

Freedom in the World

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The findings of the *Comparative Survey of Freedom* and the Map of Freedom include events up to January 1, 2000.

Freedom in the World
The Annual Survey of
Political Rights & Civil Liberties
1999-2000

Adrian Karatnycky
General Editor
and the Freedom House Survey Team

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Foreword

Freedom in the World is an institutional effort by Freedom House to monitor the progress and decline of political rights and civil liberties in 192 nations and 60 related and disputed territories. These year-end reviews of freedom began in 1955, when they were called the Balance Sheet of Freedom and, still later, the Annual Survey of the Progress of Freedom. This program was expanded in the early 1970s, and has appeared in a more developed context as a yearbook since 1978.

Since 1989, the Survey project has been a year-long effort produced by our regional experts, consultants, and human rights specialists. The Survey derives its information from a wide range of sources. Most valued of these are the many human rights activists, journalists, editors, and political figures around the world who keep us informed of the human rights situation in their countries. This edition of the Survey contains a special, end-of-the-century feature, a study of democracy's progress during the twentieth century entitled, *Democracy's Century*.

The Survey team is grateful to the considerable advice and input of our Freedom in the World advisory board, consisting of Prof. David Becker, Prof. Daniel Brumberg, Dr. Larry Diamond, Prof. Charles Gati, Prof. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Thomas Lansner, Dr. Seymour Martin Lipset, Prof. Alexander Motyl, Dr. Joshua Muravchik, Dr. Daniel Pipes, Prof. Robert Scalapino, and Prof. Arthur Waldron.

Throughout the year, Freedom House personnel regularly conduct fact-finding missions to gain more in-depth knowledge of the vast political transformations affecting our world. During these investigations, we make every effort to meet a cross-section of political parties and associations, human rights monitors, religious figures, representatives of both the private sector and trade union movement, academics and journalists.

During the past year, Freedom House staff traveled to Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Hungary, India, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia. The Survey project team also consults a vast array of published source materials, ranging from the reports of other human rights organizations to often rare, regional newspapers and magazines.

Among those responsible for the production of *Freedom in the World* are Linda Stern, editor; Mark Wolkenfeld, production coordinator; and Trish Fox, proofreader. The cover was designed by Anne Green.

Principal support for Freedom in the World has been generously provided by the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Smith Richardson Foundation.

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The 1999-2000 Freedom House Survey of Freedom: A Century of Progress

Adrian Karatnycky

Freedom House's end-of-the-century *Freedom in the World* survey finds that 85 of the world's 192 countries (44.27 percent) are Free, meaning these countries maintain a high degree of political and economic freedom and respect basic civil liberties. This figure represents a decrease of 3 countries from last year. Another 60 countries (31.25 percent of all states) were rated as Partly Free, enjoying more limited political rights and civil liberties, often in a context of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic strife, or civil war. This represents an increase of 7 from the previous year. Finally, 47 countries (24.45 percent of all states) that deny their citizens basic rights and civil liberties and were rated Not Free, a decrease of 3 from the previous year. In all, 38.9 percent of the world's population lives in Free societies, 25.58 percent lives in Partly Free states, and 35.51 percent lives in Not Free countries.

The dramatic gains for freedom registered in the 1980s and through most of the 1990s did not continue in 1999. Nevertheless, the survey's findings registered more significant upward than downward change, with 24 countries moving up and 17 down, indicating that freedom continues to make incremental gains.

In all, significant gains for freedom resulting in improved scores (on a 1-to-7 scale for political rights and civil liberties) and improved category rating changes (to Free or Partly Free) occurred in 24 countries. In addition to 7 countries whose category rating improved (Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, East Timor, Fiji, Niger, Togo, and Yugoslavia), 17 countries—Argentina, Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Panama, Qatar, Samoa, Slovakia, and Tanzania—registered numerical gains indicating significant positive change. By contrast, 6 countries saw their freedom category rating drop (Eritrea, Honduras, Malawi, Nicaragua, Pakistan, and Venezuela), and 11 countries registered significant negative trends: Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Ethiopia, Russia, Swaziland, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

A closer look at the dynamics of political change in 1999 helps to give some definition to the broader trends. Two of the world's most populous developing countries—Indonesia and Nigeria—both made transitions to electoral democracy and improved their freedom scores (while remaining within the Partly Free category). Fiji entered the ranks of Free countries as a consequence of an improved political environment, which included successful elections within the framework of new, fairer electoral laws. Progress was also registered in Djibouti, which advanced from Not Free to Partly Free as a result of free and fair presidential elections held in April 1999 and the subsequent release of some 40 political prisoners. East Timor, now a UN protectorate in transition to full sovereignty, saw its freedom status improve to Partly Free from Not Free as a result of the end to repression by the Indonesian military, security forces, and paramilitary groups. In Niger, which also advanced from Not Free to Partly Free status, free and fair presi-

Freedom in the World—1999-2000

The population of the world as estimated in mid-1999 is 5,976.3 million persons, who reside in 192 sovereign states and 60 related and disputed territories—a total of 252 entities. The level of political rights and civil liberties as shown comparatively by the Freedom House Survey is:

Free: 2,324.9 million (38.90 percent of the world's population) live in 85 of the states and in 44 of the related and/or disputed territories.

Partly Free: 1,529.0 million (25.58 percent of the world's population) live in 60 of the states and 5 of the related and/or disputed territories.

Not Free: 2,122.4 million (35.51 percent of the world's population) live in 47 of the states and 11 of the related and/or disputed territories.

A Record of the Survey (population in millions)

SURVEY DATE	FREE	PARTLY FREE	NOT FREE	WORLD POPULATION
January '81	1,613.0 (35.90%)	970.9 (21.60%)	1,911.9 (42.50%)	4,495.8
January '83	1,665.4 (36.32%)	918.8 (20.04%)	2,000.2 (43.64%)	4,584.1
January '85	1,671.4 (34.85%)	1,117.4 (23.30%)	2,007.0 (41.85%)	4,795.8
January '87	1,842.5 (37.10%)	1,171.5 (23.60%)	1,949.9 (39.30%)	4,963.9
January '89	1,992.8 (38.86%)	1,027.9 (20.05%)	2,107.3 (41.09%)	5,128.0
January '90	2,034.4 (38.87%)	1,143.7 (21.85%)	2,055.9 (39.28%)	5,234.0
January '91	2,088.2 (39.23%)	1,485.7 (27.91%)	1,748.7 (32.86%)	5,322.6
January '92 (a)	1,359.3 (25.29%)	2,306.6 (42.92%)	1,708.2 (31.79%)	5,374.2
January '93	1,352.2 (24.83%)	2,403.3 (44.11%)	1,690.4 (31.06%)	5,446.0
January '94	1,046.2 (19.00%)	2,224.4 (40.41%)	2,234.6 (40.59%)	5,505.2
January '95	1,119.7 (19.97%)	2,243.4 (40.01%)	2,243.9 (40.02%)	5,607.0
January '96	1,114.5 (19.55%)	2,365.8 (41.49%)	2,221.2 (38.96%)	5,701.5
January '97	1,250.3 (21.67%)	2,260.1 (39.16%)	2,260.6 (39.17%)	5,771.0
January '98	1,266.0 (21.71%)	2,281.9 (39.12%)	2,284.6 (39.17%)	5,832.5
January '99 (b)	2,354.0 (39.84%)	1,570.6 (26.59%)	1,984.1 (33.58%)	5,908.7
January 2000	2,324.9 (38.90%)	1,529.0 (25.58%)	2,122.4 (35.51%)	5,976.3

(a) The large shift in the population figure between 1991 and 1992 is due to India's change from Free to Partly Free.

(b) The large shift in the population figure between 1998 and 1999 is due to India's change from Partly Free to Free.

dential elections were held in November 1999, following a referendum that returned the country to democratic rule. Togo advanced from Not Free to Partly Free as a result of more open political discourse signaled by the return from exile of one of the country's main opposition leaders. With the end of Slobodan Milosevic's terror campaign in Kosovo and the establishment of a United Nations protectorate in that territory, Yugoslavia saw the resurgence of independent civic life, a vibrant opposition print media, and local television that broadcasts opposition views. These factors raised Yugoslavia's rating from Not Free to Partly Free. Most significantly, the Islamic world, long resistant to democratic change, is beginning to show signs of liberalization that include modest democratic reforms and in several cases growing democratic ferment.

Major setbacks for freedom also occurred in 1999. Venezuela exited the ranks of Free countries and is now rated Partly Free, in large measure because of the authoritarian actions of its president, Hugo Chavez. He restricted the power of the democratically elected congress, created what amounts to a parallel government of military cronies, and further eroded the country's system of checks and balances by effectively ending judicial independence. Nicaragua's rating dropped from Free to Partly Free because what appear to be trumped-up charges were filed against the country's comptroller general, who was vigorously investigating serious allegations of high-level corruption. Honduras declined from Free to Partly Free as the elected civilian government

faced serious challenges of military insubordination. Malawi also declined to Partly Free status as a result of political violence accompanying the June presidential elections that targeted Muslims in a stronghold of an opposition candidate.

Two states declined from Partly Free to Not Free status in 1999. The biggest setback for democracy occurred in Pakistan, where the military toppled an ineffective elected government that had been losing popular legitimacy owing to rising political corruption and violence. Eritrea also exited the ranks of Partly Free states and is now Not Free, as a result of the government's hostile attitude toward independent civil society and its increasing restriction of opposition political parties.

This has effectively ended any semblance of a multiparty system. Eritrea's move toward authoritarianism has been exacerbated by an ongoing war with Ethiopia.

	Free	Partly Free	Not Free
1989-1990	61	44	62
1994-1995	76	61	54
1999-2000	85	60	47

Tracking Democracy

	Number of Democracies
1994-1995	114
1999-2000	120

The Most Repressive States

At the end of a century that witnessed the emergence of democracy as the preeminent form of government, there remained 47 states that denied their citizens a broad range of basic freedoms. Among these states, 13 have been given the survey's lowest rating of 7 for political rights and 7 for civil liberties. The 13 countries so rated represent a narrow range of systems and cultures. Three (Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam) are one-party Marxist-Leninist regimes and 8 are majority Islamic countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Turkmenistan). Of the latter, Turkmenistan is a post-Communist country; Iraq, Libya, and Syria are led by secular Baathist or socialist parties; Afghanistan is a fundamentalist Islamic theocracy; Sudan is led by a government that embraces fundamentalist Islamic rhetoric; and Saudi Arabia has made important concessions to conservative clerics. The remaining worst-rated countries are Burma and Equatorial Guinea, two tightly controlled and brutal military dictatorships. One territory (Tibet) is under the jurisdiction of China's one-party Communist rule and the other, Chechnya, is under brutal attack by Russia. More importantly, of the 13 worst-rated countries and territories, all but 2 (Saudi Arabia and Equatorial Guinea) have experienced a significant period of one-party socialist rule in the last 15 years.

Democracy's Century

In a year in which freedom did not make dramatic strides in the world, it is important to remember that—despite fits and starts—human liberty has been on an upward trajectory throughout the twentieth century. When viewed from the perspective of the century as a whole, democracy and civil liberties have made important and dramatic progress.

A look at the political maps of the world in 1900, 1950, and 2000 reveals monumental shifts in the number and nature of sovereign polities. (The data from the special

Freedom House end-of-the-century survey is reproduced in the appendix of this volume.)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 55 sovereign polities, another 55 entities that were governed by colonial and imperial systems, and 20 protectorates under the sway or protection of foreign powers. No polity enjoyed competitive multiparty politics with universal suffrage, essential characteristics of an electoral democracy. A mere 12.4 percent of mankind lived under a form of government that could be deemed somewhat democratic, although suffrage was generally limited to males. In the United States, women could not vote, and the voting rights of racial minorities and the poor were restricted. Twenty-four other countries with some form of democratic government maintained similarly restrictive democratic practices, denying voting rights to women, racial minorities, and those without property. Moreover, 55.8 percent of the world population lived under some form of monarchy (with 36.6 percent of the global population under absolute monarchic rule), and an additional 30.2 percent lived under colonial and imperial domination.

By 1950, the number of sovereign polities had risen to 80. With colonialism on the decline, the number of entities still under colonial or imperial rule had fallen to 43, while 31 entities remained protectorates, many of them former colonies making the transition to independence. In the aftermath of World War II, there was a further significant expansion of the number of democratically elected governments. In 1950, 22 democratic states accounted for 31 percent of the world's population. Countries with restricted democratic practices—in which a single party exercises long-term political dominance and the role of opposition parties is limited, as in the Philippines and Cuba in 1950, or if large groups, women, or ethnic minorities were excluded from the electoral process, as in Colombia and Switzerland—accounted for a further 11.9 percent of the world population. The middle of the twentieth century also witnessed the spread of totalitarian communism as an alternative form of government, under which a third of the world's population then lived.

By the end of the twentieth century, sovereignty and electoral democracy both registered dramatic gains. The number of states more than doubled, from 80 in 1950 to 192 in 1999 (with East Timor and Bosnia, both of which are international protectorates, now also heading toward full independence and included in our list of states). The end of the century has also seen the virtual elimination of colonial and imperial rule. Today, 58.2 percent of the world's population lives under democratically elected leadership, while another 5 percent lives under systems with restricted democratic practices; for example, in dominant-party states such as Malaysia, where the ruling party

The 13 Worst Rated Countries

Afghanistan
 Burma
 Cuba
 Equatorial Guinea
 Iraq
 North Korea
 Libya
 Saudi Arabia
 Somalia
 Sudan
 Syria
 Turkmenistan
 Vietnam

The 2 Worst Rated Disputed Territories

Chechnya (Russia)
 Tibet (China)

enjoys overwhelming electoral advantages and systematically works to suppress the political space for opposition parties, and Mexico, whose parliament was elected in a democratic process, but whose presidential election of 1994 was conducted in a less than free and fair fashion. In sum, electoral democracies constitute 120 of the 192 internationally recognized independent polities. Indeed, the idea of national sovereignty has generally been accompanied by the idea of personal sovereignty within a democratically accountable state.

The trend toward democratically elected government has been accompanied by a trend toward broader political freedom and enhanced civil liberties. The adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights helped spark a growing global awareness of human freedom. Central to the spread of this awareness has been the ongoing revolution in communications technology, which has decentralized state control of information and allowed for its cheaper and more rapid dissemination.

Regional Patterns

Democracy and freedom have been on the upswing since the mid-1970s. This trend has been visible across all continents and in most cultures, underscoring the idea that human liberty and democracy are not Western constructs, but universal aspirations. Yet while the expansion of democracy and freedom has been global, it has not everywhere proceeded at the same pace. There were important geographical and cultural variations that deserve attention and deeper understanding.

At the dawn of the new millennium, democracy and freedom are the dominant trends in Western and East-Central Europe, in the Americas, and increasingly in the Asia-Pacific region. In the former Soviet Union, the picture remains mixed, with freedom's further expansion stalled and a number of countries becoming increasingly authoritarian. In Africa, Free societies and electoral democracies remain a distinct minority. While there are no democracies or Free states within the Arab world, and fewer Free and democratic states in other predominantly Muslim societies, 1999 was a year of democratic ferment in the Islamic world.

Of the 53 countries in Africa, 8 are Free (15 percent), 25 are Partly Free (47 percent), and 20 are Not Free (38 percent). With democratic elections in Djibouti, Niger, and Nigeria, 20 African countries (38 percent) are electoral democracies. At the end of 1999, Eritrea dropped from Partly Free to Not Free, while Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Niger, and Togo rose from Not Free to Partly Free. The survey also records more modest progress in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Nigeria, and Tanzania and more modest declines in freedom in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

In the Asia-Pacific region, 9 of the 26 larger countries are Free (35 percent), 7 are Partly Free (27 percent), and 10 are Not Free (38 percent). Despite the looming presence of Communist China and the rhetoric of "Asian values," 14 (24 percent) of the region's polities are electoral democracies. Of the smaller Asia-Pacific countries, 11 are Free electoral democracies, 1 (Tonga) is Partly Free, and 1 (the Sultanate of Brunei) is Not Free.

In East-Central Europe and the former USSR, there are growing signs of a growing chasm between those countries which are deepening their democratic practices and those that are not. In Central Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, including the Baltic states, democracy and freedom prevail; in the former USSR, however, progress toward the emergence of open societies has stalled or failed. Overall, 19 of the 27 post-Corn-

munist countries of East-Central Europe and the former USSR are electoral democracies. Ten of the region's states are Free, 12 are Partly Free, and 5 are Not Free; however, all of the Not Free states are from the former USSR; and with the exception of the Baltic States, none of the former Soviet republics is Free. Stagnation and reversals for freedom characterized virtually all the non-Baltic Soviet states. Russia's war in Chechnya resumed with a brutal vengeance and has been accompanied by the growing influence of representatives from the security services in the upper echelons of power. Belarus's dictatorship under the erratic tyrant Alyaksandr Lukashenka remained Eastern Europe's most repressive state. A modest revival of civic opposition activity in Yugoslavia resulted in that country's improved freedom status.

Western Europe remains the preserve of Free countries and democracies, with all 24 states both free and democratic.

Among the 35 countries in the Americas, 31 are electoral democracies (Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru are the exceptions). Twenty-two states are rated Free, 12 are Partly Free, and 1 (Cuba) is Not Free. Negative trends produced a lower freedom rating for Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, all of which declined from Free to Partly Free.

In the Middle East (excluding North Africa), the roots of democracy and freedom are the weakest. In this region, only 1 country is rated Free (Israel), 3 are rated Partly Free (Jordan, Kuwait, and Turkey), and 10 are Not Free. Israel and Turkey are the region's only 2 electoral democracies. Among the 16 states with an Arab majority in the Middle East and North Africa, there are no Free countries. Three predominantly Arab states—Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco—are Partly Free. And while the year saw some evidence of modest democratic reforms in several Arab states, there are no electoral democracies in the Arab world.

The survey continues to reveal interesting patterns in the relationship between cultures and political development. While there are broad differences within civilizations, and while democracy and human rights find expression in a wide array of cultures and beliefs, the survey shows some important variations in the relationship between religious belief or tradition and political freedom.

Of the 85 countries that are rated Free, 76 are majority Christian by tradition or belief. Of the 9 Free countries that are not majority Christian, 1 is Israel, and 2 others (Mauritius and South Korea) have significant Christian communities representing at least a third of their population. Of the 6 remaining Free countries, Mali is predominantly Muslim, nearly half of Taiwan's population is Buddhist, Mongolia and Thailand are chiefly Buddhist, Japan has a majority that observes both Buddhist and Shinto traditions, and India is predominantly Hindu and has the world's second largest Muslim population.

Thirteen of the 63 countries with the poorest record in terms of political rights and civil liberties are predominantly Christian. By this indicator, a predominantly Christian country is more than five times as likely to be Free and democratic as it is to be repressive and nondemocratic.

There is also a strong correlation between electoral democracy and Hinduism (India, Mauritius, and Nepal), and there are a significant number of Free countries among traditionally Buddhist societies and those in which Buddhism is the most widespread faith (Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, and Thailand).

The Islamic world remains most resistant to the spread of democracy and civil lib-

erties, especially the Arab countries. Only 1 country with a Muslim majority (Mali) is Free, 14 are Partly Free, and 26 are Not Free. Eight of the 41 countries with a predominantly Muslim population—a net increase of 2 from last year—are electoral democracies: Albania, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Niger, and Turkey. Nevertheless, even as Pakistan exited this group, there were growing signs of political ferment and modest democratic reform in many Islamic countries.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Islamic country, and in Nigeria, where it is estimated that roughly half the population is Muslim, political openings resulted in competitive democratic elections and an orderly transfer of power. Similarly, predominantly Muslim Djibouti and Niger held free and fair elections. Significantly, these countries represent nearly one-quarter of the world's Muslims. If we factor in the Muslims living in the electoral democracies of Europe, the Americas, and India, a majority of the world's Muslims (roughly 600 million out of 1.15 billion) live under democratically elected governments.

Democratic ferment has also become a major current in the political life of Iran. The year saw a major struggle between civil society (which includes an active student movement) and pro-reform members of the government versus government hard-line conservatives and unofficial paramilitary groups supporting them. President Khatami, a cleric, who was elected in 1997 on a platform of moderate liberalization, declared in 1999: "A lively and democratic human society is one which thinks, one which is free, one which is based on the rule of law, and one which criticizes."

A major engine for the spread of the ideas of openness and democratic practices is the Al-Jazeera satellite television station, which broadcasts from Qatar and is viewed throughout the Arab world. Al-Jazeera offers news and commentary programs that include theological debates and appearances by political dissidents and exiles from across the region. In Qatar, which remains an extremely conservative society and where the emir is a major proponent of liberalization, 1999 saw the advent of elections based on universal suffrage to municipal councils with limited powers.

Yemen held its first direct presidential election in September 1999. Onerous restrictions kept the candidate of the major opposition Yemen Socialist Party from qualifying for the ballot, but the country nevertheless saw a vote based on universal suffrage. In Morocco, positive trends include increased tolerance for opposition parties and the return of some political exiles to the country. In Jordan, a restrictive press law was relaxed and municipal elections were held in which opposition parties, including one linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, captured majorities in three cities and made an impressive showing in Amman. In Lebanon, a country that remains under Syrian domination, modest democratic progress was registered through relatively pluralistic local elections.

Although we tend to think of civilizations and cultures as fixed and stable, political transformations within civilizations can spread rapidly. For example, before the third wave of democratization was launched in the 1970s, the majority of predominantly Catholic countries were tyrannies; they included Latin America's oligarchies and military dictatorships, East-Central Europe's Marxist-Leninist states, Iberia's authoritarian-corporatist systems, and the Philippine dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Social scientists speculated about the influence that Catholicism's hierarchical system of church authority might have on Catholic attitudes toward politics. Today, of course, most Catholic countries have become Free and democratic, and some would argue that it

was precisely the internal discipline of the Catholic church that made possible the rapid spread of pro-democratic values following Vatican II and under the papacy of John Paul II.

Democracy and Conflict

While there are numerous studies suggesting that democracies do not engage in war with one another, the last two decades of democratic expansion have been accompanied by numerous violent conflicts, mostly within states. A respected annual survey of major conflicts¹ has shown the following trends for the last decade:

- Conflicts reached a peak in 1992, but have since gradually decreased across all regions; while an annual average of 48.3 inter- and intrastate conflicts took place in the period 1989-94, this annual average fell to 35.2 in the period 1995-98;
- The number of major conflicts (those in which there are more than 1,000 deaths per year) has significantly declined from a high of 20 in 1991 and 1992 to 14 in 1993, to 7 in 1994, down to 6 in 1995 and 1996, to 7 in 1997, and up to 13 major conflicts in 1998.

While there is no absolute guarantee that the downward trend will be sustained, it correlates well with the evidence of the gradual and incremental expansion of democracy and freedom in the last decade. Indeed, a close examination of the survey's regional data indicates that in the regions where democracy is predominant and political freedom is highest (Europe and the Americas), armed conflicts are proportionately lowest. Two factors appear to be related to major intrastate conflicts: weak states, in which government functions poorly and is incapable of ensuring order, and the absence of democratic systems. This is underscored by the data related to strife in 1998. Of the 13 major conflicts in 1998, 9 occurred in Africa, where weak states predominate and where democratic systems account for less than a third of all countries.

As Dr. Timothy Sisk, from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver, has suggested, much of the upsurge in strife and violence that occurred in the aftermath of the cold war in the early 1990s erupted as inept authoritarian regimes decayed, state authority collapsed, and a struggle for power ensued.² To these were added conflicts that emerged in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet empire as the new, weak successor states lacked internal legitimacy. It is the collapse of unstable and illegitimate tyrannies, not conflict occasioned by democratic ferment, that is largely at the root of post-Cold War upheaval. At the same time, there is good reason to believe that the decline in major conflicts is closely connected with the global expansion of democracy, which in the last ten years has seen the number of Free countries increase from 61 to 85 and the number of Not Free states decline from 62 to 47.

The mayhem, ethnic and sectarian conflict, and civil war that have ravaged the world in the years since the end of the Cold War have occasioned numerous international humanitarian interventions, some of them involving the armed might of the United States and other advanced industrial democracies, frequently operating under the aegis of the UN. Few would question the good intentions behind such interventions; many might go so far as to agree that, in the face of ethnic cleansing and acts of genocide

directed at innocent civilians, the international community has an obligation to act. Yet the record of successful recovery from conflicts in which the international community has intervened is mixed.

