bears monitoring. Likewise, reprisals against ethnic Pashtuns—albeit with a limited religious dimension—occurred in areas controlled by some local Northern Alliance commanders.

Other internal conflicts have a more pronounced religious dimension. Saudi Arabia continued to deny religious freedom to non-Muslims by prohibiting them from engaging in public worship. In some cases, non-Muslim individuals and private gatherings of worshippers were subject to harassment, leading to arrest, detainment, torture and deportation. Shi'a Muslims faced widespread discrimination, including imprisonment and torture.

Sectarian violence erupted in India's Gujarat Province in February, where as many as 2,000 people—mostly Muslims—died. Elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and in Gujarat, were held successfully despite widespread terrorist violence and the new state government has proposed steps to ease repression and reduce alienation. Throughout India however, light punishment for instigators of violence and perpetrators of abuse remained a stumbling block to further improvement.

In Vietnam, religious (primarily Protestant) and ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands and northwest provinces, which have often been brought to heel by government authorities in Hanoi, reportedly faced intensified repression, including closing of churches and forced renunciations of faith.

Women/Children: In Afghanistan, human rights improvements included women and ethnic minorities serving in the government and an estimated one million girls back in school. In Burma on the other hand, the State Department documented stories of rape of ethnic minority women by the Burmese military that were similar to NGO reports on the issue suggesting that rape continued to be a widespread practice. Also, the conscription of child soldiers in Burma remained a serious problem.

Child labor in the informal sector, especially children forced into the commercial sex industry, continued to be a serious problem in Cambodia, along with trafficking in women and children. In Cote d'Ivoire, child labor remained an issue of concern, and the recruitment of child soldiers in the armed civil conflict was cause for concern. Rebel groups in particular used child soldiers.

Child soldiers were used in other conflicts, including in Colombia, where both paramilitaries and guerrillas recruited children, and there is evidence that guerrillas forcibly pressed children into their forces. In Burundi, the government stated that it would not recruit child soldiers in its war against rebel forces. However, there are unconfirmed reports that children continue to serve in armed forces performing occasional tasks such as carrying weapons and supplies.

Trafficking: In the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon acknowledged trafficking in persons as problems in their countries and are taking steps to address it by curbing abuses of foreign workers, regulating camel jockeys as applicable, and combating commercial sexual exploitation.

Awareness about trafficking in persons throughout Africa grew. More African countries participated in time-bound programs designed to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In addition, many of these cash-strapped governments are increasingly working on creative programs to prevent trafficking and protect trafficking victims. Public awareness was raised at local government levels in many African countries, particularly in West Africa, about traditional practices that are being exploited by traffickers. In Tanzania, children were mobilized to help identify traffickers and other children particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. In Southern Africa, some governments began devoting more attention to the differences between trafficking, smuggling and seasonal labor migration.

In East Asia and Pacific countries, governments in general paid more attention to the problem of trafficking in persons. Indonesia passed two national plans aimed at reducing trafficking in women and children, and police action against traffickers increased. Thailand increased its cooperation with neighboring countries in addressing cross-border trafficking in persons.

In South Asia, governments continued to demonstrate serious collaboration with NGOs to provide protection, legal and medical services, and skills training to trafficking victims. This cooperative effort also extends to law enforcement, with police jointly conducting raids with NGOs.

The push for stronger anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) legislation was enhanced in the past year in many European countries. For example, the governments of Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria all passed specific articles on trafficking in their criminal codes. Rus-

sia, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan continued work on comprehensive drafts that should be finalized and forwarded to their respective parliaments soon. Localized referral systems between NGOs and police and other officials were improved and strengthened in Ukraine and UN-administered Kosovo. Serbia and Montenegro, in addition to their multi-agency national anti-trafficking teams, provided a mobile trafficking unit that brought assistance to victims throughout the country. Croatia began implementation of their National Action Plan, establishing shelters and a hotline, and drafting a law making trafficking in persons a crime.

International cooperation on investigations occurred only sporadically, with Italy and Albania showing concrete results in their joint operations.

Ratification of the UN Protocol on Trafficking was also a focus throughout the world, with several countries depositing their ratification and preparing domestic implementation.

Corruption continued to be a major impediment to successful anti-trafficking efforts. Open police corruption, harassment of returning victims and inertia on reported cases showed the public and civil society that many governments still are not serious about combating trafficking.

Worker rights: In Venezuela, the conflict between the government and labor unions intensified throughout the year. The International Labor Organization censured the government's refusal to recognize the election of Carlos Ortega as the president of the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers, citing government interference in independent trade union elections.

Progress was made in Bahrain, where legal protections for the right to organize and collectively bargain were established in new legislation. The government resolved the problem of more than 1,000 "bidoon," long-term residents of the country who were formerly stateless, by issuing them appropriate documents.

Corporate social responsibility: Partnerships among governments, business, labor unions and civil society to promote human rights and sustainable development flourished. The UN Global Compact and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) worked to promote voluntary principles and guidelines that advance corporate responsibility. During the year, positive examples of partnerships and dialogues between the public and private sectors emerged.

Responding to conditions in the agricultural sector, an innovative framework agreement was drafted between a multinational corporation and regional labor unions to address worker rights and corporate responsibility. A June 2002 Roundtable dialogue on the management of supply chains was featured in a report on the annual meeting of National Contact Points for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights gained new participants. ExxonMobil, Occidental Petroleum and the Government of Norway joined the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Secretary of State Colin Powell presented the Secretary of State's 2002 annual Award for Corporate Excellence at a ceremony that recognized two U.S. firms for their outstanding corporate citizen-

ship and exemplary international business practices by promoting healthcare in China and poverty alleviation programs in Egypt.

NOTE: In many cases, the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices state that a country “generally respects” the rights of its citizens. The phrase “generally respects” is used because the protection and promotion of human rights is a dynamic endeavor; it cannot accurately be stated that any government fully respects these rights all the time without qualification, in even the best of circumstances. Accordingly, “generally respects” is the standard phrase used to describe all countries that attempt to protect human rights in the fullest sense, and is thus the highest level of respect for human rights assigned by this report.

In some instances, this year’s Country Reports use the word “Islamist,” which should be interpreted by readers as a Muslim who supports Islamic values and beliefs as the basis for political and social life.