While many of these interventions have put an end to mass violence, they have not led to durable nation-building efforts rooted in reconciliation through democratic processes. External interventions have tended merely to freeze conflicts and to result in an intrusive international presence. While motivated by noble intentions, this international presence has had the paradoxical effect of both halting the emergence of stable and sustainable, democratic structures and impeding civic revival.

As a result, the list of UN-sanctioned missions and peacekeeping efforts has grown while the number of countries successfully emerging from their status as international protectorates has declined. Today, there are 17 UN peacekeeping operations around the world, some (like the UN's efforts to maintain the peace between Egypt and Israel and between India and Pakistan) having originated in the late 1940s. Twelve UN missions have come into being since 1991, with 8 of them in place since 1995.

Last year saw a major NATO-led humanitarian intervention in Kosovo that successfully reversed the Yugoslav government's ethnic-cleansing campaign against the Albanian population. This action emphasized the resolve of the democratic world to prevent ethnic atrocities in its backyard. Yet the situation in post-conflict Kosovo has not become easier to handle in the aftermath of the intervention. Indeed, while much suffering has been alleviated for the Albanian citizenry, a campaign of terror against Serbs and Roma (Gypsies), resulting in the death of hundreds of civilians and the displacement of tens of thousands more, has effectively cleansed Kosovo of most of its non-Albanian minorities. At the same time, the international community's unwillingness to risk attacks on its peacekeepers has resulted in significant compromises that have strengthened the power of the authoritarian Kosovo Liberation Army. Both of these factors suggest that an effective, democratically based exit strategy is an unlikely prospect in the medium term, while the likelihood of a return of Serbian and Roma populations is remote.

In Bosnia, democratic progress has been thwarted by the persistence of substantial support for Serbian hardliners in Republika Srpska and the resulting restriction on democratic choice imposed by the Office of the High Representative of the UN. In 1999, similar restrictions were imposed by the UN, including the blocking of a proposed head of a Republika Srpska broadcasting authority. While such actions by the international community may have been justified, they made it clear to citizens of Bosnia that the powers of their democratically elected leaders are significantly restricted.

The singular lack of success of international efforts in other settings, including Somalia (now abandoned by the UN), Angola, and Haiti, are additional examples that underscore the difficulties inherent in post-conflict state-building and reconciliation efforts. In most peacekeeping exercises, the international community is ultimately faced with a Hobson's choice: persist in supervising the internal political situation and restrict democratic development (thus risking the growth of public cynicism about the authority of indigenous political institutions) or accede to *de facto* ethnic separation and ratify the results of ethnic cleansing.

In short, while outside intervention puts an end to mayhem, it appears not to have found a formula that would allow for authentic, indigenously driven transitions to more open societies. In turn, the seemingly intractable nature of the political and ethnic di-

visions results in a protracted international presence that uses up vast resources, diverting funds that could be applied to new and emerging democracies that have avoided violence and strife.

The end-of-the-century *Freedom in the World* survey shows that the number of electoral democracies continues to grow. At the same time, it shows that the process of deepening liberal democratic practices is complex and requires long-term development of civic democratic consciousness and the rule of law. Nevertheless, as the century and millennium end, advocates of policies to promote democratic transitions can take heart. Their conscious efforts to strengthen democratic movements and democratic values around the world have contributed to the significant expansion of freedom registered in the long-term data of this survey. With a growing community linked by shared democratic values and signs of democratic ferment in Islamic countries, the next century holds open the promise of a new, more cohesive global community linked by shared democratic values.

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NOTES

1. Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg, "Armed Conflict, 1989-1998," *Journal of Peace Research* 5 (September 1999): pp. 593-606.
2. Timothy Sisk, "Deeply Divided and Failed States: Democratization in Unfavorable Circumstances," in *Freedom in the World: 1998-1999* (New York: Freedom House, 1999), p. 26.

Humanitarian Intervention: What Lies Ahead?

Elliott Abrams

The bloodiest century in history has closed with a new idea: that lives can be saved if foreign troops are willing to shoot human rights violators before they begin, or at least before they complete, their tasks—and that if lives can be saved this way, morality requires that we not shrink from the task, wherever it takes us.

The theory of humanitarian intervention is very much a product of the twentieth century. It is, first of all, a response to decade after decade of murder and mayhem, including genocide. Perhaps it is only survivor's guilt that motivates democratic countries to wonder if they could have done more—for the Jews or Cambodians or Kosovars or Rwandans or Sudanese or Timorese. But that guilt depends for its existence on timely knowledge, a product itself of modern technology that allows news to quickly reach every part of the world. Nor would humanitarian intervention be possible without the ability to respond to instances of injustice with the latest in modern military technology. Today we can watch the horrors of mass murder on television in the morning and have troops on the scene by night. We now know from experience that humanitarian intervention can in fact succeed in stopping the slaughter. But the question remains: When, if ever, should the U.S. and our democratic allies intervene in the affairs of other sovereign states in order to "stop the killing"?

Prior to the recent rise of humanitarian intervention, state sovereignty was the organizing principle of world affairs—not the least in the United Nations, which is after all a collection of states and not of peoples. In a twist on the old saw that in America "all politics is local," in world politics all crimes (including human rights crimes) were regarded as the local affairs of sovereign countries. There was no appeal beyond the national capital. The UN Charter makes intervention across state borders well-nigh impossible, allowing only two exceptions: self-defense in cases of "armed attack" (Article 51) and actions taken with Security Council approval as matters of collective security (Chapter VII). Humanitarian intervention without Security Council approval is, under the Charter, illegal. The British Foreign Office summed up the traditional view in a 1986 statement.

The overwhelming majority of contemporary legal opinion comes down against the existence of a right of humanitarian intervention, for three main reasons: first, the UN Charter and the corpus of modern international law do not seem to specifically incorporate such a right; secondly, State practice in the past two centuries, and especially since 1945, at best provides only a handful of genuine cases of humanitarian intervention, and, on most assessments, none at all; and finally, on prudential grounds, that the scope for abusing such a right argues strongly against its creation.... In essence, therefore, the case against making humanitarian intervention an exception to the principle of non-intervention is that its doubtful benefits would be heavily outweighed by its costs in terms of respect for international law.¹

But the British were fighting a rear-guard action. Indeed, the concept of noninter-

vention has been under challenge for years, both from international law theorists and from certain governments as well. On the level of international law, the Genocide Convention permits, and may even be said to require, intervention. More to the point, the last half-century is replete with instances where one country invaded another and cited humanitarian concerns as justification for its action: India in East Pakistan in 1971, Vietnam in Cambodia in 1978, Tanzania in Uganda in 1979, as well as 1990s cases such as the United States in Somalia and Haiti, and NATO (with the British Foreign Office in the lead!) in Kosovo. If, in some cases, the claims of humanitarian motivation seem laughable, they fit La Rochefoucauld's definition of hypocrisy: the tribute vice pays to virtue. A century ago, a country need do no more than invoke its national interest to justify military action. More recently, it is almost necessary to mention humanitarian motives as part of the justification.

The turning point was the end of the Cold War. Today we need no longer fear that intervention in local disputes will escalate into a superpower conflict and risk a major war. At the same time, whatever restraints the superpowers placed on their client states during the Cold War are gone as well, so that both potential abusers and potential interveners are far freer to act. The resulting change in the international system is evident; humanitarian intervention is a fact of international life as much as are trade treaties. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine the expansion of humanitarian intervention had the world not become far more integrated economically and were we not now accustomed to a dense web of international rules governing many areas of conduct. Labor standards, environmental regulations, regional bodies such as the European Union or Mercosur, and international human rights conventions now abound, adding layers of new rules to the older set that long governed international commerce.

Trade agreements continue to work pretty well and will no doubt remain in force at the end of the twenty-first century. Humanitarian intervention, a far newer phenomenon, may not. So far, it works badly in practice and not at all in theory. The question is whether its flaws are intrinsic and unavoidable, or can be fixed.

I.

The most serious pragmatic problem posed by humanitarian intervention is that the willingness of the intervening country to place lives and resources at risk is determined by the degree of national interest involved. In most cases, vital national interests are not at stake. Author and columnist Charles Krauthammer describes the resulting problem: "The central contradiction—the Iron Law of Humanitarian War—is this: *Humanitarian war requires means that are inherently inadequate to its ends.*"² Krauthammer believes that humanitarian intervention is "an idea whose time has come, and gone." Why? Because it involves "a contradiction of means: bloodless war." Krauthammer's point is well taken, as is his observation that the very effort to avoid bloodshed (your own or the opponent's) may prolong a war. When the motive is purely humanitarian, national interests vague or nonexistent, and the risks high, humanitarian intervention ceases to be an attractive option. There are, however, cases where conditions are more favorable for intervention. Sometimes the risks will seem low because of a huge disproportion of power between the interveners and the target state; sometimes a measure of national interest is involved. When the United States intervened in Haiti for "humanitarian" reasons, did we not also want a decent government in place there so

that we could in good conscience send back Haitian "boat people"? Indeed, absolutely pure humanitarian interventions may be the exception rather than the rule. To diminish Krauthammer's gap between ends and means, reduce the risks a bit and raise the national interest rewards above zero, and at some point a balance may be found. Indeed, considering the cases where the world did not intervene or did not do so with much energy, such as those of Rwanda and Tibet, Krauthammer's problem solves itself: when the ends are too distant from vital national interests to support the means (military casualties), intervention seldom occurs. The decision to intervene is, after all, still being made most often by political leaders whose pursuit of humanitarian ends will be tempered by their need to win elections.

Krauthammer's suggestion that means will be limited by ends—that humanitarian goals presage a weak-kneed effort that will fall short—may be wrong as well. Acting with absolute certainty of our moral rightness, we may be willing to punish the target country until its leaders are forced to yield. In Kosovo, that is precisely what happened: after a weak beginning, NATO pounded the Serbs with such severity that some complained of the civilian casualties from the bombing campaign. I did myself. The moral arithmetic here became perverse: we were unwilling to risk U.S. casualties in either air or ground combat, but given the rightness of our cause, we felt justified in a high-altitude bombing effort that inevitably killed Serbian civilians. Instead of Krauthammer's limited-war dilemma, we may in the future find ourselves confronted with a much different problem if we choose to ignore the "just war" doctrine of proportionality. That problem will be compounded if we proceed with a sense of unwarranted self-righteousness, something that is especially inappropriate in the context of our declared humanitarian objectives.

These are practical problems: how hard do you fight, how much do you risk, how many do you kill when direct national interests are quite limited? To these one more must be added: how likely is success? To impose hardship and to take lives when there is little chance to resolve a situation is not only feckless but immoral. Krauthammer argues powerfully that few cases will provide any reasonable chance of a positive outcome because the social rifts deep enough to produce massive human rights crimes cannot be solved by a brief period of international policing. We may stop the bloodshed while we are on the ground as occupiers, only to see a renewal of the killing when we leave.

In many cases, we will be too ignorant about the society in question to do much good besides preventing one side from massacring the other for a while. Or we will be willing to intervene for a brief period but unwilling to meet the costs of the prolonged stay that real change requires. On other occasions, our self-interested intervention will be wrongly described as humanitarian; we will thus advance our own national goals even if the locals benefit little (as in the case of Haiti). In all these situations, humanitarian intervention may achieve little long-term improvement in the lives of the people it claims to help.

But not always. The practical difficulties of successful humanitarian intervention remind us that our goal is to do good rather than feel good, but they should not block action when there is something useful to be done. Sometimes the problem may be an individual dictator: Panama, for example, is clearly better off with General Manuel Noriega in jail (whether one calls the U.S. intervention there humanitarian or imperialist) and has, as a result of his removal, become a working democracy. Sometimes, even

deep social divisions can exist without sectarian violence or mass murder, and a period of foreign intervention may open a new phase in the political life of a nation. The "realist" school provides important warnings against allowing moralizing to replace judgment, but prudence does not always dictate inaction or indifference.

II.

As difficult as these practical issues are, the doctrinal problems involved in humanitarian intervention may be more problematic. What we may be faced with is practice in search of a theory.

The notion that every humanitarian intervention is meant to solve a threat to international peace is the traditional defense of the practice under international law and at the UN. Unfortunately, this is a thoroughly unpersuasive argument. Such an argument may be useful in debates at the UN over whether to intervene or not. In the real world, however, local conflicts often pose no threat to the rest of the world. While all human rights crises may not be local affairs, neither are they all international in scope. The "threat to peace" argument must be reserved for appropriate cases; in most others, the "forfeiture of sovereignty" argument is more appropriate. This argument posits the following: Sovereignty rests in the people. There cannot be popular consent to severe human rights violations; hence there has not been such consent; hence the state is acting against the true sovereign (the people) when it commits human rights crimes. The intervention is then taken on behalf of the "true" sovereign and does not represent a breach of sovereignty.

For Americans, weaned on "We the People," this formulation is attractive. In fact, the forfeiture-of-sovereignty doctrine can be applied to many cases of human rights abuse. But before applying this doctrine too widely, we should consider the implications. What about crimes committed willingly by a sovereign majority against a small minority, up to and including genocide? Here the general will may be to slaughter a particular sect or religious or racial group, rendering the sovereignty argument null and void. The interveners must instead simply impose their morality on the local majority, insisting that there is now a global standard of human rights law that no one may breach. The Genocide Convention and the Convention Against Torture are codified examples of such laws, and it may be that in this new century their heretofore narrow application will be widened. Courts in England have ruled in the case of General Augusto Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile, that under international law, torturers are like pirates: they may be captured anywhere because there is a universal interest in stopping torture. One can imagine broader and broader categories of human rights violations being brought under international oversight, providing justifications not only for court actions against individual abusers but for some form of intervention as well. Why only genocide? Why large-scale atrocities and not smaller-scale ones?

Such questions raise the broader issue of whether anyone is prepared to seriously advocate intervention in the many, many countries that fall short of peaceful and democratic politics. There are also issues of doctrine to consider. Who has the right to decide that a human rights crime is being committed, or that it rises to the level of offense covered in an international treaty or convention? Who has the right to organize an intervention force? If the moral criteria which justify intervention are redefined to allow military action against lower-level human rights crimes, then the procedures for inter-

vention must be improved. Since almost every intervener claims some moral basis for its action, expanding the opportunities for intervention inevitably means enlarging the possibilities for mischief-making as well.

In recent years, the intellectual argument has been largely advanced by human rights activists favoring intervention. They have in the main strung together arguments justifying action by the great democracies to rescue people in the more backward parts of the world. In the not so distant future, these same people may wish to redirect their attention to the standards and procedures aimed at preventing misbegotten military ventures whose goals are flimsily clothed in the language of humanitarianism. Stopping a bogus humanitarian intervention may come to be as pressing a challenge as launching a genuine one.

III.

What will the coming decades bring? There is reason to believe that humanitarian intervention will be needed more often, rather than less. The last decades of the twentieth century suggested that ethnic and religious identities, long expected to decline in the face of "modernity," are instead rising in salience to millions of people, not just in the former Yugoslavia or in East Africa but around the globe.³ Sectarian strife may well become more prevalent, especially when combined with renewed nationalism. For the collapse of the Soviet empire and the end of the Cold War have unquestionably unleashed (or, to use a different term, liberated) and strengthened desires to form a state coterminous with the nation and representing its true aspirations—whether in Eritrea, East Timor, Kurdistan, or Chechnya. Moreover, increased religious devotion has in some areas led to human rights violations against nonbelievers, and in others has combined with nationalism in an explosive brew that threatens minority rights. It seems that as the world economy becomes more integrated, the desire for, indeed the intensity of feelings about, religious and national identities is strengthened. And when identity politics becomes violent, the preconditions for large-scale human rights abuses and thus for humanitarian intervention are enhanced.

It is probably true as well that the "creative destruction" we associate with capitalism will exacerbate these trends. Globalization of trade and finance can often disrupt society in a beneficial manner and hasten the arrival of democracy; it did so in South Korea, Taiwan, and Chile, to take three familiar examples. But modernization may also be disruptive to local cultures and produce a counterreaction: a search for stronger traditional identities, the reassurance and security of group membership, and the comforting exclusion of those who are different. One sees this phenomenon at its most benign when the government in London cedes sovereignty "up" to the European Union in Brussels—and "down" to the newly created Scottish and Welsh assemblies as well. It will appear in a less benign guise elsewhere.

The concept of sovereignty, already on shaky ground, will be further weakened if both human rights crimes and the demands for intervention increase. To use a corporate legal analogy, having already "pierced the veil" of inviolable state frontiers, the international community is even less likely to shrink from further humanitarian intervention in future cases. Practical objections to a particular armed intervention will no doubt prove persuasive in some instances, but the kind of international indifference to crises within sovereign states which prevailed in the past is no longer possible. For

example, it is highly unlikely that the Western democracies will forever ignore the plight of Christians who are under oppression in various third world countries. Since the world claims to believe in the equal dignity of all mankind, it is no longer possible for affluent and predominantly white societies to ignore the suffering of the poor and darker-skinned peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In addition, humanitarian nightmares that are the product of nationalism are very likely to involve border wars or border changes and therefore legitimately to involve other countries and the international community.

Finally, the so-called revolution in military affairs may play a role as well. Until now, the greatest practical limit on intervention has been the unwillingness of potential interveners to bear great risks and to take many casualties. The development of new generations of weapons, however, may reduce the cost of intervention in resources and manpower. Pilotless planes, robot vehicles, smart bombs, information warfare, and the like can reduce the risks for the intervener to a politically acceptable level. The war in Kosovo, like the Gulf War against Iraq, may be a harbinger of a new era in warfare whereby powerful states are free to intervene without much risk of sacrificing soldiers. Who would not want to rescue thousands of desperate people if the only risk was that a few robots would have to die for their country?

Curiously, even the efforts to establish rules and limits for intervention will erode traditional views of sovereignty. It is difficult to imagine what practical standards can be written into international law: when should a large-scale human rights violation be handled with speeches or boycotts, and when is armed force justified? The words international lawyers choose will never provide much guidance or much restraint. It is far more likely that a requirement of collective action will be imposed. That is, armed intervention is justified under international law when some *group* of nations says so: the Security Council, the General Assembly, NATO, or ad hoc combinations that may be assembled in a particular case. The requirement for group action revives the ideals of collective security we associate with the League of Nations and UN, and appeals to the hope that the burdens of intervention will be widely shared. But its main effect will be to disallow any one country from unilaterally deciding to use armed force. This itself represents interference with a right once thought to be at the very heart of sovereignty.

This requirement of collective action is inevitable and, on the whole, a positive development. Humanitarian intervention is defined not by means but by ends. The tools of humanitarian intervention are military, just as they are in cases of blatant aggression, so we can only distinguish the moral from the immoral intervention by making a judgment about motives. It is unlikely indeed that an armed action aimed at repression or characterized by aggressive intent will capture much international support. It is equally unlikely that an action aimed at saving lives will elicit no such support. To return to *realpolitik*, it is unlikely in the foreseeable future that a powerful American diplomatic effort will not be able to drum up support for any action that we feel we must take. Moreover, U.S. military dominance makes intervention without American approval and participation difficult and often impossible.

For Americans, this most idealistic of discussions cannot be separated from the debate over the uses of our extraordinary power. Those who fear that the United States leans always to imperial adventures and to the support of repressive regimes will have no trouble in urging great restraint, but this camp has shrunk a good deal since the end of the Cold War. As we saw in Kosovo, many who attacked American interventionism repeatedly during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s—even many who voted against U.S. in-

tervention in the Gulf War—were loudly calling for widespread U.S. intervention in the 1990s.

Today the more consequential debate is between those who believe power is bolstered when it is husbanded and those in the "use it or lose it" camp. The former group argues that the United States is uniquely able to mount an operation like Operation Desert Storm or to counterbalance growing Chinese power in East Asia and should save its powder for those requirements. To use our resources in interventions that could be undertaken by lesser powers is to squander them—and to weaken the political will to intervene in cases where our national interests are clearly involved. The interventionists counter that it is the moral leadership of the United States that will be squandered if we stand aloof when massive human rights abuses are being committed and our allies are considering action. Successful interventions, they argue, breed confidence in our will and our ability, engendering more political support at home and abroad while at the same time deterring tomorrow's human rights abuser.

The outcome of this debate is crucial to the future of humanitarian intervention. Such is the power and reputation of the United States as this century begins, so remarkable its cultural and military dominance, that the fate of humanitarian intervention depends largely on what course America decides to follow.

How will the United States proceed? The coming decades will certainly see their share of cases where violent human rights crimes occur, outside intervention is tempting, and no serious obstacles to success appear. We will then be faced with a myriad of practical and legal objections, for America's moral standards have become more refined than those which guide international law. The situation will unavoidably be messy: there will not often be guiding principles to help us ensure that we carry out actions that are permissible, desirable, or required, rather than actions that are foolish or counterproductive. We will return again and again to the same debate, amongst ourselves and with other democratic nations that share our desire to deter, diminish, stop, or punish human rights violations. If we will sometimes find a case where the decision to intervene seems an easy one, we will more often find ourselves wondering whether intervention will achieve anything useful. At the back of our minds, we will worry about the costs we must pay, the impact on our reputation and self-esteem, and whether in the end we in America would be better off in a world where national sovereignty has all the legitimacy of the divine right of kings.

Yet this is exactly the debate we should be having, and these are exactly the doubts we should be entertaining. If the theory of humanitarian intervention is a product of the twentieth century, its practice is the product of the unique circumstances at the century's end. The current international debate over humanitarian intervention reflects important progress in moral standards, but it reflects more fundamentally a single fact: that for the first time in human history a democratic society is the dominant world power. We are all engaged in a novel enterprise, judging whether and how that nation's power, combined with that of like-minded allies, can be used to eliminate or at least reduce abuses of the rights of man.

In the course of the past century, those rights were more and more carefully elaborated in international conventions that were, usually, not worth the paper they were printed on. These high-sounding agreements, signed by the likes of Stalin, coexisted with a vast empire of repression that encompassed much of the world's population. In a few short years we can now envision, indeed we are actively engaged in, making

those words real—not for all mankind, but for an ever-increasing portion of it. It is to be expected that this effort, tangled as it is with the great debate over the uses of American power, confuses and divides Americans as it does friends of human rights everywhere. We must get used to that, for this debate, and this effort, will define international politics, and our own, in the coming decades.

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NOTES

1. UK Foreign Office Policy Document No. 148, reprinted in *57 BYbIL* (1986) 614.
2. Charles Krauthammer, "The Short, Unhappy Life of Humanitarian War," *The National Interest*, Fall 1999 (emphasis in original).
3. See Peter L. Berger (Editor), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999).

Democracy and the Market: The Case of Globalization

Ethan B. Kapstein
and Dimitri Landa

An important lesson of modern political economics is that democracy and free markets are linked by potentially conflicting incentives that give rise to temporally distinct consequences. In the long-term globalization propels economic growth and contributes to the development of democratic institutions.¹ However, in the short term, globalization creates economic disruption, income inequality, and job insecurity, which lead to social conflict that threatens the stability of weak or fledgling democratic states.²

In order that emerging democracies enjoy the benefits of globalization, the governments must be able to contain the short-term adversity. The key to this ability is the implementation of policies ensuring *the development of efficient capital markets, including human capital markets, that promote the life choices for working people and their families* and thus minimize the extent to which income inequality—a short-term effect of economic globalization—coincides with inequality of opportunity.³ While strengthening the stability of emerging democracies, these policies are precisely what economic policy institutes, including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), have been advocating on purely economic grounds as the critical determinants of the economic success of globalization. Thus, although fledgling democracies may see an increased disparity in income distribution on their road to capturing the economic benefits of globalization, they may nevertheless be able to move ahead without jeopardizing their political stability. Given the appropriate policy choice, democracy and the market may *from the start* find each other to be close allies with respect to globalization.

The implementation of the requisite policies, however, faces powerful opposition in the domestic politics. It is here that the international community has a critical role: to aid national governments in, or when necessary to pressure them to complement policies of globalization with those of open and efficient capital markets, and hence open opportunities.

The Effect of Open Markets on Income Distribution

According to classic economic theory, the relationship between economic openness and growth is straightforward. Countries that adopt free trade policies and accept the

division of labor implied by the principle of comparative advantage liberate the factors of production and enable them to work with greater efficiency. As a result, these countries produce and consume more than they could in a protectionist environment.

In addition, international trade has a positive effect on growth beyond the one-time efficiency gains associated with economic openness. According to Mancur Olson's seminal argument, sustained growth in democracies can be stifled by pressure from special interest groups seeking to monopolize and cartelize national markets. Over time, the economy becomes sclerotic, as reflected in falling growth rates. The classic case of this phenomenon, according to Olson, was provided by twentieth-century Great Britain—though the same theoretical framework has been influential in our understanding of the political economy of transition economies such as that of Russia as well.⁴

Opening an economy to trade, investment, and people, in contrast, breaks the power of these special interests. "If there is free international trade, there are international markets out of the control of any lobbies.... Free trade undermines cartelization of firms, and indirectly also reduces monopoly power in the labor market."⁵ To be sure, "free trade alone is not enough" to break domestic monopoly power, but in "combination with other policies" it can play a powerful role.⁶ In sum, free trade promotes economic growth through its direct effects on the division of labor and its indirect effects on would-be rent-seekers (i.e., parties aiming to gain from political action what they are unable to achieve in the marketplace).

As a *utilitarian* doctrine, free trade theory has the goal of maximizing output and consumption for the nation (and the world) as a whole, irrespective of the consequent distribution of income for individuals *within* these countries. Politically and normatively, however, these consequences must not be overlooked.

The basic theory underlying the distribution of income under free trade was formulated by Paul Samuelson in 1948 with his "factor price equalization" (FPE) theorem. According to FPE, in two economies that adopt a policy of free trade, the returns to the factors of production (e.g., labor) in each country will tend toward equalization.⁷ In other words, trade between rich and poor countries may result in lower wages for unskilled workers in the rich state.

Thus economic opening may lead to some undesirable consequences for economic welfare if there is no adequate compensation for the "losers." The problem is that even assuming the best intentions of policymakers, designing well-targeted income transfer programs is difficult, since providing full compensation to those negatively affected by trade encourages them to identify themselves as "losers," passively accepting the compensation, rather than seeking to adjust to the new market demands. When threatened by free trade with developing countries, workers (and capitalists) in industrialized states have tended to seek protection in tariffs and non-tariff barriers such as quotas on imports. Tariff escalation against refined agricultural products from the developing world (e.g., higher tariffs on instant coffee than on coffee beans) and sugar cane quotas are particularly egregious examples of this tendency. These barriers, in turn, reduce the growth prospects for underdeveloped countries, preventing these countries from enjoying the dynamic gains from trade that accompany technological progress and growth.

As in industrialized countries, free trade may also cause rising income inequality in underdeveloped economies. The reasons, however, do not follow from FPE analysis,

but instead come from technological change.⁸ One positive effect of opening less developed economies to the world market is the transfer to such countries of new and more efficient production technologies. These technologies, however, are likely to have a skill bias, which rewards workers who possess the skills to operate the new equipment, while leaving others by the wayside. Indeed, the welfare of less-skilled workers may actually decrease under free trade. As recent work shows, technology transfers that take place between developed and underdeveloped (especially Latin American) countries are positively correlated with wage dispersion among workers in the receiving country.⁹ That is, as new technology moves into underdeveloped countries, the labor markets in these economies become increasingly segmented into "winners" and "losers."

Moreover, the entry into the world market of countries with cheap and abundant labor, such as China, tends to lower the wages of the low-skilled labor engaged in complementary production in other underdeveloped countries that attempt to restructure their economies toward greater export-orientation and that have otherwise more expensive labor.¹⁰ These problems associated with free trade are a primary reason for the widening of wage gaps in Latin American countries since the mid-1980s.¹¹

Income Inequality and Economic Growth

The consideration of the effects of inequality on growth is best approached through the prism of the endogenous growth theory (EGT), which has gained considerable currency in macroeconomic theory in the last decade. EGT models of economic inequality and their empirical tests have strongly linked higher income inequality with sociopolitical instability and lower growth.

EGT has yielded two approaches-usually held to be competing, but which should properly be seen as complementary-to the relationship between income distribution and economic growth: "endogenous fiscal policy" and "sociopolitical instability."¹² While these approaches both support the claim that greater income inequality leads to lower growth, they differ in their analyses of the underlying political mechanisms that generate this outcome.¹³

Proponents of the endogenous fiscal policy approach¹⁴ argue that income inequality induces voters to redistribute income away from the upper income groups, who, in open economies, generally are the immediate winners of the open-borders policy. However, since the wealthy have the highest propensity to save (and thus to invest), progressive taxation has the perverse effect of inhibiting investment and hence economic growth. Moreover, in a global economy any significant effort to re-distribute the wealth away from the rich is also likely to encourage capital flight, again with the effect of reducing domestic resources for investment.

The sociopolitical instability approach associated with EGT¹⁵ posits a direct link between economic inequality and the "bottom-up" political instability. The latter kind of political instability, manifested in protest demonstrations, deaths from political violence, and so on, can be seen as a consequence of skewed income distributions-as may result, for example, from the sudden opening of a country to free trade. Sociopolitical instability, in turn, creates an environment of uncertainty, thus discouraging investment. Not only does it lead savers to withdraw their funds and send them abroad (capital flight, as occurs today in many developing and transition economies), but it causes the government to invest in police and military forces, which are economically ineffi-

cient. Again, the net result of income inequality is instability, which leads to slow or negative growth and hence to weaker democracy.

The Contributions of Economic Growth to Democracy

One of the most robust findings of recent large cross-country studies of the relationship between economic growth and democracy holds that growth strengthens democratic states. This insight has its origins in Seymour Martin Lipset's observation of the correlation between wealth and democracy, a finding that has received strong support in subsequent empirical studies.¹⁶ Perhaps the most ambitious recent attempts to provide support for the wealth-democracy connection have been made by Richard Posner and Robert Barro. Posner shows that higher median incomes bring about greater political stability, perhaps because wealthier countries are better able to support a strong but more humane criminal justice and internal security system.¹⁷ In a similar vein, Robert Barro maintains:

With respect to the effects of economic development on democracy, the analysis shows that improvements in the standard of living—measured by a country's real per capita GDP, infant mortality rate, and male and female primary school attainment—substantially raise the probability that political institutions will become more democratic over time. Hence, political freedom emerges as a sort of luxury good.¹⁸

The underlying argument is that with rising incomes societies become more willing—and more able—to pay for such things as clean air, better working conditions, and democratic governance. It suggests that consumers have a hierarchy of needs, starting with the necessities of life and moving upward toward such luxury items as political freedom.

The positive effects of economic development on the strength and stability of democracy complete the causal chain from economic globalization to democratic consolidation. To the extent that globalization contributes to national wealth, it promotes democracy and supports democratic institutions. To the extent that globalization gives rise to economic inequality, it leads to political instability and backlash against free trade, tariff hikes, and, consequently, slowed economic growth, hence, decreasing rates of democratic consolidation.

Capital Markets in Emerging Democracies

Whether or not income inequality leads to political instability is almost certainly affected by the differing expectations for future prosperity held by the "winners" and "losers" from economic change. Workers displaced by economic change (such as the opening of markets) in developing countries would undoubtedly prefer to share the prosperity than to rebel. Sharing the prosperity, however, means having the opportunity to pursue retraining or a higher level of education or to borrow in order to invest in an entrepreneurial venture—activities that require substantial levels of wealth accumulation in most countries. In the absence of such opportunities, workers naturally have low expectations of their ability to adjust to economic change and eventually transform themselves into "winners."

It is these low expectations—and not simply the income inequality—that should be

seen as motivating the "losers" of the economic change to seek redress through political activities that threaten both the stability, or at least the quality, of the fledgling democratic states and their economic growth and development. Importantly, it is the existence of the opportunities for socio-economic mobility that distinguishes developing countries from advanced industrial democracies, where public access to capital markets is significantly more open, offering wider career choice (and greater opportunities for children), economic efficiency, and, ultimately, greater political stability.¹⁹

The perhaps inevitable income inequality as consequence of globalization does not logically imply the inequality of opportunity. The political stability of the fledgling democracies may depend on the ability of policymakers to appreciate the differences between the two types of inequality, and to structure domestic policies accordingly.

Whether social instability or increased opportunities for mobility will prevail in a given country is determined by how responsive government policies are to the economic demands of the voters. The available data strongly indicate an unresponsiveness to such demands in the developing world, both in the sense of transfers from those on the higher steps of the income distribution ladder²⁰ and in the sense of establishing opportunities for social mobility.

Assuming that voters prefer signaling their views through the electoral process than by costly protest, we may infer that the better organized interests of the upper income strata have generally been successful in counteracting the pressure from the voting majorities of median- and lower-income groups to redistribute their wealth. Thus, *the realities of pluralist politics, which reward the better organized and wealthier groups, do not justify confidence in the willingness or ability of domestic political institutions in fledgling democracies to promote the opportunities of those who are on the losing end of economic change.*

Escaping this trap is likely to require both pressure and assistance from the international community, particularly for the development of *human* capital markets. Given that such a development is costly, if no case can be made for a positive connection between education and economic growth, a choice between the demands of democracy and those of the market may be inescapable. Fortunately, not only can such a case be made, but, both theoretically and empirically, it is also one of the most widely accepted arguments in contemporary macroeconomics.

The relationship between educational attainment and economic growth (and thus democracy) was not a fixture of the early literature on economic development. In contrast, recent work has focused on human capital as "an engine of economic growth."²¹ The degree of investment in and the access to capital markets, especially human capital markets, plays a determinative role in a country's trade and growth prospects. In the context of economic openness, the well-being of both democracy and the market hinge on the same set of policies.

The Development of Human Capital Markets in Emerging Democracies

The empirical evidence confirms the presence of very different country experiences in relation to the pursuit of such policies. According to the World Bank, "Some countries have successfully combined openness and investment in learning and education, forming a virtuous circle: openness creates demand for education, and learning and education make a country's export sector more competitive."²² Examples of this positive trend

are most prominent in East Asia, at least prior to the financial crisis of 1997-1998 (and it is interesting to note that the countries least touched by the crisis, such as Taiwan, seem to be those where this relationship holds most strongly). Yet in other countries, especially those in Africa and Latin American, the relationship between openness, education, and growth has become vicious rather than virtuous. Low education spending and the consequent predominance of low-skilled and low-educated labor in Latin America has led to wage competition with the low-skilled and low-educated labor of China and other recent entrants into the world market, resulting in a downward pressure on (i.e., the effective devaluation of) the "returns to basic education."²³

The tragedy is that these blue-collar workers have the least access to the higher education that they need to remain competitive in the global economy. This provides a chilling example of how globalization and education might fuel a vicious circle. However, the answer to breaking this circle will not be found in simply throwing money at the education establishment; to the contrary, it is "the distribution of education [that] matters."²⁴

The available data on educational expenditure in developing countries do not give much reason for optimism. For example, educational expenditures *fell* between 1980 and 1992 in El Salvador (from 3.9 to 2.2 percent of GNP), Bulgaria (4.5 to 4.2), Malaysia (6.0 to 5.3), Mali (3.8 to 2.2), and Zambia (4.5 to 1.8). Of all developing and transition economies, only three (Kenya, Ukraine, and Yemen) spent more than 7 percent of GNP on education; for the world as a whole the figure was 5.2 percent, or only slightly more than the 4.4 percent spent in 1980. These figures hardly indicate a major commitment of public expenditure. Incidentally, education has clearly not been the big winner of the post-Cold War peace dividend, which saw military expenditures for the world nearly halve from 5.2 to 2.8 percent of GNP during the 1980-1995 time frame.²⁵

Additionally, the evidence from developing countries, especially in Africa and Latin America, suggests that the benefits of education are being captured by the small number of likely "winners" from globalization. Levels of educational attainment differ significantly depending upon income level and gender. Further, UNICEF reports that public expenditure is not targeted at basic education, despite evidence that this delivers the highest economic returns. Instead, "many countries continue to focus on higher (tertiary) education to the detriment of primary and secondary levels."²⁶

Who are the beneficiaries of that spending on higher education? Certainly not the most needy. For the developing world as a whole, the poorest fifth of the population receives only 3 percent of public expenditure in higher education, while the richest fifth receive almost 70 percent. In short, there is no evidence that education is contributing to equality; to the contrary, it is clearly the rich who benefit from public spending.

With respect to Africa, the data show that "the gains in access to education have been unevenly distributed___In many countries the poor get much less than their fair share of government spending on education." As examples, in Ghana, the richest 20 percent of households receive 45 percent of state subsidies to higher education, while the poorest fifth get only 6 percent. In Malawi the distribution is even worse, with the corresponding figures being 59 percent and 1 percent.²⁷

Latin American provides similar if slightly less dramatic evidence. According to the IADB, "In most countries of the region, education is more poorly distributed than

one might expect."²⁸ This becomes especially apparent as the level of education increases. For example, whereas 94 percent of poor children in South America complete their first year of primary education, only 63 percent make it through the fifth year and fewer than 15 percent through the ninth year. As a result, the IADB concludes "Latin America's poor educational distribution is not the result of problems of initial access for the poor to the education system. It results instead from high and more rapid drop-out rates among the poor. *Latin American school systems are quite stratified as a result, and do not constitute a mechanism for social mobility or for reducing income differences*" (italics added).²⁹ This is not a promising finding for those who care about the democratic future in these countries.

The Role of the International Community

So what is to be done? We believe that foreign assistance should play a critical role in promoting investment in capital market development for fledgling democracies and that this investment be targeted at the "losers" from economic and technological change—those who are least advantaged. Indeed, such policies should be made part of an international economic strategy designed to promote both freer trade and economic equity. For as we have seen, economic openness that worsens income inequality can threaten growth and democracy. In short, trade policy must become sensitive to the domestic politics of the emerging democratic states.

Such a policy will require both an increase in and redirection of international assistance. While we recognize the immense political challenges involved, we believe that a strong case for this strategy can be made. After all, to the extent that the advanced industrial states are truly committed to promoting democratization around the world, for reasons of both economic self-interest and national security, this investment should be seen as both moderate and prudent.

Clearly, the current trend in foreign assistance is not promising. Official development assistance by the major industrial countries reached its post-World War II high of \$70 billion in 1991. Since that time, aid levels have tumbled to insignificant levels, largely because of decreased spending by the United States; while the U.S. economy constitutes 30 percent of the industrial world total, its aid contributions represent less than 17 percent of all official flows traveling between developed and underdeveloped countries. As a result, the member-states gathered in the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recently judged "the current level of American aid as inadequate."³⁰

Overall, the advanced industrial democracies now allocate less than 0.25 percent of their GNP to foreign assistance, or 50 percent less than they provided at the outset of the 1990s. It is hard to think of any other program, domestic or international, that has suffered such reductions. The end of the Cold War on the one hand, and renewed fiscal pressure on the welfare state on the other, have doomed aid budgets everywhere.

At the same time, perceptions about the effectiveness of aid must change before there can be a significant shift in public support. Polling data taken by aid organizations reveal widespread skepticism about the efficacy of aid programs; the belief that such funds "go down a rat hole" is widely held by the public. A major step in the direction of changing attitudes toward aid is the issuing by the World Bank of its recent report, *Assessing Aid*. That report is brutally honest about the errors that have been made in the past and circumspect about future prospects. Nonetheless, the report provides clear

evidence that it is possible to target aid to support greater opportunity for the least advantaged. Specifically, the World Bank has found the following with respect to program effectiveness:³¹

First, foreign aid succeeds when it complements domestically sound economic policies. That is, it can help promote overall growth and the expansion of individual opportunities in those countries that pursue macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment measures. It should be emphasized that the effect of such assistance "is large[;] ... 1 percent of GDP in assistance translates into a 1 percent decline in poverty and a similar decline in infant mortality."

Second, in such reform-oriented settings, aid and private investment are mutually supportive; contrary to commonly held beliefs, there is no evidence that aid "crowds out" the private sector. There are several reasons for this positive relationship between aid and investment. For foreigners, the presence of official development assistance often provides reassurance that donor nations are engaged with governments in the reform process and will put pressure on any government that seeks to extort funds from private investors or to nationalize their holdings. For domestic investors, aid that supports infrastructure and institutional development makes the local setting more attractive and promising over the long haul.

Third, aid in the form of technical assistance can enhance the capability of state officials. Not only can it be used to help countries import effective policies in such areas as health care, education, and environmental management, but by providing advice about how to make more efficient use of inputs, it can also expand the range of outputs. As a result, higher-quality public services end up reaching citizens.

What these points suggest is that aid must be better targeted with respect to both recipients and feasible projects. Aid should be directed not only to those countries that are committed to economic reform, but more specifically to governments that are also committed to expanding education and work for the least advantaged. All too often, as the World Bank admits, educational expenditure in developing countries has "not always reached groups that have traditionally had low levels of education (the poor and girls, for instance)."³²

One strategy the Bank advocates in this respect is further decentralization of educational expenditure. Indeed, this tactic is associated with the broad movement toward fiscal decentralization around the world, a promising development only to the extent that local governments are indeed more responsive to the needy than are central governments. According to a study of three World Bank programs of decentralized educational expenditure in El Salvador, Pakistan, and Brazil, the results have been impressive. "In each case decentralizing and involving civil society led to improvements in public services—specifically the broader availability of schooling to disadvantaged groups."³³

More broadly, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, and major bilateral donors ought to reexamine their economic programs and policies in light of the connections among openness, growth, and democracy. The received wisdom provides an optimistic view about the evolution of the political economy, teaching that open markets promote efficiency, which produces growth and, ultimately, democracy. But that outcome, we have sought to demonstrate, is critically mediated by domestic political institutions that may capture the gains from trade for an elite, denying the majority of citizens equity of opportunity. Such an outcome is likely to

have highly negative consequences for the stability of emerging democratic societies and to lead to "vicious" as opposed to "virtuous" circles of economic development. Breaking the vicious circles and transforming them into virtuous ones, and in so doing increasing the prospects for a democratic future—*both more stable and more substantively democratic*—will certainly require the good work of courageous leaders within domestic societies, but without foreign assistance these prospects are less likely to be realized.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Robert Barro, "Democracy and Growth," *Journal of Economic Growth* 1: 1-27, 1996.
2. See, for example, Dani Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997).
3. Although economic opportunities can, in principle, be equal and closed, we are, obviously, referring to the case in which the equality is achieved at the "high end" of the distribution of opportunities ladder.
4. Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1982); on the transition economies, see Anders Aslund, Peter Boone, and Simon Johnson, "How to Stabilize: Lessons from Post-Communist Economies," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 1 (1996): 217-291.
5. Olson, *Rise and Decline of Nations*, p. 142.
6. Looking at the recent wave of cross-border merger and acquisition activity, however, not to mention the history of cross-border cartels, one might argue that Olson was overly optimistic about the competitive powers unleashed by free trade.
7. For a good review of the debate over FPE, see William Cline, *Trade and Income Distribution* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997), pp. 40-41.
8. Although some of the inferences from these explanations may appear to be in conflict, this need not, in fact, be so. For clues to the theoretical coherence, see Philippe Aghion, Eve Caroli and Cecilia Garcia-Penalosa, "Inequality and Economic Growth: the Perspective of the New Growth Theories." *Journal of Economic Literature* (forthcoming).
9. Donald Robbins, *Evidence of Trade and Wages in the Developing World* (OECD Development Center Technical Papers, no. 119), December 1996. See also Inter-American Development Bank, *Facing Up to Inequality in Latin America* (Washington, DC: IADB, 1998), p. 46.
10. See Adrian Wood, "Openness and wage Inequality in Developing Countries: The Latin American Challenge to East Asian Conventional Wisdom." *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, January 1997.
11. Ibid.
12. This terminology is adopted from Roberto Perotti, "Growth, Income Distribution and Democracy: What the Data Say," *Journal of Economic Growth* 1 (June 1996), pp. 148-187, at 151-152. We observe that this body of work tends to contradict the assertion of a

"Kuznets curve," which posits a strong relationship between the early stages of economic development and a sharp increase in income inequality.

13. See, for example, Robert Barro, "Economic Growth in a Cross-Section of Countries," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 106 (May 1991), Roberto Perotti, "Political Equilibrium, Income Distribution and Growth," *Review of Economic Studies* 60 (October 1993), Alberto Alesina, Sule Ozler, Nouriel Roubini, and Philip Swagel, "Political Instability and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Growth* 1 (1996).

14. Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, "Is Inequality Harmful for Growth?" *American Economic Review* 84 (June 1994); Alberto Alesina and Dani Rodrik, "Distributive Politics and Economic Growth," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 109 (1994).

15. See, most prominently, Alberto Alesina and Roberto Perotti, "Income Distribution, Political Instability, and Investment," *European Economic Review* 40 (1996): 1203-1228, Yannis Venieris and Dipak Gupta, "Income Distribution and Socio-Political Instability as Determinants of Savings," *Journal of Political Economy* 96 (1986): 873-883.

16. For a review, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 59-72. We recognize the presence of some important exceptions to the Lipset rule, including India and Bangladesh.

17. Richard Posner, "Equality, Wealth and Political Stability," *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 13 (1997).

18. Barro, "Democracy and Growth," pp. 23-24.

19. For the similar point, see Klaus Deininger and Lyn Squire, "A New Data Set of Measuring Income Inequality," *World Bank Economic Review* 10 (1996): 565-592.

20. See, inter alia, the findings in Perotti 1996, who controls for democracies.

21. Gary Becker, "Human Capital and Poverty Alleviation," World Bank, Human Capital Development and Operations Policy Working Papers, n.d., www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/hnp/hddflash/workp/wp_00052.html.

22. Ramon Lopez, Vinod Thomas, and Yan Wang, "Addressing the Education Puzzle," World Bank, processed, 1998, pp. 7-8.

23. IADB, *Facing Up to Inequality*, p. 46.

24. Ramon Lopez, Vinod Thomas, and Yan Wang, "Addressing the Education Puzzle," World Bank, processed, 1998, p. 1.

25. World Bank, *World Development Report 1998/99* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 200, 202.

26. UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children: 1999* (New York: UNICEF, December 1998), p. 63.

27. World Bank, *World Development Report 1998/99*, p. 45.

28. IADB, *Facing Up to Inequality in Latin America*, (Washington, DC: IADB, 1998) p. 42.

29. IADB, *Facing Up to Inequality*, p. 43.

30. Development Assistance Committee, *Development Cooperation Review of the United States* (Paris: OECD, 1998), p. 1.
31. World Bank, *Assessing Aid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 2-4.
32. World Bank, *Assessing Aid*, p. 108.
33. World Bank, *Assessing Aid*, p. 111.

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Journalist Deaths on the Increase

Leonard R. Sussman

By all accounts, 1999 was a difficult year for the safety of journalists worldwide. Freedom of the press suffers, even if the exact degree is not immediately quantifiable. (Our Freedom House assessment of press freedom in 186 countries is on the Web at *freedomhouse.org*).

Our tally of 15 categories of press freedom violations as of December 31, 1999 appears on the accompanying table [page 35]. This provides a 27-year listing of journalists killed, kidnapped, arrested and expelled—the only continuous listing since 1982 (covering 1981)—and a 12-year compilation of eleven other categories of violations. We record 48 journalists killed on the job in 1999, a 37 percent increase over 1998. The rise in violence against the press—print and broadcast—occurred in nearly every category. There were 1,651 serious cases reported in 1999; 1,417 in 1998.

The total of 16,608 cases of violence against journalists includes 18 years of violations shown in the table from A to O and 13 years from E to O.

The violence against journalists is regularly recorded now by several other agencies whose compilations differ, though the trend lines remain the same for all observers. The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) reported from Paris that 70 journalists and other media employees were killed in 1999. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the union grouping headquartered in Brussels, said 80 journalists and media staff were killed. Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) in Paris said 36 journalists were killed. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in New York tallied 33 journalists killed.

The differences in the numbers are explained by the fact that the newspaper owners (WAN) and the press union (IFJ) include media staff persons who are not strictly journalists. RSF and CPJ limit the listing to practicing journalists and also delay calling the nature of the attack while investigating the circumstance of the death of a journalist. Freedom House includes some journalist-associated deaths such as camera crews, other reporting assistants, and media managers.

**PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS—1999
(and cumulative figures since 1982)**

	1999	1982-99
A. Killed	48 [17]*	892
B. Kidnapped, Disappeared, Abducted	60 [16]	488
C. Arrested/Detained	368 [63]	4,450
D. Expelled	12 [9]	480

A. Angola 1; Argentina 1; Azerbaijani; Colombia 6; Cote D'Ivoire 1; India 4; Indonesia 3; Lebanon 1; Myanmar 1; Nigeria 4; Pakistan 1; Russia 3; Sierra Leone 9; Sri Lanka 5; Turkey 2; Ukraine 1; Yugoslavia 4;

B. Azerbaijani; Congo(K) 1; Columbia 15; Cuba 2; Indonesia 7; India 1; Iran 1; Israel 1; Kenya 1; Lebanon 1; Nigeria 1; Pakistan 2; Peru 1; Russia 4; Sierra Leone 20; Sri Lanka 1;

C. Angola 12; Azerbaijan 2; Bangladeshi; Belarus 3; Botswana 4; Burkina Faso 3; Burma 20; Burundi 1; Cameroon 1; Chile 1; China 32; Colombia 1; Comoros 1; Congo (B) 2; Congo (K) 24; Cote d'Ivoire 9; Croatia 2; Cuba 37; Czech Republic 1; Djibouti 4; Egypt 3; Ethiopia 6; France 2; Gabon 1; Gambia 8; Guinea 3; Hungary 1; India 3; Indonesia 3; Iran 12; Iraq; Israel 9; Jordan 4; Kenya 6; Latvia 1; Liberia 2; Malawi 2; Mauritania 1; Mozambique 2; Nepal 13; NigeriaH; Pakistan 12; Palestinian Authority 6; Paraguay 2; Peru 4; Romania 1; Russia 2; Rwanda 2; Sierra Leone 11; Somalia 2; Sudan 4; Swaziland 1; Tanzania 1; Togo 2; Tunisia 1; Turkey 15; Uganda 3; Ukraine 1; Vietnam 1; Yemen 4; Yugoslavia 17; Zambia 14; Zimbabwe 7.

D. Central African Republic 1; Cuba 1; Djibouti 2; Fiji 1; Guinea 2; Indonesia 2; Sierra Leone 1; Vietnam 1; Yugoslavia 1.

	1999	1987-99
E. Charged, Sentenced, Fined	232[53]	1,212
F. Beaten, Assaulted, Tortured	295[43]	2193
G. Wounded in Attack	26 [8]	425
H. Threatened	67[21]	836
I. Robbery, Confiscation of Materials or Credentials	66(23)	842
J. Barred from Entry or Travel	27(20)	520
K. Harassed	130 [44]	1,654
L. Publication or Program Shut Down	29 [15]	750
M. Publication or Program Banned, Censored, or Suspended.	202(50)	1,278
N. Home Bombed, Burned, Raided, or Occupied	25 [17]	174
O. Publication or Program Bombed, Burned, Raided or Occupied	64(31)	454
TOTAL:	1,651	

[] indicates the number of countries in which violations occurred.

Compiled by Kathleen Cronin-Furman and Kristen Guida.

Introduction to Country and Related Territory Reports

The *Freedom in the World 1999-2000* survey contains 192 country and 16 related and disputed territory reports. Each report includes basic political, economic, and social data arranged in the following categories: **polity**, **economy**, **population**, **purchasing power parities (PPP)**, **life expectancy**, **ethnic groups**, **capital**, **political rights** [numerical rating], **civil liberties** [numerical rating], and **status** [Free, Partly Free, or Not Free]. For countries or territories which received a numerical ratings change or trend arrow this year, a brief explanatory sentence is included. An explanation of the methods used to determine the Survey's ratings is contained in the chapter on methodology-

The **polity** category contains an encapsulated description of the dominant centers of freely chosen or unelected political power in each country or territory. Most of the descriptions are self-explanatory, such as Communist one-party for China or parliamentary democracy for Ireland. Such non-parliamentary democracies as the United States of America are designated as presidential-legislative democracies. European democratic countries with constitutional monarchs are designated as parliamentary democracies, because the elected body is the center of most real political power. Only countries with powerful monarchs (e.g., the Sultan of Brunei) warrant a reference to the monarchy in the polity description. Dominant-party polities are systems in which the ruling party (or front) dominates the government, but allows other parties to organize or compete, short of taking control of the government. Other types of polities include various military or military-influenced or dominated regimes, transitional systems, and several unique polities, such as Iran's clergy-dominated presidential-parliamentary system. Countries with genuine federalism contain the word "federal" in their polity description.

The reports contain a brief description of the **economy** of each country or territory. Non-industrial economies are called traditional or pre-industrial. Developed market economies and Third World economies with a modern market sector have the designation capitalist. Mixed capitalist countries combine private enterprise with substantial government involvement in the economy for social welfare purposes. Capitalist-statist economies have both large market sectors and government-owned productive enterprises, due either to elitist economic policies or state dependence on key natural resource industries. Mixed capitalist-statist economies have the characteristics of capitalist-statist economies, as well as major social welfare programs. Statist economies have the goal of placing the entire economy under direct or indirect government control. Mixed statist economies are primarily government controlled, but also have significant private enterprise. Developing Third World economies with a government-directed modern sector belong in the statist category. Economies in transition between statist and capitalist forms may have the word "transitional" in their economy description.

The **population** and **life expectancy** figures were obtained from the "1999 World Population Data Sheet" of the Population Reference Bureau.

The **purchasing power parities (PPP)** show per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in terms of international dollars in order to account for real buying power. These figures were obtained from the *1999 United Nations Development Program Human Development Report*. However, for some countries, especially tiny island countries, this information was not available.

Information about the **ethnic groups** in a country or territory is provided in order to assist with the understanding of certain issues, including minority rights, addressed by the *Survey*. Sources used to obtain this information included *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1999* and the CIA *1999 World Factbook*.

The **political rights** and **civil liberties** categories contain numerical ratings between 1 and 7 for each country or territory rated, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The **status** designation of "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free," which is determined by the combination of the political rights and civil liberties ratings, indicates the general state of freedom in a country or territory. The ratings of countries or territories which have improved or declined since the previous survey are indicated by upward or downward arrows, respectively. Positive or negative trends which do not warrant a ratings change since the previous year may be indicated by upward or downward trend arrows, which are located next to the name of the country or territory. A brief explanation of ratings changes or trend arrows is provided for each country or territory as required.

Following the section on political, economic, and social data, each country report is divided into two parts: an **overview** and an analysis of **political rights and civil liberties**. The overview provides a brief historical background and a description of current political events. The political rights and civil liberties section summarizes each country or territory's degree of respect for the rights and liberties which Freedom House uses to evaluate freedom in the world.

Reports on related and disputed territories follow the country reports. In most cases, these reports are comparatively brief and contain fewer categories of information than do the country essays. In this year's *Survey*, reports are included for 16 related and disputed territories, although ratings are provided for all 60 territories.

Afghanistan

Polity: Fundamentalist theocracy, competing warlords (civil war) **Political Rights:** 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

Economy: Mixed-statist

Population: 25,800,000

PPP: na

Life Expectancy: 46

Ethnic Groups: Pashtun (38 percent), Tajik (25 percent), Hazara (19 percent), Uzbek (6 percent), other (12 percent)

Capital: Kabul



Overview:

Ten years after the Soviet Union withdrew the last of its occupying troops and left behind a devastated country, in 1999 Afghanistan's warring factions appeared no closer to achieving a military or political solution to a decade of civil conflict. The continued fighting brought more civilian deaths, displacement, and hardship. The ruling Taliban's severe, centuries-old social code also continued to create acute health care and economic crises for women and girls.

Following a nineteenth-century Anglo-Russian contest for domination, in 1921 Britain recognized Afghanistan as an independent monarchy. King Zahir Shah ruled from 1933 until being deposed in a 1973 coup. Since 1978, when a Communist coup set out to transform this highly traditional society, Afghanistan has been in continuous civil conflict. In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded seeking to install a pro-Moscow Communist faction. More than 100,000 Soviet troops faced fierce resistance from U.S.-backed *mujahideen* (guerrilla fighters) before finally withdrawing in 1989.

After overthrowing the Communist government in 1992, the ethnic-based mujahideen militias, backed by neighboring countries and regional powers, battled each other for control of Kabul. Between 1992 and 1995, factional fighting in and around Kabul killed more than 25,000 civilians. The fighting has intensified cleavages between the rural-based Pashtuns, who form a near majority and have ruled for most of the past 250 years, and the large Tajik minority. Initially, the key protagonists were Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Pashtun-based *Hizb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party) and the Tajik-dominated *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Association), headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani.

In September 1996 the Taliban, a new, Pashtun-based militia organized around theology students, ousted a Rabbani-led nominal government in Kabul. The Taliban has since co-opted or defeated most of its rivals. In August 1998, the Taliban captured the key northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif and several northern provinces from the ethnic-Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostam, which contributed to the fragmentation of a self-styled opposition Northern Alliance of ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazara Shiites. In September, Taliban troops also captured central Bamian province, the Hazara Shiite stronghold. This left the northern Panjshir Valley, the stronghold of anti-Soviet military commander Ahmad Shah Masood, as the last major area outside Taliban control.

In April 1999, negotiations over a power-sharing agreement between the Taliban and Masood, the only active link to the Rabbani administration, collapsed, as did talks

in Tashkent in July. In May, the Taliban accused Iran of being behind a failed uprising in the western city of Herat, after which authorities arrested dozens of ethnic Hazaras. On July 28, the Taliban launched an offensive that captured the Shomali plains north of Kabul. During the attack Taliban fighters committed atrocities that caused some 65,000 refugees to flee their homes. In early August, Masood's forces counterattacked and recouped half of the lost territory. In another development, in February, a powerful earthquake southwest of Kabul displaced 30,000 people and destroyed numerous homes and buildings.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: There are no democratic processes or institutions at any level in Afghanistan. The Taliban rule by decree through an inner circle of clerics based in Kandahar, led by former mujahideen fighter Mullah Mohammed Omar. Appointed local *shura* (councils) also rule by decree. These decrees regulate nearly all aspects of social affairs and are strictly enforced.

The Taliban control roughly 90 percent of the country, although only three foreign governments formally recognize it. Most of the remaining territory is held by either Masood's Tajik-based forces or the small Hazara Shiite-based Hezb-i-Wahadat militia in central Afghanistan. On November 14, aviation and financial sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council took effect after the Taliban refused to extradite the Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden, who allegedly plotted the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Several civilian-based opposition parties function clandestinely, but the Taliban has harassed many of their members. In March 1999, Amnesty International reported that the Taliban had arrested and severely tortured up to 200 Afghan political figures in the past year on account of their peaceful political activity. Some had been released as of February, but more than a dozen had been killed and around 100 remained in detention.

The Taliban have largely neglected most functions of government and rely on the UN and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide basic services, food-for-work programs, mine clearance, and refugee repatriation. The militia finances many of its activities through narcotics trafficking.

The judiciary consists of tribunals in which clerics with little legal training hand down rulings based on Pashtun customs and the Taliban's interpretation of the *Shari'a* (Islamic Law). Proceedings are brief, defendants lack the right to legal counsel, due process safeguards are absent, and there is no right of appeal. In a society where families of murder victims have the option of carrying out court-imposed death sentences or granting clemency, victims' relatives have killed convicted murderers on several occasions. Authorities have also bulldozed alleged sodomizers under walls, stoned adulterers to death, and amputated the hands of thieves. Prison conditions are inhumane.

The Taliban have arbitrarily detained and tortured thousands of men from ethnic minority groups, often civilians rounded up during military operations. Many have been killed or have disappeared. In May, Amnesty International reported that both the Taliban and the Hezb-i-Wahadat had committed abuses against civilians in and around the city of Bamian as control of the area alternated between the two groups between September 1998 and May 1999.

The Taliban's social code and its interpretation of the Sharia have created severe hardship for women. Religious police from the Department for the Promotion of Virtue

and Prevention of Vice regularly flogged, beat, and otherwise punished women in detention centers and public places for violating Taliban dress codes, which include wearing the *burqa*, a one-piece garment covering the entire body. After visiting Afghanistan in 1999, the UN Special Rapporteur for Violence Against Women called the religious department "the most misogynist entity in the world." Throughout the country, soldiers, militiamen, and renegades from the various political factions were responsible for occasionally abducting and raping women.

The Taliban continued to enforce the rural Islamic custom of *purdah* even in urban areas. Under *purdah*, women are isolated from men who are not relatives and cannot leave home unless escorted by a close male relative. The Taliban also continued to ban most women from working, creating extreme hardship through the loss of income and female-based relief services. The Taliban reportedly exempted destitute widows from the prohibition on female employment. However, the ban continued to cover most female medical workers in Kabul's hospitals. Health care is segregated, and women are forced to seek treatment in two poorly equipped hospitals. A 1998 report by the Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights found that most women in Kabul had little or no access to health care, for reasons that included lack of a male chaperone or unavailability of a female doctor.

The Taliban continued to formally ban girls from going to school, although it did allow some privately funded, underground "home schools" for girls to function despite their being banned in 1998, and authorities reportedly ran limited primary schools for girls in Kabul. Only about one-quarter of boys attend school, largely because 80 percent of teachers are women and they can no longer work. In 1998, an international aid group estimated there are some 28,000 street children in Kabul.

In 1999, the civil conflict continued to cause civilian casualties, although at a far reduced rate than in the mid-1990s. Armed factions have committed several massacres of civilians and soldiers. Most notably, in 1997 Uzbek-dominated opposition troops reportedly executed thousands of Taliban prisoners of war, and in August 1998 the Taliban reportedly massacred thousands of ethnic Hazaras. Observers also alleged that the Taliban committed massacres in May 1999 after regaining control of the central city of Bamian.

Some 400,000 civilians in Kabul rely on international NGOs for health care, subsidized bread, and other aid. In 1998, most international NGOs left Kabul after refusing Taliban orders to move to an abandoned building on the capital's outskirts, and many have not returned. The UN international staff left Afghanistan in 1998 following the killing of an Italian UN worker in Kabul, and only a few have returned.

The Taliban sharply restrict freedoms of speech, press, and association. The militia tightly controls its sole broadcast outlet, Radio Voice of Sharia. In 1998, the Taliban banned televisions, videocassette recorders, videos, and satellite dishes, and destroyed stock found in shops. There are few, if any, civic institutions and no known trade unions.

The Taliban continued to sharply restrict religious freedom and force men to grow beards. Roughly 85 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, and the Taliban and other factions have meted out particularly harsh treatment to the Hazara Shiite minority.

Outside areas of Taliban control, the rule of law is similarly nonexistent. Justice is administered arbitrarily according to Sharia and traditional customs. Rival groups carry out torture and extrajudicial killings against opponents and suspected sympathizers.

Opposition groups operate radio stations and publish propaganda newspapers. The loosely organized opposition Northern Alliance operates the only television station in Afghanistan from its headquarters in Faizabad. The Northern Alliance also operates schools for both boys and girls.

The UN estimates that even after ten years of mine clearance, Afghanistan remains the most heavily mined country in the world. The 20 years of fighting since the Soviet invasion have left tens of thousands of Afghans internally displaced, and some 2.6 million others as refugees in Iran and Pakistan.

Albania

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)
Status: Partly Free
Population: 3,500,000
PPP: \$2,120
Life Expectancy: 72
Ethnic Groups: Albanian (95 percent), Greeks (3 percent), others, including Vlachs, Gypsies, Bulgarians, Serbs (2 percent)
Capital: Tirana



Overview:

In 1999, Albania was again plagued by instability. The war in Kosovo resulted in a massive influx of Albanian refugees from neighboring states, compounding the problems of Albania's already weak and overburdened economy. Lawlessness continued to pervade many parts of the country, with central institutions unable to assert governmental control. This was especially true in northern Albania, where the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) operated openly and drug smuggling and other forms of organized crime dominated economic and political life. Meanwhile, in the capital the old guard of Albanian politicians who had dominated the country's politics throughout the post-Communist period reasserted its control over the nation's political life, and infighting between rival power blocs prevented meaningful political reform from taking place.

The most recent set of statewide elections for Albania's parliament, the Kuvend Popullare (People's Assembly) was held in June 1997 and resulted in a victory for the opposition Socialist Party, which, together with its allies, gained 119 of 155 seats in the parliament. In July 1997, Albanian president Sali Berisha, the leader of the Democratic Party, resigned, and Fatos Nano of the Socialist Party became the country's prime minister, with Rexhep Mejdani replacing Berisha as president.

In September 1998, a top Berisha associate, Azem Hajdari, was assassinated, leading to several days of rioting. In October 1998, Nano resigned as prime minister and fled to Macedonia after reports of a possible coup attempt by Berisha followers. Nano was replaced by Pandeli Majko, who managed to form a government and obtain a considerable degree of international support. In November 1998, a new constitution was adopted after a countrywide referendum returned a large majority of citizens in favor

of its adoption. The adoption of the constitution was a defeat for Berisha, who had campaigned for a boycott of the referendum.

However, meaningful moves towards reform and reasserting central governmental control over the country were put on hold by the Kosovo crisis. After the NATO attack on Yugoslavia in March 1999, fighting intensified along Albania's northern and eastern borders with Yugoslavia as the KLA used Albanian territory as a safe haven and assumed de facto authority of districts in northeastern Albania.

What few resources the government had were consumed by the tremendous burden of caring for the estimated 500,000 Albanians who had been driven from Kosovo or had fled the fighting during the 79-day war. The task of caring for the refugees was made additionally difficult because of Albania's poor transportation and communications infrastructure. Only large amounts of international assistance and the dispatch of more than 8,000 NATO troops, along with a considerable number of international relief workers, prevented a large-scale humanitarian disaster. Nevertheless, the general lawlessness and anarchy that prevailed in the north led to considerable human rights abuses by organized crime syndicates. International organizations and media reported numerous cases of young girls from the refugee camps being kidnapped and sent to work as prostitutes in Italy and other western European countries (Albania already functioned as one of the primary smuggling routes for illegal immigrants into European Union countries) or of refugees having what remained of their belongings stolen or extorted by local criminal gangs.

The end of the war in early June allowed the vast majority of refugees to move quickly back to their homes. In July, Berisha's Democratic Party reentered parliament after a nearly year-long boycott, allowing a semblance of normalcy to return to the country's political life. Nevertheless, splits within the ruling party prevented any serious attempts to combat corruption and crime in the country. Political uncertainty again hit Albania in October, when Majko lost control of the Sociality Party to the more radical leader of the party's old guard, Fatos Nano. Majko resigned on October 26, and was replaced by Ilir Meta of the Socialist Party, becoming at the age of 30 Europe's youngest prime minister.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The judicial system is considered inefficient and prone to corruption. Judges often have little formal legal training, and an attempt to make judges with fewer than ten years of experience (in effect, most judges) take a one-time test of their legal competence in May 1999 met with numerous obstacles and complaints. Of 250 judges scheduled to take the test, 59 refused; of these, 53 were subsequently discharged. Holding individuals in custody or detaining them for purely political reasons appears to be negligible. However, police are often reported to be ill trained.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. The majority of Albania's citizens are Muslims, and they have again been allowed to practice their religion openly after several decades of Enver Hoxha's Communist dictatorship. In 1999, there were occasional reports from southern Albania describing harassment of Albanian and Greek Orthodox Christians. Church property confiscated or nationalized by the Communists is still an unresolved issue between the state and the different religious communities.

Freedom of assembly is subject to government restrictions; however, several political parties exist and compete for power. There are also several active trade unions,

including the Independent Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania, with some 280,000 members, and the Confederation of Unions, linked to the Socialist Party. International and domestic NGOs generally function with little governmental interference.

A media law was passed in 1997 but never implemented, and in September 1998, the Albanian parliament passed the new "Law on Private and Public Broadcast Media." The new law limits ownership in any national broadcaster to 40 percent. However, critics of the new law question whether the spirit of the law can be violated by indirectly allowing shares of national broadcasters to be bought up by individuals indirectly, either through kinship groups or shell companies, thereby preventing a true pluralization of Albanian media. Sensationalism and publication of gossip or outright lies plague much of the media, and few journalists are seen as having a sense of journalistic responsibility. News coverage by the state-run television favors the government.

Algeria

Polity: Dominant party (military-influenced) **Political Rights:** 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Economy: Statist **Status:** Not Free
Population: 30,800,000
PPP: \$4,460
Life Expectancy: 68
Ethnic Groups: Arab Berber (99 percent), European (<1 percent)
Capital: Algiers



Overview:

Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a former foreign minister who had been out of the political scene for more than 20 years, was elected president on April 15, 1999. Although the military approved seven presidential candidates, it openly favored Bouteflika, making him the guaranteed winner well before the polls opened. His six opponents withdrew from the race on the eve of the election, charging vote rigging and electoral fraud.

After a two-year informal truce negotiated between the army and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), the armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the AIS formally offered in June to end its war with the government and to fight alongside the army against more extreme Islamic militants. Bouteflika responded with an amnesty for Islamist rebels who renounced violence, excluding those convicted of rape or murder, and pardoned thousands of detainees, but stopped short of offering the FIS prospects for a return to politics. Parliament approved a draft amnesty law in July, and several hundred militants had surrendered by the end of 1999.

After a violent liberation struggle convinced France to abandon 130 years of colonial rule, Algeria achieved independence in 1962. The National Liberation Front (FLN) ruled as a virtual one-party regime until the political system was reformed in 1989. Antigovernment sentiment stemming from corruption, housing shortages, unemployment, and other severe economic and social problems boosted the FIS despite the party's

avowed commitment to theocratic rule under Sharia (Islamic law). The army canceled the second round of 1992 legislative elections in which the FIS had achieved a commanding lead and banned the party, setting off a civil conflict marked by often random violence that has claimed some 100,000 lives.

Accurate information about the conflict is difficult to obtain because of heavy official censorship and an Islamist campaign that has killed approximately 70 journalists and forced many into exile. While Islamist radical groups are primarily responsible for the massacres of men, women, and children that have characterized the conflict, government-backed militias have also apparently committed some mass killings. Human rights groups have charged government forces with thousands of disappearances, torture, and other excesses against alleged militants and their suspected supporters.

Throughout 1999, Bouteflika waged an aggressive campaign to shore up his legitimacy and to win the support of a public weary of seven years of violent civil conflict, high unemployment, and rampant corruption. In July, he announced that the government's peace agreement with the AIS would be put to a referendum. Although the measure had already passed into law, Bouteflika's apparent aim was to drum up enough domestic and international support to allow him to maneuver independently of military hardliners. Promising to resign if the peace plan was rejected by voters, Bouteflika appeared on television almost nightly, calling for national unity and peace in an intensive drive to overcome public indifference. Official figures put the turnout on September 17 at 85 percent, with 99 percent in support of the plan. However, most observers claim that official figures are inflated.

In August, Bouteflika launched a "war on corruption" by sacking nearly half the country's provincial governors. Calling corruption a "scourge worse than terrorism," he warned that the judiciary would also be targeted for its "abuse of influence, sloth, failure to execute justice, and human rights abuses." In September, Bouteflika announced the establishment of a committee to reform the judiciary.

Despite the slow reconstruction of representative institutions in Algeria, the army continues to dominate politics and Bouteflika's authority is limited. Changes in official policy reflect shifts in the balance of power among infighting military factions. Thus despite Bouteflika's professed determination to fight corruption and to restore peace, he faces a credibility problem. By October, repeated delays in forming a government led to speculation of army interference. An unnamed government official was quoted as saying that generals had vetoed Bouteflika's proposals for government candidates because they did not include individuals from Algeria's main political parties. Former finance minister Ahmed Benbitour was named prime minister in December.

Despite the peace deal between the government and the AIS, violence continued throughout 1999. The radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) denounced the agreement and vowed to continue its armed campaign against the government. The frequency of violent incidents escalated prior to the presidential election and in the run-up to the September referendum. Bombings, massacres at fake roadblocks, ambushes, and army retaliation took more than 300 lives between June and September alone. The commitment of the GIA and other armed radical elements to the use of force dims prospects for an end to the war in the near future.

Another threat to peace came in November with the assassination of Abdelqader Hachani, a senior FIS leader who had promoted dialogue with the government. The assassination highlighted frustrations within the FIS over the failure of authorities to

allow the party to resume political activity, and preceded an escalation of violence. Jailed FIS leader Abassi Madani called for an end to political cooperation with Bouteflika. It remains to be seen how seriously this incident will weaken Bouteflika's efforts to lead his country out of nearly ten years of civil conflict.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Algerians' right to choose their government freely in democratic elections has never been honored. The country has effectively been under martial law since the cancellation of the 1992 polls. April 1999 presidential elections were restricted to seven regime-approved candidates. Reports of irregularities included official intimidation of contenders' supporters, media favoritism of the military-backed candidate, padding of election rolls, and distribution of preprinted ballots. Bouteflika's six opponents finally withdrew from the campaign, refusing to participate in what they called a "charade." June 1997 legislative polls excluded the main Islamic opposition groups and were conducted under severe restrictions of freedom of expression and association. The 1996 constitution expanded presidential powers and banned Islamic-based parties. The continuing state of emergency and an antiterrorism decree give the regime almost unlimited power.

Both sides in the conflict commit serious human rights violations, and the rule of law is seldom respected. In October, Bouteflika publicly denounced the judiciary, saying that it "has not been able to protect the citizens against serious abuses. In fact, most of the time it supports the views of the powerful..." The president then announced the formation of a national commission to reform the judiciary. No specific reforms have yet been announced.

The 1992 Antiterrorist Law suspends many due process safeguards. Security forces and pro-government militias are responsible for extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, and disappearances. Despite government claims that security forces are routinely brought to justice for human rights abuses, the authorities have not made such cases public. No independent investigation into the fate of some 3,000 people who disappeared since 1993 after having been abducted by security forces and state-armed militias has been initiated. The Algerian government has consistently denied access to human rights monitors from the UN and from international human rights groups.

Armed Islamist rebel forces routinely abduct and brutally murder men, women, and children, although government soldiers and pro-government militias are primary targets. In one incident prior to the presidential elections, 18 civilians had their throats cut at a fake roadblock set up by suspected Islamists. In another, pro-government militia members were killed by a bomb allegedly planted by the GIA. On several occasions, mass graves containing dozens of victims of Islamist militants have been found. In the second half of the year, killings by the GIA and the extremist Da'wa wal Djihad (Appeal and Struggle) reportedly numbered more than 400.

Press freedom is limited by governmental pressure and legal constraints as well as by the Islamist insurgency. Although violence against journalists has decreased in recent years, some 70 journalists have been killed by Islamists, and hundreds have fled the country. The government controls all broadcast media. The state of emergency restricts press freedom and deems undefined threats to the state or to public order punishable by law. A 1990 law requires speech to respect "individual dignity, the imperatives of foreign policy, and the national defense." "Reading committees" used to cen-

sor the private press were abolished in 1998, but the state monopoly on paper, printing, and advertising leaves private media vulnerable to financial pressure. In May, a state printing press suspended the independent *Demain d'Algerie* for alleged nonpayment of debts. In this precarious environment, self-censorship is rife.

Freedom of assembly is sharply limited. Official permission is required for public meetings, with the exception of legal opposition party meetings. However, public assemblies that do not support the government are rarely permitted. Authorities banned an April demonstration against alleged voter fraud in the presidential election and fired tear gas at protesters commemorating the 1998 murder of a popular Berber singer. Emergency legislation restricts freedom of association. Nongovernmental organizations must have licenses, and the interior ministry may deny a license to or dissolve any group regarded as a threat to public order. In July, the government banned a meeting of human rights groups in Algiers. Membership in the FIS is illegal.

According to the constitution, Islam is the state religion, and the law limits the practice of other faiths. However, small Christian and Jewish communities practice their faiths without government interference. Radical Muslims have killed and issued public threats against perceived "infidels," though extremists do not differentiate between religious and political killings. Berbers, who live mainly in the northeastern Kabylie region, have been targeted by radical Islamists for their liberal interpretation of Islam. The largest ethnic minority, Berbers have sought to maintain their cultural and linguistic identity in the face of the government's Arabization program. A 1998 law made Arabic the official language of Algeria and marginalized Tamazight, the native Berber language. The law requires that all official business, national broadcast media, communications equipment, and medical prescriptions use Arabic. The 1984 Family Code, based on Sharia, discriminates against women in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody.

Workers have the right to establish trade unions and to strike. About two-thirds of the labor force is unionized.

Andorra

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 100,000

PPP: na

Life Expectancy: 83

Ethnic Groups: Spanish (61 percent),

Andorran (30 percent), French (6 percent), other (3 percent)

Capital: Andorra la Vella

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Andorra, after being ruled jointly since 1278 by the French state and the Spanish bishops of Urgel, acquired independence and adopted its first constitution in 1993. The new constitution defines Andorra as an independent "parliamentary co-principality" in which sov-

ereignty is vested in the people (that is Andorran citizens), although the Spanish and French co-princes remain joint heads of state, with limited and largely symbolic powers.

Andorran politics is dominated by five major parties. Four of them governed in coalition until early 1997, when the Liberal Union party won 18 of the 28 general council (parliament) seats. Marc Forne Molne of the Liberal Union is currently serving as head of the cabinet of ministers (executive council).

Andorra has no national currency, but circulates French francs and Spanish pesetas. By virtue of its association with Spain and France, Andorra has also adopted the euro, despite not being a member of the European Monetary Union. In 1991, Andorra established a customs union with the European Union (EU) that permits free movement of industrial goods. The co-principality became a member of the United Nations in 1993 and a member of the Council of Europe in 1994.

With the creation of the EU internal market, Andorra lost its privileged duty-free status and is suffering an economic recession. Tourism, the mainstay of Andorra's economy, accounts for about 80 percent of gross domestic product.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Andorrans can change their government democratically. The *sindic* (president), subsindic, and the 28 members of the general council are elected in general elections held every four years. The new constitution mandates that half of the representatives be elected by parish and half selected from nationwide lists.

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press. The domestic press consists of two daily and several weekly newspapers. There are two radio stations, one state-owned and the other privately owned, as well as six television stations. Several French and Spanish stations can be reached in Andorra.

The Roman Catholic Church is guaranteed the "preservation of the relations of special cooperation with the State in accordance with the Andorran tradition." The church, however, is not subsidized by the government. The practice of other religions is respected, but subject to some limitations.

There are no limitations on domestic or foreign travel, emigration, or repatriation. Andorra has a tradition of providing asylum for refugees, although it has no formal asylum policy. Requests are considered on an individual basis.

The constitution recognizes the right of all persons to form trade union associations. Strikes were illegal under the old system, and the new constitution does not state explicitly that strikes are permitted. Although discrimination against unions is not prohibited under the law, no trade unions have been established formally.

The country's judiciary is independent, and the legal system is based on the French and Spanish civil codes. Citizens enjoy the right to due process, the presumption of innocence, and the right to legal counsel, including free counsel for the indigent.

Women were enfranchised in 1970, and in 1973 they were permitted to stand for public office. There are no legal barriers to political participation by women, although social conservatism continues to limit their involvement in politics. The recently established Association of Andorran Women actively promotes women's issues through education and outreach.

↓ Angola

Polity: Presidential-legislative
Economy: Statist
Population: 12,500,000
PPP: \$1,430
Life Expectancy: 47

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Ethnic Groups: Ovimbundu (37 percent), Kimbundu (25 percent), Bakongo (13 percent), mestizo (2 percent), European (1 percent), other (22 percent)

Capital: Luanda

Trend Arrow: Angola receives a downward trend arrow due to further repression of the press and ongoing atrocities committed by both sides in the war.

Overview:

The situation in Angola deteriorated considerably during 1999 as fighting that had resumed in December 1998 between the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) intensified. At one point, 70 percent of the country's population was living under siege by UNITA in government-held provincial capitals. At least 1.7 million people, or more than 10 percent of the population, have been displaced as the humanitarian situation worsened to levels described by aid workers as "catastrophic." Assistance has been hindered by deteriorating security in the countryside. Seven humanitarian workers were killed in 1999 in direct attacks on well-marked aid vehicles.

In February 1999, the United Nations Security Council voted to end the UN peace-keeping mission in Angola following the collapse of the peace process and the shooting down of two UN planes. Neither the MPLA nor UNITA has ever fully complied with the 1994 Lusaka Accords, which were meant to end nearly three decades of devastating warfare in Angola. But by September, the UN had decided to send in a small mission to begin replacing the one it had withdrawn.

The government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos announced a major offensive against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA early in the year, saying "We must make war to have peace." The army made considerable gains against the rebels, and pursued them to their rear bases along the borders of neighboring countries. But more regional instability could follow, adding to the problems created by the war in the nearby Democratic Republic of Congo. Fighting from Angola has spilled into Namibia and threatens to do the same in Zambia. More than 20,000 Angolan refugees have fled to Zambia since October 1999, adding to the 160,000 already there. Another 10,000 have fled to Namibia since September.

The Angolan government's procurement of weapons this year matched levels in 1994, with Russia as the prime source of arms. They were paid for through bank loans, oil revenues, and mining profits. UNITA continued to fund its weapons purchases through the illegal sale of diamonds, which is estimated to have earned the rebel group \$4 billion during the last eight years alone. South African diamond giant De Beers maintains that it does not buy from UNITA and announced in October that it had placed a worldwide embargo on the purchase of diamonds from Angola.

Angola has been at war since shortly after independence from Portugal in 1975. During the cold war, the United States and South Africa backed the rebel UNITA movement while the former Soviet Union and Cuba supported the Marxist Dos Santos government. The conflict has claimed at least half a million lives since it began.

Economic conditions have worsened with a drop in world oil prices. Petroleum accounts for 90 percent of government revenue, but state corruption and a lack of transparency have prevented the average Angolan from benefiting from the wealth. The country accounts for about ten percent of annual global diamond production. Nevertheless, in the 1999 UN Human Development Report, Angola fell four places to 160th, which categorizes it as one of the 15 poorest countries on earth.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Angolans freely elected their own representatives for the only time in the September 1992 UN supervised presidential and legislative elections. The vote was described by international observers as generally free and fair despite many irregularities. But Savimbi rejected his defeat to Dos Santos in the first round of presidential voting and resumed the guerrilla war.

The MPLA dominates the 220-member national assembly. Although 70 UNITA members continue to sit in parliament, their movements are restricted and four were held in prison, accused of maintaining secret contact with Savimbi. New elections have been provisionally scheduled for the year 2000, but it is not certain that the Angolan people will yet be free to change their government through the ballot box.

The resumption of war has galvanized Angola's civil society. It has been involved in efforts to renew the peace process by urging the inclusion of the Angolan people, not just the warring parties. Nongovernmental groups have also helped pressure the government to account for its use of oil revenues.

Serious human rights abuses by both government and rebel security forces have been widespread, including torture, abduction, rape, sexual slavery, and extrajudicial execution. Both sides conduct forced recruitment of civilians, including minors. Local courts rule on civil matters and petty crime in some areas, but an overall lack of training and infrastructure inhibit judicial proceedings, which are also heavily influenced by the government. Many prisoners were detained for long periods in life-threatening conditions while awaiting trial.

Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, the media have suffered a serious clampdown characterized by severe and sometimes violent measures. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said the Angolan government in 1999 was "among Africa's worst offenders against press freedom." At the beginning of 1999, the government ordered a ban on coverage of the civil war. The independent media largely ignored the ban, and as a result was accused by the state press of "facilitating" UNITA's war efforts. Angola's minister of social communication, Hendrik Vaal Neto, had warned of a violent crackdown against journalists deemed "unpatriotic" or allegedly "inciting treason."

In September, the government imposed a ban on the transmission of foreign news programs. In January, two journalists with the independent Radio Morena in Benguela were arrested following the rebroadcast of a news program from Portuguese state television that featured an interview with a UNITA official. Mauricio Cristovao, of the Radio 5 sports channel on the state-owned Radio Nacional de Angola, was gunned

down in August by unidentified gunmen in an attack that the Journalists Association of Angola described as an assassination. Also in August, police raided the studios of Radio Ecclesia, a Roman Catholic FM station, while it was rebroadcasting a BBC interview with Savimbi, the UNITA leader. Police arrested nine journalists. The station was accused of having violated "the internal and external security of the state" under Angola's Law on Crimes Against State Security. The law cannot be challenged because there is no functioning constitutional court.

Labor rights are guaranteed by the constitution, but only a few independent unions are functioning and those exist in the cities. The vast majority of rural agricultural workers remain outside the modern economic sector, and their livelihood has been further jeopardized by the war. Despite legal protections, de facto societal discrimination against women remains strong, particularly in rural areas. Religious freedom is generally respected.

Antigua and Barbuda

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 100,000
PPP: \$9,692
Life Expectancy: 74
Ethnic Groups: Black (89 percent), other (11 percent)
Capital: St. John's

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999, Antigua and Barbuda's nearly 30-year-long Bird family dynasty won a ringing endorsement by voters, who ignored a series of corruption scandals and retained Lester Bird as prime minister. The vote reflected continued support for policies that have made the two-island nation one of the region's most prosperous. A month before the March vote, the U.S. State Department had warned that Antigua's democratic institutions "remain under threat from individuals who have infiltrated government bodies to weaken the fledgling money laundering and offshore business controls." The country, it said, is "one of the most attractive centers in the Caribbean for money launderers."

Antigua and Barbuda is a member of the British Commonwealth. The British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. The islands gained independence in 1981. Under the 1981 constitution, the political system is a parliamentary democracy, with a bicameral parliament consisting of a 17-member house of representatives elected for five years and an appointed senate. In the house, there are 16 seats for Antigua and one for Barbuda. Eleven senators are appointed by the prime minister, four by the parliamentary opposition leader, one by the Barbuda Council, and one by the governor-general.

Dominated by the Bird family and the Antigua Labour Party (ALP), rule has been based more on power and the abuse of authority than on law. The constitution has been

consistently disregarded. The Bird tenure has also been marked by scandals ranging from Antigua's role as a transshipment center for South American cocaine destined for the United States and Europe, and its involvement in arms smuggling for the Colombian cartels, to its importance as a money-laundering center.

In 1994 Vere Bird, (who was the patriarch of the most prominent family and who died in 1999), stepped down as prime minister in favor of his son Lester. In the run-up to the 1994 election, three opposition parties united to form the United Progressive Party (UPP). The UPP campaigned on a social-democratic platform emphasizing rule of law and good governance. In the election, the ALP won 11 of 17 parliamentary seats, down from 15, in 1989, while the UPP won 5, up from 1.

After taking office as prime minister, Lester Bird promised cleaner, more efficient government. But his administration continued to be dogged by scandals. In 1995 Bird's brother, Ivor, was convicted of smuggling cocaine into the country, but received only a fine.

The country's thriving offshore banking industry has repeatedly been the target of international concern about inadequate regulation and vetting that led to a surge in questionable banking operations, a number with alleged links to Russian organized crime. In 1998, Antigua and Barbuda's offshore industry, serviced by some 50 loosely regulated banks, was rocked by public disclosure of what the U.S. Customs Service called the biggest non-narcotics money-laundering racket it had ever uncovered. The government's recent crackdown on Russian-owned banks (six were closed down in 1998) has been offset by renewed efforts to ensure even greater banking secrecy and a reluctance to cooperate with foreign law enforcement.

The March 1999 elections resulted in the ALP winning 12 of the 17 parliamentary seats; the UPP 4; and the Barbuda People's Movement retaining its single seat.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Constitutionally, citizens are able to change their government by democratic means. Political parties, labor unions, and civic organizations are free to organize. However, the UPP announced it was challenging the March 1999 results in six of 17 constituencies, reflecting outside observers' criticism of a lack of an independent electoral commission, the need for redrawn electoral districts, and the need to purge the electoral rolls, which have not been revised in 20 years. In the weeks before the election, many opposition ads were pulled from government-controlled television and radio stations; in a nation of 67,000 people, some 52,000 were registered to vote.

The judiciary is nominally independent, but weak and subject to political manipulation by the ruling party; it has been nearly powerless to address corruption in the executive branch. In 1997, legislation was passed which allows for the issuance of an Internet casino license that, like those of offshore banks, promises minimum regulation, maximum discretion, and no taxes. There is an intra-island court of appeals for Antigua and five other former British colonies in the Lesser Antilles. The police generally respect human rights, but basic police reporting statistics are confidential. Conditions at the country's prison, which dates to the eighteenth century and was recently privatized, are primitive.

The ALP government and the Bird family control the country's television, cable, and radio outlets. Opposition parties claim that they receive limited coverage from, and have little opportunity to express their views on, the government-controlled elec-

tronic media. Freedom of religion is respected. Social discrimination and violence against women is a problem.

The Industrial Court mediates labor disputes, but public sector unions tend to be under the sway of the ruling party. Demonstrators are occasionally subject to harassment by the police, who are politically tied to the ruling party.

Argentina

Polity: Federal presidential-legislative democracy **Political Rights:** 2*

Civil Liberties: 3

Economy: Capitalist **Status:** Free

Population: 36,600,000

PPP: \$10,300

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: White [mostly Spanish and Italian], (85 percent), mestizo, Amerindian, and others (15 percent)

Capital: Buenos Aires

Ratings Change: Argentina's political rights rating changed from 3 to 2 because of a victory by the political opposition in free and fair presidential elections in October.



Overview:

In 1999, Fernando de la Rúa, the candidate of the multiparty opposition Alliance, capitalized on public weariness with President Carlos S. Menem's ten-year reign to decisively defeat Menem's Peronist Party replacement in presidential elections held on October 24. Menem, who won praise for his free market reforms and pro-U.S. foreign policy, left de la Rúa and the heterogeneous coalition he heads a legacy of widespread public corruption, violent crime, and swelling numbers of urban poor. Adding to de la Rúa's problems are a senate packed with Menem supporters, a politicized and unpopular judiciary, and security forces seasoned with former death squad activists and former members of a lethal military regime.

The Argentine Republic was established after independence from Spain in 1816. Democratic rule was often interrupted by military coups. The end of Juan Peron's authoritarian rule in 1955 led to a series of right-wing military dictatorships as well as left-wing and nationalist violence. Argentina returned to elected civilian rule in 1983, after seven years of repression of suspected leftist guerrillas and other dissidents.

As amended in 1994, the 1853 constitution provides for a president elected for four years with the option of reelection to one term. Presidential candidates must win 45 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff. The legislature consists of a 257-member chamber of deputies elected for six years, with half the seats renewable every three years, and a 72-member senate nominated by elected provincial legislatures for nine-year terms, with one-third of the seats renewable every three years. Two senators are directly elected in the newly autonomous Buenos Aires federal district.

As provincial governor, Menem, running an orthodox Peronist platform of nationalism and state intervention in the economy, won a six-year presidential term in 1989, amidst hyperinflation and food riots. Once inaugurated, Menem discarded statist Peronist

traditions by implementing, mostly by decree, an economic liberalization program. In 1995, Menem handily won reelection for four years and his Peronist Party also eked out a narrow majority in both houses of congress.

Corruption and unemployment were at the head of voters' concerns when in October 1997, they handed Menem's Peronists their first nationwide defeat in a decade. The Alliance, composed of the centrist Radical Party and the center-left Front for a Country in Solidarity, won nearly 46 percent of the vote compared with 36 percent for Menem's party. On November 29, 1998, Buenos Aires mayor and Radical Party leader Fernando de la Rúa won a contested primary to become the Alliance candidate in the 1999 presidential elections. In response, Menem orchestrated the packing of the Argentine senate with two members of his ruling party in an effort to stave off corruption inquiries until at least 2001.

In 1999, bickering between Menem and the Peronist Party presidential nominee, Buenos Aires governor Eduardo Duhalde, dominated much of the political landscape. A decision, promoted by Menem, to uncouple most of the provincial gubernatorial races from the presidential contest helped Peronists win in the key districts of Córdoba and Santa Fe. However, the decision proved fatal for the hapless Duhalde, who was beaten by de la Rúa 48.5 percent to 38 percent. The Peronists retained control of the senate, with 35 of the 67 seats, and they hold the governorships in 18 of 23 provinces. In October, Transparency International ranked Argentina 72 out of 99 nations rated for public corruption.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through elections. Constitutional guarantees regarding freedom of religion and the right to organize political parties, civic organizations, and labor unions are generally respected. The 1999 elections were generally free and fair, with serious complaints of voter fraud in one province. More worrisome was the trend towards campaigning through the mass media, a costly process financed by money from undisclosed sources.

Journalists and human rights groups generally are allowed to operate freely, but both have been subject to various forms of intimidation, including more than 1,000 beatings, kidnappings, and telephone death threats during Menem's rule. International pressure kept the Menem government from passing a series of restrictive press laws. In 1997, an Argentine photojournalist was murdered in a manner reminiscent of the death squads of the 1970s. A well-known businessman with extensive ties to Menem's inner circle and, allegedly, organized crime was accused of instigating the outrage. The businessman committed suicide in 1998 after convincing testimony linked him to the murder. In May 1999, a crusading editor of a Patagonian weekly was also murdered.

Labor is dominated by Peronist unions. Union influence, however, has diminished because of corruption scandals, internal divisions, and restrictions on public sector strikes decreed by Menem to pave the way for his privatization program. In 1998, a deadlocked congress approved a government-sponsored labor "flexibility" initiative after a congressional deputy—allegedly filmed by state intelligence agents in a gay bordello the agents operated—changed positions on the measure and voted for it.

Menem's authoritarian ways and manipulation of the judiciary have resulted in the undermining of the country's separation of powers and the rule of law. In 1990, Menem pushed a bill through the Peronist-controlled senate that allowed him to stack the supreme court with an additional four members and to fill the judiciary with politically

loyal judges. He used the supreme court to uphold decrees removing the comptroller general and other officials mandated to probe government wrongdoing. Overall, the judicial system is politicized, inefficient, and riddled with the corruption endemic to all branches of government. In 1999, as the election hopes of Menem's party were dashed, the judiciary appeared to take a somewhat more independent course. The politicization of the judiciary, however, remains a grave problem.

Public safety became a significant electoral issue in 1999. Polls show that four out of every ten Argentines living in greater Buenos Aires had been robbed in 1998. Police misconduct, often seemingly promoted by senior government officials including Menem himself, resulted in a number of allegedly extrajudicial executions by law enforcement officers. Arbitrary arrests and ill treatment by police, frequent occurrences, are rarely punished in civil courts owing to intimidation of witnesses and judges. Criminal court judges are frequent targets of anonymous threats. The Buenos Aires provincial police, in particular, are heavily involved in drug trafficking, extortion, vice, and the collecting of political funds for the ruling Peronist Party. In 1999, Menem's vice president, Carlos Ruckauf, was elected governor of Buenos Aires province after having suggested police shoot at criminals' arms and legs without prior warning, "pumping them full of bullets." After his election Ruckauf named to top provincial justice posts a former military coup leader and a former policeman accused of systematic torture in detention camps during a previous armed forces dictatorship.

In 1999, military intelligence agents in Cordoba were caught spying on court workers investigating the fate of babies kidnapped from their illegally detained mothers during the so-called dirty war that occurred from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s.

The investigation of a 1994 car bombing of a Jewish organization, in which more than 80 people died, has languished because of sloppy police work at the crime scene and the alleged complicity by members of the security forces with the terrorists. The Roman Catholic majority enjoys freedom of religious expression. The 250,000-strong Jewish community is a frequent target of anti-Semitic vandalism. Neo-Nazi organizations and other anti-Semitic groups, many tied to remnants of the security services, remain active.

Armenia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)
Status: Partly Free
Population: 3,800,000
PPP: \$2,360
Life Expectancy: 73
Ethnic Groups: Armenian (93 percent), Azeri (3 percent), Russian (2 percent), Kurd and others (2 percent)
Capital: Yerevan



Overview:

Parliamentary elections in May 1999 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Unity bloc, a new alliance led by

powerful Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and former Soviet Armenian leader Karen Demirchian, which campaigned on a populist platform of greater state involvement in the economy and increased social spending. Following the elections, Sarkisian was chosen as the country's new prime minister, while Demirchian was named speaker of parliament. Just five months later, the country was plunged into a political crisis when five gunmen stormed the parliament building on October 27 and assassinated several top officials, including Sarkisian and Demirchian. The killings left a power vacuum in the Armenian government and caused speculation about possible long-term political implications.

The landlocked, predominantly Christian Transcaucasus republic of Armenia was ruled at various times by Macedonians, Romans, Persians, Mongols, and others. Prior to their defeat in World War I, Ottoman Turks controlled a western region and, between 1894 and 1917, engaged in a systematic genocide. Following a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1920, the Russian region came under Communist control and was designated a Soviet republic in 1922, while western Armenia was returned to Turkey. Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in September 1991.

Prior to the 1995 parliamentary elections, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutiun and eight other parties were banned, thereby ensuring the dominance of Levon Ter Petrosian's ruling Armenian National Movement's (ANM) coalition. Petrosian's ANM-led Republican bloc won control of two-thirds of the seats. In the 1996 presidential election, Petrosian defeated former Prime Minister Vazgen Manukian, who ran on a pro-market, anticorruption platform.

In February 1998, Petrosian resigned following mass defections from the ANM and the resignation of key officials in protest against his gradualist approach in negotiations over control of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan. In March, Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, who was appointed by Petrosian in 1997 and formerly served as president of Nagorno-Karabakh, was elected president with the support of the previously banned Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutiun. He defeated Karen Demirchian with 60 percent of a second-round vote. In April, Kocharian appointed former Finance and Economy Minister Armen Darbinian as prime minister. In elections to the 131-seat national assembly on May 30, 75 seats were awarded in single mandate constituencies and 56 seats under a proportional system to parties receiving a minimum of five percent of the vote. The Unity bloc, an alliance of Sarkisian's Republican Party and Demirchian's People's Party created primarily to serve as a power base for their respective leaders, won by a huge majority, receiving 29 seats under the proportional system. The Communist Party came in a distant second, with 8 seats, followed by Right and Accord with 6 seats, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutiun with 5 seats, and Orinats Erkir (Country of Law) and National Democratic Union with 4 seats each. Under the single mandate system, Unity candidates also received a clear majority of votes, securing 27 seats, while other parties won 3 seats or fewer. Independent candidates, most of whom are regarded as supporters of Unity, received 37 seats. In June, Prime Minister Armen Darbinian resigned and was replaced by Sarkisian.

On October 27, five heavily armed gunmen burst into Armenia's parliament during a live national radio broadcast, assassinating Prime Minister Sarkisian, Parliamentary Speaker Demirchian, and seven other senior government officials, while taking dozens of hostages. The attackers, led by former journalist and extreme nationalist Nairi

Hoonanian, claimed that they wanted to punish the government for the country's economic problems and rampant corruption, but expressed no coherent political platform. Following a night of direct negotiations between President Kocharian and Hoonanian, during which the attackers were allowed to speak on national television and promised a fair trial, the gunmen surrendered and released their hostages. Amid speculation that the gunmen were carrying out someone else's orders as part of a plan to destabilize the country, several other suspects, in addition to the five gunmen, were subsequently arrested for their alleged involvement. In the wake of the attacks, the country's interior and national security ministers resigned.

On November 3, President Kocharian appointed Aram Sarkisian, Vazgen Sarkisian's younger brother and the director of a cement factory, as the new prime minister. Armen Khachatryan, a parliamentary deputy and head of the Foreign Affairs Commission, was chosen as the new speaker of parliament. In contrast to their experienced and powerful predecessors, both men were regarded as relatively unknown and inexperienced figures, who many speculated would continue the previous government's policies.

The assassinations closely followed a visit by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, who had left the country just hours earlier after holding talks with Sarkisian and Kocharian on the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. While the timing of the killings led to immediate speculation that the two events were somehow connected, particularly as Armenia and Azerbaijan appeared to be making progress in peace negotiations, lead gunman Hoonanian denied a direct link between the two. Although the 1994 ceasefire continued largely to hold, little progress was made in internationally led peace negotiations. Armenia generally has approved the most recent peace plan of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which calls for Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan to form a common state, while Azerbaijan has rejected the proposal for not explicitly guaranteeing the restoration of its sovereignty over the territory.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Armenians can change their government democratically, although the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections were characterized by serious irregularities. International observers reported some improvements regarding the 1999 parliamentary vote over previous elections, including the adoption of a new electoral code in February containing some recommendation of the international community, more balanced media coverage before and during the vote, and the return to the political arena of previously banned parties. However, they also cited serious problems with significant inaccuracies of voter lists, the presence of unauthorized persons in polling stations, and the lack of effective and impartial electoral commissions.

In 1995, voters approved the government-backed constitution, which provides for a weak legislature and a strong presidency. The directly elected president appoints the prime minister, who is in charge of the cabinet, although the legislature can remove the prime minister by a no-confidence vote. The government appoints the ten regional governors, who have the authority to remove locally elected officials from office.

Twenty-one political parties and blocs, including newly legalized parties, ran under the proportional system in the May 1999 parliamentary elections. However, most parties in Armenia are dominated by specific government officials or other powerful figures, espouse similar political platforms, or are weak and ineffective. The Unity party

is associated with the Yerkrpah militia group of Nagorno-Karabakh war veterans, which has been linked to harassment of and attacks on religious minorities.

Self-censorship among journalists is common, particularly in reporting on Nagorno-Karabakh, national security, or corruption issues. While most newspapers are privately owned, the majority operate with very limited resources and are dependent on economic and political interest groups. Libel laws have been used to intimidate the media. In August, the editor of the daily *Oragir* (Diary) was found guilty of crimes including publishing libelous statements about the wife of a parliamentarian and distributing defamatory information against a candidate for May's legislative elections. He was fined and sentenced to three years in prison. In addition to two state television channels, a number of private television stations broadcast throughout the country. Most radio stations are privately owned.

Freedom of religion is somewhat respected in this overwhelmingly Christian country. However, the Armenian Apostolic Church, to which 90 percent of Armenians formally belong, is not subject to certain restrictions imposed on other religious groups, including having to register with the State Council on Religious Affairs. Provisions in a law on religious organizations prohibit financing for groups based outside of the country and require religious organizations to have at least 200 members to register. As of June 1999, 48 religious organizations were officially registered, although the council continues to deny registration to Jehovah's Witnesses.

The government generally respects freedom of assembly and association, although the registration requirements are cumbersome and time consuming. The constitution enshrines the right to form and join trade unions. In practice, however, labor organizations are weak and relatively inactive.

The judiciary is not independent and is subject to political pressure from the executive branch and corruption. Despite the adoption of new legislation concerning criminal investigations and trials, Armenia's justice system remains characterized by widespread violations of due process. Under a new criminal procedure code which went into effect in early 1999, witnesses do not have the right to legal counsel while being questioned in police custody, and detainees may not file a complaint in court before trial regarding abuses suffered during criminal investigations. Police frequently make arbitrary arrests without warrants and beat detainees during arrest and interrogations, and prison conditions remain poor.

The government places some restrictions on travel, particularly for those possessing state secrets or subject to military service. The constitution provides for the right to private property. While citizens have the right to establish businesses under several laws, regulation and an inefficient and often corrupt court system hinder operations. Key industries remain in the hands of oligarchs and influential clans who received preferential treatment in the early stages of privatization. Women face obstacles to professional advancement in this traditional patriarchal society, and trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution is believed to be a serious problem.

Australia

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 19,000,000
PPP: \$20,210
Life Expectancy: 78
Ethnic Groups: White (92 percent), Asian (7 percent), Aboriginal [including mixed] (1 percent)
Capital: Canberra

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

In June 1999, Australian Prime Minister John Howard won parliamentary approval of major tax changes that had been the centerpiece of his conservative coalition government's 1998 election campaign.

The British claimed Australia in 1770. In January 1901, six states gained independence as the Commonwealth of Australia, adopting the Northern Territory and the capital territory of Canberra as territorial units in 1911. The queen of England is the head of state in this parliamentary democracy. The directly elected bicameral parliament consists of a 76-member senate and a 148-member house of representatives. Executive power is vested in a cabinet headed by a prime minister.

Since World War II, political power has alternated between the center-left Labor Party and the center-right coalition of the Liberal Party and the smaller, rural-based National Party. Beginning in 1983, Labor, under Bob Hawke and later Paul Keating, began cutting tariffs, deregulating financial markets, and privatizing transport, telecommunications, and utilities. By the 1996 elections, polls showed many Australians concerned with high unemployment and other costs of restructuring. The Liberal-National coalition won power with 94 seats against 49 for Labor; minor parties took 5 seats.

During his first term, Premier John Howard of the Liberal Party faced political and social issues that sharpened cleavages between rural and urban interests. In April 1998, the government and farmers' groups backed a major stevedoring company's dismissal of some 1,400 dockworkers in one of Australia's largest and most confrontational labor disputes in decades. A court ordered the workers reinstated. In July, parliament approved controversial legislation restricting Aboriginal claims to pastoral lands, satisfying demands of farmers and mining companies.

Wary that Asia's economic crisis could slow the Australian economy, Howard called an early election for October 3, 1998. The Liberal-National coalition campaigned on its economic management and a promise to introduce a 10 percent goods and services tax (GST) that would be somewhat offset by personal income tax cuts. Labor Party leader Kim Beazley criticized the proposed GST for covering food and promised a jobs creation program. The Liberal-National coalition won 80 seats (64 and 16, respectively); Labor, 66; independents, 2. Economically marginalized farmers and rural townspeople signaled their disillusionment with traditional parties by handing 8.39 percent of the vote to the far-right One Nation party, which campaigned against Aboriginal land rights and Asian immigration, and in favor of economic protectionism. However, One Nation won only a single senate seat.

On June 28, 1999, the senate approved an amended tax package that included a 10 percent GST beginning in July 2000, with an exemption for basic food items, and income tax cuts. In a November 6 referendum, some 55 percent of participants rejected a plan to replace the queen of England as head of state with a president elected by a two-thirds majority of parliament. Polls showed that a majority of Australians favored transforming the country into a republic, but that many republicans voted "no" in the referendum because they preferred having a directly-elected president.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Australians can change their government democratically. Fundamental freedoms are respected in practice. The judiciary is independent, although in the mid-1990s, the official Law Reform Commission reported that women face discrimination in the legal system.

Australia's main human rights issue is the treatment of its indigenous population of approximately 353,000 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Aborigines face systemic discrimination and mistreatment by police; are incarcerated at higher rates than whites, often because they cannot afford a fine or are denied bail for minor offenses; and die in custody at far higher rates than whites. A 1997 Amnesty International report, examining trends in custodial deaths since a Royal Commission initiated special remedies in 1992, found that ill treatment, a systemic lack of adequate health care, and inadequate investigations into deaths still characterized the penal system. Gaps in health indicators between the indigenous and white populations are among the highest for developed countries. Figures for 1998 showed that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have a life expectancy of around 20 years fewer than the rest of the population. Aborigines also face societal discrimination and inferior educational opportunities. The government is responsive to these concerns and has undertaken numerous initiatives in health care and other areas.

In 1992, the high court handed down a landmark ruling formally recognizing that from a legal standpoint, Aborigines inhabited Australia prior to the British arrival. Native title could thus still be valid where Aboriginal groups maintained a connection to the land. The 1993 Native Title Act required the government to compensate groups with valid claims to state land, but left unclear the status of pastoral land (state land leased to farmers and miners), which represents some 42 percent of Australian territory. In 1996, the high court ruled that native title can coexist with pastoral leases, though pastoral rights would take precedence over native title claims.

The 1998 amendments to the Native Title Act placed restrictions on Aboriginal claims to pastoral land. In March 1999, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination called Australia's land practices "racially discriminatory" and urged the government to review four provisions of the amended Native Title Act "that discriminate against indigenous title-holders." The government rejected the allegations, noting that under the amended law, 79 percent of the country's land is still subject to claims by indigenous title-holders.

The official Human Rights Commission continued to criticize the government's practice of detaining asylum seekers pending resolution of their claims, which can take up to five years. Domestic violence is reportedly relatively common. In May, a court handed down the first prison sentence to an Australian convicted in Australia of sexual abuse of children abroad.

Australian trade unions are independent and active, although recent legislation has

weakened labor rights and contributed to a decline in union rolls. The 1994 Industrial Relations Reform Act encouraged the use of workplace contracts linked to productivity rather than industry wide collective bargaining. The 1997 Workplace Relations Act restricted the right to strike to the periods when the contracts are being negotiated, abolished closed shops, and limited redress for unfair dismissal. In 1998, the International Labor Organization (ILO) ruled that the Workplace Relations Act breaches ILO conventions because it does not promote collective bargaining.

Austria

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 8,100,000

PPP: \$22,070

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: German (99 percent), other, including Slovene, Croat (1 percent)

Capital: Vienna

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Dominating Austrian political life throughout 1999 were the run-up to national elections and the eventual second-place electoral victory on October 3 of Jorg Haider's nationalist Freedom Party. In March, the 49-year-old son of a former minor Nazi party official, espousing an anti-immigrant platform, was elected governor of the southern province of Carinthia. By then his party already held 40 out of 183 national council seats. Heightening fears of Austrian jobs lost to foreigners, Haider's party captured 26.9 percent of the popular vote in the national election, shunting the government's junior coalition partner, the Christian Democratic Austrian People's Party (OVP), into third place and chipping away substantially at the ruling Social Democrats' dominance. Ironically, Austria has the second-lowest immigration rate of European Union (EU) countries, with foreigners comprising only ten percent of its population. Unemployment also remains low. Haider now dominates the largest far-right party in Europe.

In the wake of the election, Chancellor Viktor Klima promised to keep the Freedom Party out of the government, immediately ruling out the prospect of a coalition with Haider's party. Klima vowed to retain the coalition with the conservative OVP, which has prevailed for the last 13 years. Haider does not hide his ambition to one day become chancellor. Analysts speculate that the Freedom Party's strong electoral finish was due in part to public displeasure with coalition politics, high taxes, and an austerity budget.

Rifts in Austria's coalition government continued to spread throughout 1999. As in the previous year, debate continued over whether Austria should join NATO. Chancellor Viktor Klima and his Social Democratic Party (SPO), which has dominated national political life for 28 years, seek to maintain Austria's traditional neutrality and

claim that there is insufficient popular support for the country to seek NATO membership. At the same time, Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel, leader of the OVP, argues that Austria should join NATO, just as it joined the EU, and influence the policy of an organization that clearly affects events in Austria. Debate also continued between the coalition partners over economic policy, with the OVP favoring total liberalization.

The Republic of Austria was established in 1918 after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and was reborn in 1945, seven years after its annexation by Nazi Germany. Occupation by the Western allies and the Soviet Union ended in 1955 under the Austrian State Treaty, which guaranteed Austrian neutrality and restored national sovereignty.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Austrians can change their government democratically. The country's provinces possess considerable latitude in local administration and can check federal power by electing members of the upper house of parliament. Voting is compulsory in some provinces. The independent judiciary is headed by a supreme court and includes both constitutional and administrative courts.

A 1955 treaty prohibits Nazis from exercising freedom of assembly and association. Nazi organizations are illegal, but Nazis are welcomed in the Freedom Party. In 1992, public denial of the Holocaust and justification of approval of Nazi crimes against humanity were outlawed. In general, Austrian police enforce these anti-Nazi statutes more enthusiastically when extremists attract international attention.

Austrian media are free. Legal restrictions on press freedom on the grounds of public morality or national security are rarely invoked. The Austrian Broadcasting Company, which controls radio and television, is state owned, but is protected from political interference by a broadcasting law.

Women hold approximately ten percent of federal assembly seats and approximately 20 percent of provincial seats. They are prohibited by law from working at night in most occupations. Nurses, taxi drivers, and a few other workers are exempted from this ban. Women generally earn 20 percent less than men and are not allowed to serve in the military. The ruling SPO has pledged to begin to address gender biases by ensuring that women occupy 40 percent of all party and government posts by 2003.

Under the informal *proporz* system, many state and private sector appointments—including those of senior teachers in state schools—are made on the basis of affiliation with the two main political parties.

Trade unions retain an important independent voice in Austria's political, social, and economic life. Fifty-two percent of workers are organized in 14 national unions, all of which belong to the Austrian Trade Union Federation and which are managed by supporters of the country's traditional political parties. Although not explicitly guaranteed in the constitution or in national legislation, the right to strike is universally recognized.

Azerbaijan

Polity: Presidential
(dominant party)
Economy: Mixed statist
(transitional)
Population: 7,700,000
PPP: \$1,550
Life Expectancy: 71
Ethnic Groups: Azeri (90 percent), Dagestan peoples (3 percent),
Russian (3 percent), Armenian (2 percent), other (2 percent)
Capital: Baku

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Azerbaijan's long-serving authoritarian ruler, President Heydar Aliev, underwent heart bypass surgery in April, putting much of the country's political and economic decisions on hold during his recuperation period and renewing speculation about his possible eventual successor. In July, the adoption of a controversial local elections law, which was criticized by the opposition, paved the way for the country's first municipal elections held on December 12.

Persia and the Ottoman Empire competed for Azeri territory in the sixteenth century, with the former gaining control in 1603. The northern sector, ceded to Russia in the early 1800s, briefly joined Armenia and Georgia in the Transcaucasus Federation after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Azerbaijan proclaimed its independence the following year, but was subdued by the Red Army in 1920. In 1922, it entered the Soviet Union as part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federal Republic, becoming a separate Soviet republic in 1936. Azerbaijan declared independence from the Soviet Union following a referendum in 1991.

In 1992, Abulfaz Elchibey, leader of the nationalist opposition Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), was elected president in a generally free and fair vote. A military coup in mid-1993 ousted Elchibey from power and installed former First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Heydar Aliev as president. In October 3 presidential elections, deemed undemocratic by foreign election observers, Aliev reportedly received 98.8 percent of the vote. Azerbaijan's first post-Soviet parliamentary elections, held in November 1995, were regarded as neither free nor fair, with five leading opposition parties and some 600 independent candidates barred from the vote that saw President Aliev's Yeni Azerbaijan party win most seats. A new constitution adopted that year further strengthened Aliev's already sweeping powers.

On October 11, 1998, the incumbent Aliev was chosen president with more than 70 percent of the vote in an election characterized by serious irregularities, including election law violations and a lack of transparency in the vote counting process. Aliev's closest challenger, Etibar Mamedov of the Democratic Party of Independence of Azerbaijan, finished second with 11 percent.

Aliev underwent heart surgery in the United States on April 29, 1999, returning to Azerbaijan after almost two months of recuperation in Turkey. During his absence, most important political and economic developments came to a standstill in a country

in which Aliev makes virtually every major government decision. His illness further highlighted questions about the country's future and his possible successor. Many suspect that Aliev is grooming his son Ilham, who is vice president of the state oil company SOCAR, to be Azerbaijan's next president.

In the country's first local elections held on December 12, approximately 36,000 candidates, half of them nominally independent, competed for 22,000 seats on municipal councils. Prior to the vote, opposition parties strongly criticized the law on municipal elections adopted in July in preparation for the December vote as undemocratic. Subsequently, opposition members said that they had been prevented from becoming members of various local electoral commissions, and that many of their candidates had been refused registration. During the poll, election observers noted widespread irregularities, including unauthorized persons in polling stations and the stuffing of ballot boxes. Caspian Sea energy issues continued to dominate much of Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policies throughout the year. The first pipeline to carry Caspian oil directly to world markets without passing through Russian territory opened in April. The line, which runs from the Azerbaijan capital of Baku to the town of Supsa in Georgia, will earn Azerbaijan an estimated \$10 million a year in transit fees. In July, the discovery of a large natural gas deposit at the Shakh Deniz offshore field, a site widely regarded as a promising source for oil, transformed Azerbaijan into a potential major gas exporter. However, Azerbaijan's gas exports will compete with those of neighboring Turkmenistan, which has vast gas reserves and has already reached an agreement to supply Turkey with 16 billion cubic meters a year. On November 18, a long-awaited agreement was signed in Istanbul to construct an oil pipeline stretching from Baku through Georgia to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. However, the U.S.-backed project, which is projected to begin operation in 2004 or 2005, will still need an assured supply of oil and financial backing in order to be commercially viable. The pipeline, which would bypass Russia, is widely seen as reducing Russian influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The most recent international mediation efforts over control of the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which call for Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan to form a common state, remained inconclusive at year's end. While Armenia had largely accepted the plan, Azerbaijan was pushing for clearer guarantees of sovereignty over the territory. On October 24, Azerbaijan's foreign minister and a senior presidential advisor reportedly resigned their positions in protest over concessions that Azerbaijan appeared prepared to make in the negotiations. The assassination of Armenian Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, who recently had become a supporter of a negotiated solution, and other top officials on October 27, further delayed progress in the peace talks.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Azerbaijan cannot change their government democratically. President Aliev, who in 1999 celebrated 30 years of almost uninterrupted rule since becoming Azerbaijan's Communist Party leader in 1969, has imposed an authoritarian regime while building a cult of personality. The 1995 constitution gives the president control over the government, legislature, and judiciary. Presidential elections in October 1998 were considered neither free nor fair by international observers. The 124-member parliament (*Mili Majlis*), which is composed mostly of members of Aliev's Yeni Azerbaijan party, exercises little legislative initiative independent of the president. Although more than 30

political parties are registered, opposition members face frequent harassment and arrest by the authorities.

While the constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press, these rights are not respected in practice. Despite the official abolition of censorship in August 1998, the government routinely prosecutes journalists for articles critical of the president or other prominent state officials, and self-censorship is common. Many newspapers struggle financially in the face of heavy fines or imprisonment of their editors and staff, and are dependent on government-controlled publishing and distribution facilities. State-run television and radio, which are the primary sources of information for much of the country, are tightly controlled by the government. In late 1998, former President Abulfaz Elchibey was charged with slander after he accused President Aliev of having helped to found the Kurdish separatist party PKK in Turkey in the late 1970s. In February 1999, the case against him was dropped. A journalist with the *Chag* daily was sentenced to 18 months in prison in April for an alleged "call to social disorder" in an article that was never published. A new wave of harassment against the press resulted from Aliev's displeasure over discussions of his health following heart bypass surgery in April and conjectures concerning his possible successor. In early October, independent station Sara TV and Radio was shut down by the authorities the day after it broadcast an interview with an opposition leader of the Independent Azerbaijan Party. On December 9, 1999, parliament adopted a new media law severely restricting freedom of the press. Among the law's provisions, an agency of the executive branch will distribute broadcast licenses and shut down broadcasters charged with violating broadcast regulations, while broadcasters will not have the right to appeal through the court system. In addition, officials can file suits against journalists whose work they find "insults the honor and dignity of the state and the Azerbaijani people," or is "contrary to the national interest."

Shiite Muslims, who constitute most of the country's population, as well as Sunni Muslims, Russian Orthodox Christians, and Jews, can worship freely. However, the government restricts some religious activities of foreigners and Azerbaijani members of nontraditional religious groups through burdensome registration requirements, limitations on freedom to proselytize, and interference in the dissemination of printed materials. The small ethnic Armenian community has complained of professional and educational discrimination.

The government frequently restricts freedom of assembly and association, particularly for political parties critical of the government. Most trade unions belong to the state-run Azerbaijani Labor Federation. There is no effective collective bargaining system, and unions do not participate in determining wage levels.

The judiciary, which does not function independently of the executive branch, is inefficient and corrupt. The president appoints supreme and constitutional court judges, subject to parliamentary approval, as well as lower-level judges. Detainees are often held for long periods of time before trials, and their access to evidence and lawyers is restricted. Corruption is rampant, with bribes frequently demanded for a suspect's release.

Police abuse of suspects during arrest and interrogation is reportedly widespread. According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, no judge ruled as inadmissible testimony obtained through torture in 20 cases investigated by the human rights organization. In a January revolt at the Gobestan prison, a group of prisoners seized hostages

and demanded transportation to escape. Eleven prisoners were reportedly shot when Interior Ministry troops stormed the facility. In a positive development, a Soviet-era law allowing courts to confiscate the property of individuals convicted of many crimes was declared unconstitutional in June.

The constitution enshrines the right to own property and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Privatization has led to a rise in small businesses, mostly in the retail and service sectors. However, significant parts of the economy remain in the hands of a corrupt *nomenklatura*, severely limiting equality of opportunity. Traditional norms perpetuate discrimination and violence against women, although a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been formed to address women's rights issues. In June, Azerbaijan's courts ruled that Islamic women may wear headscarves when being photographed for passports and other official documents.

Bahamas

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1*
Status: Free

Population: 300,000

PPP: \$16,705

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Black (85 percent), white [British, Canadian, U.S.] (15 percent)

Capital: Nassau

Ratings Change: Bahamas' civil liberties rating changed from 2 to 1 due to government attempts to engage community organizations in an effort to achieve greater improvements in the area of public safety.



Overview:

A battle for leadership of the ruling Free National Movement (FNM), to be decided at a party convention in April 2000, resulted in December 1999 in the resignation of the Bahamas' attorney general and the firing of one of his key political allies by Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham. Ingraham, who has announced he will step down as party chief at the end of his second term in office, appeared to be attempting to maintain control of the party apparatus. A spiraling crime rate linked to illegal narcotics and gunrunning has left Bahamians questioning whether the islands were returning to the ways of the last decade, when the Bahamas earned the nickname "a nation for sale."

The Bahamas, a 700-island nation in the Caribbean, is a member of the Commonwealth. It was granted independence in 1973. The British monarchy is represented by a governor-general.

Under the 1973 constitution, a bicameral parliament consisted of a 49-member house of assembly directly elected for five years and a 16-member Senate with 9 members appointed by the prime minister, 4 by the leader of the parliament opposition, and 3 by the governor-general. The number of seats in the assembly has been reduced by 9, to

40, in keeping with a 1992 FNM campaign promise. The prime minister is the leader of the party that commands a majority in the house.

After 25 years in office, Lyndon Pindling's Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) was ousted by Ingraham and the FNM in the 1992 elections. The PLP had been dogged by years of allegations of corruption and high official involvement in narcotics trafficking. Ingraham, a lawyer and former cabinet official, was expelled by the PLP in 1986 for his outspoken attacks on corruption. He became leader of the FNM in 1990.

Ingraham vowed to bring honesty, efficiency, and accountability to government. Pindling, at the time the western hemisphere's longest-serving head of government, relied on his image as the father of the nation's independence. With 90 percent of the electorate voting, the FNM won 32 seats in the house of assembly, to the PLP's 17. Pindling held his own seat and became the official opposition leader.

Upon taking office, Ingraham appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the Pindling government. In 1995 the commission detailed widespread mismanagement and malpractice in the national telephone and airline companies.

In the 1997 election, Ingraham claimed credit for revitalizing the economy by attracting foreign investment. Voters handed his FNM a 34 to 6 majority in parliament and rebuked Pindling and the PLP for a second time. In April 1997, Pindling resigned as opposition leader and was replaced by Perry Christie, who had served in the PLP cabinet until he denounced government corruption in the wake of a drug probe.

In 1998, Ingraham commuted the death sentences of 17 prisoners who had spent more than five years on death row—in keeping with the limit set by the Privy Council in London, the highest court for several current and former British colonies. However, in September he announced that his government would limit the right of appeal in capital cases. Ingraham also kicked off the hiring of 200 more police officers in an effort to crack down on violent crime. Law enforcement sources say that illegal guns were used in most of the more than 60 murders that occurred in the population of 280,000.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government democratically. Constitutional guarantees regarding the right to organize political parties, civic organizations, and labor unions are generally respected, as is the free exercise of religion.

The judicial system is headed by a supreme court and a court of appeal, with the right of appeal under certain circumstances to the Privy Council in London. There are local courts, and on the outer islands the local commissioners have magisterial powers. Despite antidrug legislation and a 1987 agreement with the United States to suppress the drug trade, there is evidence of drug related corruption and money laundering, although less than during the Pindling years.

Violent crime is a growing concern, particularly in Nassau, and has been a focus of the Ingraham government. Nongovernmental organizations have documented the increase in recent years of violent crime and police brutality. Rights groups also criticize the subhuman conditions and overcrowding in the nation's prisons. The Fox Hill prison remains filled to more than twice its intended capacity. In 1996 Ingraham reinstated the death penalty for murder. In 1998, 30 people sat on death row. Two people were executed.

Full freedom of expression is constrained by strict libel laws. Unlike its predecessor, the Ingraham government has not made use of these laws against independent

newspapers. It has amended media laws to allow for private ownership of broadcasting outlets.

In 1998, the government denied asylum requests and deported scores of Cuban refugees held in detention centers back to Cuba. Among those repatriated were three members of the Cuban national baseball team, who were sent back despite an asylum offer from the government of Nicaragua. Bahamian authorities responded to complaints by pointing out that they were complying with the terms of a 1996 memorandum of understanding with Cuba.

Labor, business, and professional organizations are generally free. Unions have the right to strike, and collective bargaining is prevalent. Between 25,000 and 40,000 Haitians reside illegally in the Bahamas. Tight citizenship laws and a strict work permit system leave Haitians with few rights. The influx has created social tension because of the strain on government services. In November 1998, law enforcement authorities broke up an international ring trafficking in illegal immigrants from Asia responsible for supplying U.S. businesses with cheap labor. Violence against women is a serious, widespread problem.

Bahrain

Polity: Traditional monarchy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 700,000

PPP: \$16,527

Life Expectancy: 69

Ethnic Groups: Bahraini (63 percent), Asian (13 percent), other Arab (10 percent), Iranian (8 percent), other (6 percent)

Capital: Manama

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa became emir of Bahrain after the death of his father, Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman al-Khalifa, in March 1999. By year's end, Shiite-led opposition groups campaigning for the restoration of parliament were disappointed by the new emir's failure to initiate democratic reform. Although the government made some conciliatory gestures toward the opposition, summary arrest, forcible deportation, and torture of suspected opposition activists continued throughout 1999.

Bahrain has been ruled by the al-Khalifa family since 1782. The country was a British protectorate from 1861 until 1971, when British forces withdrew after years of Arab nationalist disturbances. The emir retained a virtual monopoly on power until the adoption in 1973 of a constitution that provided for a partially elected national assembly. Describing Bahrain's new legislative body as "obstructionist," the emir ordered its dissolution in 1975.

With the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the accompanying spread of Islamic fundamentalism, resentment among Bahrain's majority Shia population against its Sunni

rulers intensified. Opposition activists were arrested and exiled in large numbers in the 1980s and 1990s. Responding to international calls for political liberalization, Sheikh Isa appointed a consultative council of 30 business and religious leaders in 1993.

The arrest of a Shiite cleric and several former Sunni parliamentarians in 1994 for petitioning for the reinstatement of parliament and the release of political detainees sparked civil unrest that has killed more than 40 people to date. According to international human rights monitors, the Bahraini government has arrested thousands of people, sentenced hundreds to jail terms, and expelled some 500 people. Security forces routinely raid homes and beat and arrest families. The government flatly rejects criticism of its rights record and blames Iran for inciting unrest. Political analysts and private sector businessmen, however, blame the government's failure to resolve widespread social and economic disparities, and particularly unemployment, which stands at about 30 percent in the Shi'a community.

Under pressure from opposition and international human rights groups, Sheikh Hamad allowed Amnesty International to visit Bahrain in June 1999 for the first time in 12 years. He also ordered the release of 320 political detainees and pardoned 12 political exiles. Among those released was Sheikh Abdul Ameer al-Jamri, a former parliamentarian and leading Shiite activist convicted in July of spying and inciting unrest. Al-Jamri had been held without trial since 1996.

Despite conciliatory gestures, the government continued to repress Shiite activism, tried and sentenced political detainees en masse prior to Amnesty International's visit in order to reduce the number of administrative detainees, and forced al-Jamri to make a humiliating apology in return for his pardon. Many observers believe that true political reform is unlikely as long as neighboring Saudi Arabia opposes the spread of democracy in the region. Moreover, Sheikh Hamad has retained his late father's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa, who apparently authored the hardline position that the government has taken toward the opposition since 1994. According to exiled reformers, prospects for reconciliation remain weak and the political atmosphere remains volatile.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bahrainis cannot change their government democratically. Political parties are prohibited, and most opposition leaders are currently either imprisoned or exiled. The emir rules by decree and appoints all government officials, including the 15-member cabinet, the 40-member Majlis al-Shura (parliament), the urban municipal councils, and the rural *mukhtars* (local councils). Citizens may submit petitions to the government and appeal to the emir and officials at regularly scheduled audiences.

The interior ministry maintains informal control over most activities through informant networks. Agents may search homes without warrants and have used this authority frequently against Shiites. Despite the decreasing frequency of violent antigovernment protests, the London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement reported dozens of cases in which security forces arrested and severely beat men, women, and even young children in early-morning raids during 1999.

The 1974 State Security Act allows authorities to detain individuals suspected of "antigovernment activity," which includes participation in peaceful demonstrations and membership in outlawed organizations, for up to three years without trial. Detainees are subject to torture, forced confessions, incommunicado detention, and inadequate

prison conditions. In 1999, the government pardoned over 500 political prisoners. Authorities do not release information about the numbers of detained or the identities of detainees, but it is believed that more than 1,000 people remain in prison for political reasons. In June, the government began holding summary trials to sentence many of these prisoners, thus reducing the number of administrative detainees in time for Amnesty International and United Nations visits. The Bahraini government delayed a scheduled October 1999 visit by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the grounds that the new emir will need time to "remedy the situation." The visit is expected in October 2000.

The Bahraini government continued to deport people considered to be security threats. According to the U.S. State Department, those who accept foreign citizenship or passports or who engage in "antigovernment activities" abroad forfeit their Bahraini citizenship. The London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement reported numerous cases of forcible deportation in 1999.

The judiciary is not independent. Members of the al-Khalifa family serve as judges in courts at all levels. Security trials are held in secret, the right to an attorney is limited, and verdicts are not subject to appeal. A 1999 decree requires that those convicted in state security courts pay compensation for damages or face extended jail terms. Four Shiite civil judges may not handle cases deemed politically sensitive.

Freedom of speech and of the press is sharply restricted. Privately owned newspapers refrain from criticizing the ruling family, while radio and television are government-owned and broadcast only official views. According to Human Rights Watch, access to the Internet has been easily obtainable since 1995. No authorization is required to launch a Web site, although authorities have blocked Web sites and reportedly monitor Internet use. A small number of Bahrainis have been detained or questioned on suspicion of using the Internet to transmit information to opposition groups outside the country.

Political parties and organizations are prohibited. Some professional societies and social or sports clubs may serve as forums for political discussion, but they may not engage in political activity. In 1998, the prime minister dissolved the bar association, the only association exempt from the ban on political activity. Bahrainis are not permitted to demonstrate, and even peaceful protests are met with intimidation by security officials.

Bahraini women may own and inherit property, represent themselves in public and legal matters, obtain passports and leave the country without permission of a male relative, work outside the home, drive without escorts, and wear clothing of their choice. A non-Bahraini woman will automatically lose custody of her children if she divorces their Bahraini father. Labor law does not discriminate against women, but there is discrimination in the workplace, including wage disparity and denial of opportunity for advancement. In December, Bahrain appointed its first woman ambassador. Sheikha Hayya bin Rashid al-Khalifa will be the government's new envoy to France.

Islam is the state religion, and Bahrainis are overwhelmingly Muslim. According to the U.S. State Department, Christians and other non-Muslims, including Jews, Hindus, and Bahais, are free to practice, maintain places of worship, and display religious symbols. Sunni Muslims enjoy favored status with the government. Shias were permitted, beginning in 1999, to work in the defense force and the interior ministry, though they may not hold significant posts. Shias generally receive inferior educational, social, and

municipal services. In a conciliatory gesture, the new emir declared the Shia religious celebration of Ashura a national holiday and donated rice and lamb to some 500 Shia congregations.

Independent labor unions and collective bargaining are nonexistent. The law restricts strikes deemed damaging to worker-employer relations or national interest, and few strikes occur.

Bangladesh

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 125,700,000

PPP: \$1,050

Life Expectancy: 59

Ethnic Groups: Bengali (98 percent), Bihari, others

Capital: Dhaka

Ratings Change: Bangladesh's political rights rating changed from 2 to 3 due to continued political violence.

Political Rights: 3*

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999, an opposition coalition headed by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party called numerous general strikes in an effort to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's government to call early elections.

Bangladesh won independence in December 1971 after Indian troops helped defeat occupying West Pakistani forces in a nine-month war. The army assassinated the independence leader Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in 1975, an event that precipitated 15 years of often turbulent military rule and continues to polarize Bangladeshi politics. The country's democratic transition began with the resignation of General H. M. Ershad in 1990 after weeks of pro-democracy demonstrations.

The 1991 elections brought the centrist Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to power under Khaleda Zia. A September 1991 national referendum transformed the powerful presidency into a largely ceremonial head-of-state position in a parliamentary system.

In 1994, the center-left opposition Awami League began boycotting parliament to protest alleged official corruption and a rigged by-election, beginning two years of crippling general strikes and partisan violence. Despite constant tensions, the Awami League and the BNP differ little on domestic policy. Many disputes reflect the personal animosity between Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibar, and Zia, the widow of a former military ruler allegedly complicit in Sheikh Mujibar's 1975 assassination. The Awami League boycotted the February 1996 elections, which the BNP won, but forced the government's resignation in March. At the June 1996 elections, held with a 73 percent turnout, the Awami League won 146 of 300 parliamentary seats (30 additional seats are reserved for women); the BNP, 113; Ershad's

Jatiya Party, 33; smaller parties, independents, and vacant seats, 8. Hasina formed a government initially backed by the Jatiya Party.

Hasina scored early political successes with a 1996 Ganges River water-sharing accord with India and a 1997 accord ending a low-grade insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). In November 1998, a landmark court ruling sentenced 15 former army officers to death over the 1975 coup, although only four officers were actually in Bangladesh for the trial. Hasina has also promoted a controversial treaty giving India transit rights through Bangladesh and has presided over the politically sensitive initial tendering of contracts to foreign companies to develop offshore gas reserves.

However, like her predecessor's, Hasina's government has carried out limited administrative and economic reforms. The BNP and three opposition allies—the Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and Islami Oikyo Jote—have resorted to frequent parliamentary walkouts and have called some 60 days of nationwide general strikes since 1996, with the ultimate aim of forcing Hasina to call early parliamentary elections, not due until 2001. In 1999, opposition strikes periodically shut down banks, businesses, and schools and frequently turned violent in Dhaka, Chittagong, and other cities. The opposition charged the government with corruption and abuse of power, which the government denied. On October 6, the BNP rejected a government offer of dialogue to ease political tensions, saying it would only discuss the government's resignation. Each one-day strike costs this impoverished country an estimated \$68 million in lost production and exports.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bangladeshis can change their government through elections. A 1996 constitutional amendment required a caretaker government to conduct elections. The June 1996 elections were the first under the amendment, and, they were Bangladesh's freest despite some violence and irregularities.

Both the Awami League and the BNP, when in opposition, have undermined the legislative process through frequent parliamentary boycotts and the use of *hartals*, or general strikes, rather than parliamentary dialogue to settle political disputes. Despite their Gandhian origin, today hartals are generally accompanied by coercion, thuggery, and violent clashes between rival party activists and between activists and police. Student wings of political parties are embroiled in violent campus conflicts.

The high court is independent. Lower courts are generally independent but are plagued by corruption and severe backlogs that lead to lengthy pretrial detentions. In practice, poor people have limited recourse through the courts. Torture, rape, and other abuse of suspects and prisoners leading to several deaths each year is routine, widespread, and rarely punished.

Both the Zia and Hasina governments have used the 1974 Special Powers Act, which allows authorities to detain suspects without charge for up to 120 days, against political opponents, usually prior to demonstrations. Human rights advocates have sharply criticized the practice of "safe custody" detention, whereby judges have imprisoned female victims of rape, kidnapping, prostitution, and forced labor trafficking for up to four years, allegedly for their protection.

A 1997 accord ended an insurgency in the CHT that had claimed 8,500 lives since 1973, when the Shanti Bahini rebel group began fighting for autonomy for the 600,000 Chakmas and other indigenous, Buddhist tribal people in the region. On May 12, 1999,

the former Shanti Bahini leader took over as chairman of a new, semiautonomous regional council.

In 1999, the diverse and outspoken private print media continued to function under pressure. Police attacked several journalists, particularly photojournalists, covering general strikes and other events called by the opposition. Party activists also raided several newspaper offices. In recent years, authorities have detained several journalists for their reporting. Political considerations influence the apportionment of government advertising revenue and subsidized newsprint on which most publications are dependent. Broadcast media are largely state owned, and coverage favors the ruling party. Islamic fundamentalist militants often harass journalists and try to disrupt cultural events.

Rape, dowry-related assaults, acid throwing, and other violence against women occur frequently with minimal police intervention in this heavily patriarchal society. A law requiring rape victims to file police reports and obtain medical certificates within 24 hours of the crime in order to press charges prevents most rape cases from reaching the courts. Police also accept bribes not to register cases and rarely enforce existing laws protecting women. In rural areas religious leaders occasionally arbitrarily impose floggings and other punishments on women accused of violating strict moral codes. Women face discrimination in health care, education, and employment. Under customary laws of the minority Hindu community, women have no legal right to divorce or inheritance. Muslim women in theory enjoy greater formal legal protection in family matters, but these laws are routinely flouted.

In November 1999, the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association released a survey suggesting that organized groups traffic nearly 25,000 Bangladeshi women and children each year into neighboring countries and the Middle East. Most of the women end up in brothels while the children are used for labor. Local authorities rarely investigate trafficking and are often complicit in these crimes. In July 1999, police forcibly evicted some 6,000 legally registered prostitutes from a brothel in Narayanganj and placed them in a home for destitute women.

A five-month crackdown on banditry, ending in June, that led to the arrest of a reported 47,000 criminal suspects highlighted the problem of lawlessness in parts of western Bangladesh. Human rights groups say the police themselves are often engaged in criminal activity. In August, authorities demolished some 50,000 shanties and evicted thousands of poor families in Dhaka without prior notice or rehabilitation arrangements, ostensibly to drive out criminals and drug dealers who had set up bases in the slums. The high court later recommended that the government make alternative arrangements for those evicted.

Islam is the official religion. Hindus, Christians, and other minorities worship freely but face societal discrimination. The Garos and other tribal minorities have little input in land-use decisions affecting them. Some 20,000 Burmese Rohingya refugees remain in Bangladesh, citing fear of forced labor and other abuses by the Burmese army. Bangladesh also hosts some 400,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis who were rendered stateless at independence in 1971 and seek repatriation to Pakistan.

A 30 percent employee approval requirement and restrictions on organizing by unregistered unions hamper union formation. Workers suspected of union activities can be legally transferred or fired. Unions are largely prohibited in the two export-processing zones. The Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union is one of the few

effective, nonpartisan unions. The garment industry generates more than 70 percent of the country's export earnings and employs the most workers, 90 percent of them women. In this and other low-wage industries, working conditions are poor and anti-union harassment and discrimination are prevalent. In 1999, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund reported that at least 6.3 million children under age 14 are working in Bangladesh, mostly as maids, servants, farm workers, or rickshaw pullers.

In 1998, Bangladesh's worst flooding in decades caused at least 1,500 deaths, left millions homeless, and, according to the World Bank, deprived 30 million people of their source of income. Meanwhile, corruption is widespread, and the government loses an estimated \$2 billion each year in unpaid taxes.

Barbados

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 300,000

PPP: \$12,001

Life Expectancy: 75

Ethnic Groups: Black (80 percent), white (4 percent), other (16 percent)

Capital: Bridgetown

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

The ruling Barbados Labor Party (BLP) retained power in 1999 by winning 26 of 28 parliamentary seats, a rout that left Prime Minister Owen Arthur firmly in control of his country's political fortunes for the foreseeable future. A strong economic performance reflected the government's efforts to diversify the economy by creating financial and computer services. The results of the election gave Arthur the mandate he needed to declare Barbados a republic.

A member of the British Commonwealth, Barbados achieved independence in 1966. The British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. The government is a parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature and a party system based on universal adult suffrage. The senate comprises 21 members, all appointed by the governor-general: 12 on the advice of the prime minister, 2 on the advice of the leader of the opposition, and the remaining 7 at the discretion of the governor-general. A 28-member house of assembly is elected for a five-year term. Executive authority is vested in the prime minister, who is the leader of the political party commanding a majority in the house.

Since independence, power has alternated between two centrist parties—the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), under Errol Barrow, and the BLP under Tom Adams. Adams led the BLP from 1976 until his death in 1985. Adams was succeeded by Bernard St. John, but the BLP was defeated and Barrow returned to power in 1986. Barrow died in 1987 and was succeeded by Erskine Sandiford, who led the DLP to victory in the 1991 elections.

Under Sandiford, Barbados suffered a prolonged economic recession as revenues from sugar and tourism declined. By 1994, the economy appeared to be improving, but unemployment was still at nearly 25 percent. Sandiford's popularity suffered, and he was increasingly criticized for his authoritarian style of government. He lost a no-confidence vote in parliament when nine BLP legislators were joined by four DLP backbenchers and one independent legislator who had quit the DLP. David Thompson, the young finance minister, replaced Sandiford.

In the 1994 election campaign, Arthur, an economist elected in 1993 to head the BLP, promised to build "a modern, technologically dynamic economy," create jobs, and restore investor confidence. The BLP won 19 seats; the DLP, 8; and the New Democratic Party (NDP), a disaffected offshoot of the DLP formed in 1989, won 1 seat.

Arthur combined a technocratic approach to revitalizing the economy with savvy politics. He appointed a number of promising young cabinet members and, in the run-up to the 1999 election, was able to boast that in five years, unemployment had been halved, to 12 percent. Arthur has promised to make Barbados a republic, a change in status that would require a two-thirds vote in parliament, although it would retain Commonwealth membership. The feeble showing by Thompson's DLP in the 1999 elections created worries that the parliamentary opposition was in danger of withering away. Worry about increases in the number of armed robberies and burglaries focused government attention on new strategies for fighting crime.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through democratic elections, and the January 1999 elections were free and fair. Constitutional guarantees regarding freedom of religion and the right to organize political parties, labor unions, and civic organizations are respected. Apart from the parties holding parliamentary seats, other political organizations abound, including the small, left-wing Workers' Party of Barbados.

The judicial system is independent and includes a supreme court that encompasses a high court and a court of appeals. Lower-court officials are appointed on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. The government provides free legal aid to the indigent. In 1992 the court of appeals outlawed the practice of public flogging of criminals. The prison system is antiquated and overcrowded, with more than 800 inmates held in a building built for 350.

Human rights organizations operate freely. The high crime rate, fueled by an increase in drug abuse and narcotics trafficking (there was some decrease in drug related crime in 1999), has given rise to human rights concerns. There are numerous complaints of excessive force used by the Royal Barbados Police Force during arrests and interrogation. A counternarcotics agreement signed between the United States and Barbados in late 1996 will provide funding for the Barbados police force, the coast guard, customs, and other ministries, for a broad array of programs to combat drug related crimes. Barbados also entered into an updated extradition treaty with the United States, as well as, in May 1997, a maritime law enforcement agreement.

Freedom of expression is fully respected. Public opinion expressed through the news media, which are free of censorship and government control, has a powerful influence on policy. Newspapers are privately owned, and there are two major dailies. Private and government radio stations operate. The single television station, operated by the

government-owned Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), presents a wide range of political viewpoints.

In 1992, a domestic violence law was passed to give police and judges greater powers to protect women, although violence and abuse continue to be major social problems. Women are well represented at all levels of government and politics.

Part of the country's move to break with the British Crown has been a government effort to exalt Bajan heroes at the expense of English ones, such as Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, whose statue stands in Trafalgar Square, Bridgetown. The effort has created resentment among the whites who make up about seven percent of the country's 265,000 people. In response, Arthur appointed a 13-member National Reconciliation Committee to foster greater understanding between the majority Black and the minority Anglo communities.

There are two major labor unions and various smaller ones that are politically active. Women make up roughly half of the workforce. Some 12,000 Barbadians—8.5 percent of the economically active population—earn less than the minimum wage of U.S.\$85 a week.

↓ Belarus

Polity: Presidential-dictatorship

Economy: Statist

Population: 10,200,000

PPP: \$4,850

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Belarusian (78 percent), Russian (13 percent), Polish (4 percent), Ukrainian (3 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Minsk

Trend Arrow: Belarus receives a downward trend arrow due to disappearances of key democratic leaders, the closure of independent media, and stronger attempts to remove domestic opposition to the planned union with Russia.

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Harsher media restrictions, more repressive tactics against key opposition figures, and movement towards a tight union with Russia all marked the 1999 rule of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. Since assuming power in 1994, Lukashenka has harassed and expelled dissidents, repressed the news media, reintroduced a command economy, and obtained passage of a constitution to strengthen his one-man rule.

Belarus was part of the realm of medieval Kievan Rus'. After a lengthy period of Lithuanian rule, it merged with Poland in the 1500s. It became part of the Russian Empire after Poland was partitioned in the 1700s and became a constituent republic of the Soviet Union in 1922. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the democratic leader Stanislaw Shushkevich became the head of state. A pro-Russian parliament ousted Shushkevich in 1994, and the newly created post of president was won by Lukashenka, a former state farm director and chairman of the parliament's anticorruption commit-

tee. After his election, Lukashenka gradually introduced an authoritarian regime. In 1996, Lukashenka extended his term and amended the country's constitution by referendum. Parliament was restructured into a bicameral legislature consisting of a house of representatives with 110 deputies and a senate, with the president appointing one-third of the senators.

In 1999, Russia and Belarus continued to move towards a federal union of both countries with a joint head of state, a single currency, military integration, unified customs and border controls, and dual citizenship. Movement towards institutionalizing the union is likely to lead to wide civil unrest.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

The citizens of Belarus cannot change their government democratically, although Lukashenka has promised free parliamentary elections in the year 2000. Although his term in office was extended in 1996 to 2001, no country, apart from Russia, recognized him as the legitimate Belarusian leader after July 20 1999 when his term in office legally ran out. A demonstration by 5,000 on July 21 calling upon him to step down was broken up, and 70 were arrested. On the same day, the legitimate supreme soviet met in secret and declared its chairman, Syamyon Sharetsky, to be henceforth head of state under the 1994 constitution. The United States, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe (CE), from which Belarus's special guest status was suspended in 1996, no longer officially recognize Lukashenka as the legitimate ruler of Belarus. The EU, OSCE, and CE are promoting dialogue between the legitimate supreme soviet and the authorities in order to improve the political climate for the year 2000 parliamentary elections. The opposition to Lukashenka laid down five conditions: define the role of any future parliament, hold free elections using a mixed majoritarian-proportional system, grant access to the state media, release political prisoners, and halt repression.

Freedom of the press is strictly curtailed, and in 1999, greater restrictions were placed on the media. In April a government memorandum banned government officials from passing official documents to nonstate media, and forbade state enterprises to place advertisements in opposition publications. The State Committee on Television and Radio controls broadcasting. A number of small, local, privately owned television stations broadcast entertainment programming. The State Press Committee (SPC) has warned and interfered with a number of independent publications—*Afosa Niva*, *Belaruskiye Vedemosti*, *Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, *Krynitsa*, *Imya*, and *Belaruskaya maladzyozhnaya*. The SPC repeatedly threatened the newspaper *Naviny* with closure; formerly entitled *Svaboda*, it was closed in 1997. *Naviny* is expected to resume under a third name, *Nasha svaboda*.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by law, although the Belarusian Orthodox Church (BOC), which comes under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, is the *de facto* state church and an ally of President Lukashenka's Pan-Slavic ideology. Roman Catholics and Jews have complained of governmental delays in returning church property and synagogues. Both indigenous Belarusian churches (Greek Catholic and Autocephalous) are subjected to state discrimination because they are linked to opposition political parties and oppose the BOC.

Even though 78 percent of the population is ethnic Belarusian, the Belarusian language educational system is being dismantled. Russian was restored as a second state

language after a referendum in 1995. Five hundred Belarusian-language schools have been closed since 1994, and the last remaining Belarusian language high school in Minsk was merged with a Russian school in 1999. Few books are published in Belarusian, and Belarusian has disappeared from radio and to a great extent from television.

In 1999 the opposition Party of Communists and the Peasant Party were both denied legal registration. Public rallies and demonstrations require government approval. A 1999 presidential decree "on measures to prevent emergencies during mass events" restricts where opposition rallies and meetings can be now be held. After the September bomb blasts in Russia, allegedly undertaken by Chechen terrorists, additional security measures were enforced in Belarus. Charitable organizations have faced government pressure, and arbitrary and contradictory tax policies have led several international humanitarian groups to cease operations in Belarus. In October the militia raided without a search warrant the offices of Visna-96, a human rights organization, and removed publications and office equipment.

Opposition supporters are often subjected to beatings and torture in detention. Former Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir still sits in prison after being indicted on trumped-up corruption charges in March 1999. This same year the authorities resorted to a new tactic of kidnapping high-ranking opposition figures (Tamara Vinnikava, Yuriy Zakharanka, Viktor Hanchar, and Anatol Krasouski), who then disappeared. The Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Belarusian Service reported that many Belarusians increasingly believe the victims to have been murdered. To prevent his disappearance when he became Belarus's legitimate head of state, Sharetsky moved to Lithuania on July 22, 1999. Uladzimir Nyaklyaeu, chairman of the Writer's Union, requested political asylum in Poland when he was threatened with arrest after protesting state discrimination of Belarusian language and culture.

The judicial system is essentially the same three-tiered structure that existed during the Soviet era. Judges continue to be influenced by the political leadership, and lawyers were disbarred in 1999 after defending political prisoners. The president appoints the chairman and five other members of the constitutional court. The remaining six members are appointed by the Council of the Republic, which itself is composed partly of presidential appointees and partly of loyalists chosen by the Minsk City Council and six *oblast* councils, which are pro-government.

The constitution guarantees property rights, but land ownership, with few exceptions, is not allowed. There are no legal restrictions on the participation of women in government, business, or education.

Belgium

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 10,200,000
PPP: \$22,750
Life Expectancy: 77

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Ethnic Groups: Fleming (55 percent), Walloon (33 percent), mixed and others, including Moroccan, Turkish and other immigrant groups (12 percent)
Capital: Brussels

Overview:

Belgium continued to be plagued by political scandal and decreased confidence in its government throughout 1999. This resulted in a landslide victory of the conservative Liberal Party over the government of Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene and his Christian Democratic led coalition in national elections in June. Public outrage over a food scandal, involving dioxin-contaminated poultry and other products, and revelations that Dehaene's government suppressed information about the poisoning culminated in the sweeping victory of the center-right Liberals, led by Guy Verhofstadt. It is estimated the dioxin crisis caused at least \$500 million in damages to the Belgian economy, as a result in large part of temporary Europe-wide and Asian bans on Belgian meat and produce. In July a coalition government of Greens, Liberals, and Socialists was formed, with Verhofstadt as prime minister.

In September the new government drafted a plan outlining the reform of immigration and deportation procedures. The previous government had come under intense public pressure in the wake of the 1998 death of Semira Adamu, a 20-year-old Nigerian asylum seeker smothered to death with a pillow by Belgian police as they struggled to forcibly deport her. The new plan calls for simplifying asylum procedures, improving immigrant aid programs, and improving conditions in detention centers, measures previously called for by human rights groups.

The country continues to face increased ethnic and linguistic tensions between its French-speaking Walloons, who worry that they are losing their identity, and the Flemings, who are calling for a confederated or separate state.

Modern Belgium dates from 1830, when the territory broke away from the Netherlands and formed a constitutional monarchy. Today, the largely ceremonial monarchy symbolizes the weakness of Belgian unity. Ethnic and linguistic antagonism during the 1960s prompted a series of constitutional amendments, in the period 1970-71 and in 1993, that devolved power to regional councils at the expense of the central government in Brussels. A 1993 amendment formally transformed the country into a federation of Flanders, Wallonia, and bilingual Brussels, with the German-speaking area accorded cultural autonomy. Also in 1993, parliament adopted an amendment establishing three directly elected regional assemblies with primary responsibility for housing, transportation, public works, education, culture, and the environment. The weak central government continues to oversee foreign policy, defense, justice, monetary policy, taxation, and the management of the budget deficit.

Political parties are split along linguistic lines, with both Walloon and Flemish parties ranging across the political spectrum. Numerous small ethnic parties and special interest groups have emerged, leading to a decline in the dominance of the three major parties: the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Liberals.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Belgians can change their government democratically. Non-voters are subject to fines. Political parties generally organize themselves along ethnic lines, with different factions of the leading parties subscribing to a common platform for general elections. Each ethnic group has autonomy in its region, but constitutional disputes arise when members of one group elected to office in a different territory refuse to take competency tests in the dominant language of that region.

The country's judiciary is independent but has continued to experience criticism as a result of the country's ongoing political and criminal scandals.

While freedom of speech and the press is guaranteed, Belgian law prohibits some forms of pornography as well as incitements to violence. Libel laws have some minor restraining effects on the press, and restrictions on the right of civil servants to criticize the government may constitute a slight reduction of the right to civil speech. Autonomous public boards govern the state television and radio networks and ensure that public broadcasting is linguistically pluralistic. The state has permitted and licensed independent radio stations since 1985.

Belgians enjoy freedom of religion and association. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim institutions are state subsidized in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country, and other faiths are not restricted. Immigrants and linguistic minorities argue that linguistic zoning limits opportunity.

Belgium has enacted measures to promote sexual equality, including the prohibition of sexual harassment. Legislation mandates that, in the next general parliamentary election, 33 percent of the candidates be women. Approximately 60 percent of the workforce are members of labor unions, which have the right to strike—one that they frequently exercise—even in "essential" services.

Belize

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 200,000

PPP: \$4,300

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (44 percent), Creole (30 percent), Maya (11 percent), Garifuna (7 percent), other (8 percent)

Capital: Belmopan

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999 Prime Minister Said Musa's government focused on promoting citrus and shrimp farming, two of Belize's main ex-

ports, while seeking to expand its already large offshore business community. The role of a British-Belizean billionaire who owns the country's largest bank and who enjoys close ties to Musa's government received scrutiny as a result of concern about the country's loose financial regulations and ineffective money laundering legislation. The government also failed to live up to its commitment to resolve the indigenous rights disputes—particularly the big dispute about Maya land and resource rights, and about forest and oil concessions.

Belize is a member of the Commonwealth, and the British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. Formerly British Honduras, the name was changed to Belize in 1973. Independence was granted in 1981.

Belize is a parliamentary democracy with a bicameral national assembly. The 29-seat house of representatives is elected for a five-year term. Members of the senate are appointed: 5 by the governor-general on the advice of the prime minister; 2 by the leader of the parliamentary opposition; and 1 by the Belize Advisory Council.

The government has changed hands three times since independence between the center-right United Democratic Party (UDP) and the center-left People's United Party (PUP). In the 1993 elections, the UDP and National Alliance for Belizean Rights (NABR) formed a coalition, winning 16 of the 29 seats in the house of representatives.

The August 1998 elections proved to be a referendum on Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel's largely unfulfilled pledge that his UDP would create jobs. Esquivel was successful in resisting a regional trend toward currency devaluation. Tired of a long-stagnant economy, voters carried opposition leader and former Attorney General Musa to the premiership, giving his PUP 26 out of 29 seats in parliament. Musa, who ran on an antitax, pro-jobs platform, pledged to make Belize a party to international treaties on indigenous and women's rights. Among Musa's early initiatives were the creation of a national health service and a pruning back of the power of cabinet ministers. In 1999, efforts by Indian groups to assure their land rights before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights were effectively blocked by the Musa government.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government democratically in peaceful, fair, and open elections. Since independence from Great Britain, each election in racially diverse Belize has resulted in the incumbent party's being ousted. In the 1998 elections there was a 78 percent turnout of a population that has swelled in recent years because of immigration from other Central American countries. The incumbent UDP party was also heavily outspent in the campaign. There are no restrictions on the right to organize political parties. Civil society is well established, with a large number of nongovernmental organizations working in social, economic, and environmental areas.

In general, the judiciary is independent and nondiscriminatory, and the rule of law is respected. However, judges and the director of public prosecutions must negotiate the renewal of their employment contracts, rendering them vulnerable to political influence. In addition, narcotics cases often go on for years while defendants are free on bail. Prison conditions do not meet minimum standards. The government opened a new facility in 1993 to alleviate overcrowding. However, this new prison, which houses death row inmates, provides in some cases one bed for six inmates, nonworking toilets, and inadequate protection from the weather.

Belizeans have suffered from an increase in violent crime, much of it related to

drug trafficking and gang conflict. In February 1996 the U.S. government added Belize to its list of major drug-transit countries despite the anticrime measures undertaken in 1995, including the adoption of a quick trial plan, and the country remained on the list in 1997. A stolen-car treaty signed in 1996 was ratified by Belize in 1997, but has not entered into effect because of U.S. congressional inaction.

The Belize Human Rights Commission is independent and effective. Human rights concerns include the plight of migrant workers and refugees from neighboring Central American countries and charges of labor abuses by Belizean employers. Most of the estimated 40,000 Spanish-speakers who have immigrated to the largely English-speaking country since the 1980s do not have legal status. Some have registered under an amnesty program implemented in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Reports continue of mistreatment of migrant workers, however.

There are six privately owned newspapers, three of which are subsidized by major political parties. The mostly English-language press is free to publish a variety of political viewpoints, including those critical of the government, and there are Spanish-language media. Belize has a literacy rate of more than 90 percent. Radio and television are saturated with political advertising during elections. Fourteen private television stations operate, including four cable systems. There is an independent board to oversee operations of the government-owned outlets.

There is freedom of religion, and the government actively discourages racial and ethnic discrimination. The Esquivel government, however, did not recognize aboriginal land rights (Maya people are treated under Belize law as virtual squatters in their own homeland) and took action that threatened the survival of the Maya Indian communities. More than half of the 21,000 Belizean Maya live in the Toledo district, where they form nearly two-thirds of the population. Despite their claim to be the original inhabitants of Belize, they have no secure title to their ancestral lands, which have been targeted by foreign, mostly Malaysian, investors. This land, for thousands of years, has provided Maya Indians with food, medicinal plants, building materials, and hunting grounds. In 1996 the Maya organized demonstrations and took legal steps to block government-negotiated logging contracts. They also opposed the paving of a major road that would afford businesses access to the area. Land claims continue to be fought out in the courts. The Musa government's official position, based on promises from the 1998 campaign, is that it is interested in resolving the Maya rights issues, but in fact it has followed an age-old policy of top-down control by the elites, who have significant economic and political interests in the Maya region. Compounding the Maya's problems with logging concessions and oil concessions (there are reports that a lot of oil may be under Maya lands) is a recently revealed government plan, developed in secret, to build an international highway through Maya country to Guatemala. The Musa government has also announced plans to establish a Southern Regional Development Corporation to take over most of the economic and political decisionmaking in southern Belize. Critics say that such a group would be a top-down institution with power over traditional lands.

Labor unions are independent and well organized and have the right to strike, but the percentage of the workforce that is organized has declined to 11 percent. Unionized workers earn two to three times as much as their neighbors. Disputes are adjudicated by official boards of inquiry, and businesses are penalized for failing to abide by the labor code.

Benin

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3*
Economy: Mixed statist
Status: Free
Population: 6,200,000
PPP: \$1,270
Life Expectancy: 53

Ethnic Groups: African [42 ethnic groups, including Fon, Adja, Bariba, Yoruba] (99 percent)

Capital: Porto-Novo

Ratings Change: Benin's Civil Liberties rating changed from 2 to 3 due to the government's adoption of a restrictive press law and subsequent crackdown on the media.



Overview:

While Benin held legislative elections in March 1999 that further consolidated the democratic transition the country began a decade ago, a clampdown on the press later in the year slightly eroded civil liberties. Under the guidance of Benin's Independent National Electoral Commission, the legislative polls proceeded smoothly and were judged free and fair by international observers. It was the third such election held since a national conference in 1990 ushered in democracy after nearly 20 years of single-party rule under the Marxist military leader Mathieu Kérékou. Fifty-six political parties put up candidates for the 83 parliamentary seats in the March polls on the basis of proportional representation. This year marked the first that an electoral commission in Benin took an oath of moral responsibility. The penalty for violation was a stiff fine and five years in prison stripped of all civil and political rights.

The opposition Democratic Renewal Party won 11 of the 83 seats at stake. It maintains cordial relations with the Renaissance Party of Benin of former President Nicéphore Soglo, which won 27 seats in March's poll. The two parties and several others in the opposition have a combined total of 42 parliamentary seats against 41 by pro-Kérékou candidates. Benin's party formation has largely been based on personality and ethnicity.

After Kérékou returned to power in the March 1996 presidential elections, he endeavored to eradicate corruption. A commission set up to investigate financial irregularities revealed that CFA 70 billion was embezzled in several departments of the government, particularly in the National Agricultural Development Company and the National Petroleum Marketing Company, between April 1996 and April 1999. A code of ethics aimed at curbing graft in the allocation of government contracts was launched in July. It obliges officials to announce publicly any payments made in the process of awarding contracts, whether in the form of remuneration or presents.

Benin was once the center of the ancient kingdom of Dahomey, the name by which the country was known until 1975, when Kérékou renamed it. Six decades of French colonial rule had ended in 1960, and Kérékou took power 12 years later, ending successive coups and countercoups. He imposed a one-party state under the Benin People's Revolutionary Party and pursued Marxist-Leninist policies. But by 1990, economic hardships and rising internal unrest forced him to agree to a transition to democracy that culminated in his defeat by Nicéphore Soglo in the March 1991 presidential elec-

tions. The country's human rights record subsequently improved. Kérékou made a comeback in 1996.

Historically, Benin has been divided between northern and southern ethnic groups, which are the main bases of current political parties. Northern ethnic groups enlisted during Kérékou's early years in power still dominate the military. The armed forces continue to play an apolitical role in government affairs despite concerns about morale within their ranks and ethnic imbalance. The south has enjoyed more advanced development.

Benin is a poor country whose economy is based largely on subsistence agriculture. Privatization has proceeded slowly. In an effort to attract more investors, stimulate the private sector, and bring in value-added tax, establishment of an industrial free zone is underway.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Benin held its first genuine multiparty elections in 1991. The president may serve two five-year terms, while national assembly members may serve an unlimited number of four-year terms.

The judiciary is generally considered to be independent, but concerns were raised in September when six journalists were sentenced simultaneously. Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) said it appeared that the criminal court's decision was connected to the publication of articles in *Le Matinal* and *L'Aurore* which criticized a former state prosecutor. Three journalists and three editors of the newspapers *L'Aurore*, *Le Matin* and *L'il du Peuple* received prison sentences of up to one-year and heavy fines. They were found guilty of "defamation." Some were accused of slandering a Red Cross worker or a former director of the Air Navigation Security Agency. Two of the journalists were sentenced in a case that is several years old and had seemingly been settled at an earlier date. They were all sentenced under a Article 86 of a press law passed in 1999 which carries prison sentences of up to one year for alleged defamation.

Aside from harsh libel laws that have been used against journalists, constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression are respected in practice. Most broadcast media are state owned, but allow opposition and other reports critical of the government. Independent radio and television stations began operating in 1997 under a liberalized broadcasting law, but steep license fees are likely to keep community radio and television stations off the air. An independent and pluralistic press publishes articles highly critical of both government and opposition leaders and policies.

Numerous nongovernmental organizations and human rights groups operate without governmental hindrance. The Benin League for the Defense of Human Rights was a key investigator into claims that hundreds of people were extrajudicially executed after the disputed 1998 presidential election in neighboring Togo. Human rights are largely respected in Benin, although concern has been raised over the operation of anti-crime vigilante groups in the southwest. They claimed to have burned alive at least 100 alleged criminals in 1999.

Freedom of assembly is respected in Benin, and requirements for permits and registration are often ignored. Religious freedom is respected. Although the constitution provides for equality for women, they enjoy fewer educational and employment opportunities than men, particularly in rural areas. In family matters, in which traditional practices prevail, their legal rights are often ignored. They have equal inheritance and property rights, but local custom in some areas prevents them from inheriting real prop-

erty. There are active women's rights groups that have been effective in drafting a family code that would improve the status of women and children under the law. Smuggling children for domestic service and meager compensation into neighboring Nigeria is reportedly widespread.

The right to organize and join unions is constitutionally guaranteed. Strikes are legal, and collective bargaining is common. Several labor federations are affiliated with political parties and international labor groups. Approximately 75 percent of wage earners belong to labor unions. Laws prohibit employer retaliation against strikers, and the government enforces them effectively.

Bhutan

Polity: Traditional monarchy

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 6

Economy: Pre-industrial

Status: Not Free

Population: 800,000

PPP: \$1,467

Life Expectancy: 66

Ethnic Groups: Bhote (50 percent), Nepali-speaking (35 percent), indigenous or migrant tribes (15 percent)

CapitahThimphu



Overview:

Britain began guiding this Himalayan land's affairs in 1865 and installed the ruling Wangchuk dynasty in 1907. Britain's role ended with a 1949 Indo-Bhutan treaty that gave India control over Bhutan's foreign affairs. Since then, New Delhi has supported the Wangchuk family's continued rule as an absolute monarchy. In 1972 the current monarch, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, succeeded his father to the throne. The 150-member national assembly meets irregularly, and in practice has little independent power. Every three years village headmen choose 100 national assembly members, while the king appoints 40 seats and religious groups choose 10 seats. The king and most top officials come from the minority, Tibetan-descended Ngalong Drukpa ethnic group.

In 1987, the government began requiring all citizens to adopt Ngalong Drukpa dress and customs. In 1988, after a census showed Nepali speakers, also known as Southern Bhutanese, to be in the majority in five southern districts, authorities began applying a discriminatory 1985 Citizenship Act to arbitrarily strip thousands of Southern Bhutanese of their citizenship.

The Citizenship Act confirmed the primary basis for citizenship to be residence in Bhutan in 1958, the year the kingdom extended citizenship to most Southern Bhutanese. But to prove citizenship, Southern Bhutanese now had to show a land tax receipt for 1958, which had been of little importance when issued three decades earlier. The act also tightened requirements for transmitting citizenship to persons born after 1958.

Southern Bhutanese groups organized peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in 1990, although more hardline groups reportedly resorted to some arson and violence. In the early 1990s, soldiers systematically raped and beat Southern Bhutanese villag-

ers, forcibly expelled tens of thousands to India and ultimately southeastern Nepal, and arrested thousands more as "antinationalists." Officials forced many refugees to sign "voluntary migration forms" forfeiting their land and property. The government said it feared for the survival of Drukpa culture and identity because of the growth of the Nepali-speaking population. Authorities alleged that most of those evicted were illegal immigrants, but the Nepalese government later said that 97 percent of the refugees possessed proper identity cards or alternate documentation of Bhutanese citizenship, such as tax receipts or health certificates.

In 1994 dissidents from the country's third and perhaps largest major ethnic group, the Sarchop community in eastern Bhutan, launched the Druk National Congress (DNC) party in exile. Since then, the DNC has organized demonstrations, wall postering, and other peaceful pro-democracy activities, mainly in eastern Bhutan. In 1997, the authorities began arresting scores of suspected DNC members and sympathizers, including monks, religious teachers, children, and relatives.

In June 1998, the king dissolved the council of ministers, or cabinet, removed himself as its chairman, and gave parliament the power, in theory, to remove the king through a two-thirds vote. The king also allowed the legislature to elect a majority of the cabinet, although the king will still assign portfolios. The diplomat Jigme Thinley became head of the council of ministers. In September 1999, an eighth round of talks between Bhutan and Nepal on repatriation of the refugees ended in a deadlock after the two sides failed to agree on a verification mechanism. In December, the *Kathmandu Post* (Nepal) reported that the Bhutanese government had released 40 political prisoners.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bhutanese lack the democratic means to change their government. The king wields absolute power, and the king and a small group of largely interrelated Ngalong Drukpa elites make key decisions. The national assembly is often a forum for diatribes against the Southern Bhutanese, who hold a disproportionately small number of seats. Political parties are de facto prohibited, and none legally exists. The government has arrested or driven into exile most of its vocal critics.

In the early 1990s the army and police committed grave human rights violations against Southern Bhutanese, including arbitrary arrests, beatings, rape, destruction of homes, and robbery. Few, if any, of those responsible have been punished, resulting in a continued climate of impunity. Assamese and Bodo militants from the northeast Indian state of Assam reportedly operate with impunity in southern Bhutan.

The rudimentary judiciary is not independent. The king appoints and can dismiss judges, most of whom have little legal training. Several detainees and prisoners have reportedly died in custody in recent years as a result of poor conditions. In June 1999, Amnesty International reported that authorities had arrested approximately 150 suspected DNC members and sympathizers in 1998. In December, the government released 40 political prisoners. They included South Asia's best-known political prisoner, Tek Nath Rizal, whom authorities sentenced in November 1993 to life imprisonment under a broadly drawn National Security Act legislated three years after his imprisonment.

Authorities restrict freedom of expression. Criticism of the king is not permitted, except indirectly during national assembly discussions. The state-owned weekly *Kuensel* is Bhutan's only regular publication and offers mainly pro-regime propaganda. The multilingual radio services of the state-controlled Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS)

do not offer opposition views. In January 1999, the London-based BBC reported that the former head of the Nepali language service of the BBS had sought asylum in the Netherlands on the grounds of ethnic-based persecution. In June, the BBS introduced a television service, initially available only in Thimpu. Authorities also began operating a public-access Internet server, although a basic rate of \$35 per month for 15 hours may make the service prohibitively expensive for ordinary Bhutanese. Satellite television reception is illegal, although in practice it is generally tolerated.

Freedom of assembly is nonexistent. In recent years security forces have arrested participants in peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations, mainly in eastern Bhutan and in the southwestern border town of Phuntsholing. Authorities sharply restrict freedom of association for political purposes but permit some business and civic organizations to function.

The sixth Five Year Plan (1987-1992) introduced a program of "One Nation, One People," that promoted *driglam namzha*, the national dress and customs of the ruling Drukpas. A 1989 royal decree made *driglam namzha* mandatory for all Bhutanese, although enforcement is sporadic. The government continues to ban the Nepali language as a subject of instruction in schools.

The government requires Southern Bhutanese to obtain official no objection certificates (NOC) to enter schools, take government jobs, and sell farm products. Anecdotal data from Bhutanese refugees with relatives in Bhutan suggest that significant numbers of Southern Bhutanese children have no local schools to attend. In recent years, authorities have reportedly denied NOCs for schooling to children of Sarchop pro-democracy activists. In 1998, the government fired 219 civil servants, mostly Southern Bhutanese, many of whom were related to pro-democracy activists.

The Drukpa Kagyu sect of Mahayana Buddhism is the official state religion. Buddhist lamas (priests) wield fairly strong political influence. During a 1997 crackdown on pro-democracy activists, authorities reportedly closed 13 monasteries of the Nyingmpa school of Buddhism that is practiced by most Sarchops.

Independent trade unions and strikes are de facto illegal. Villagers are often forced to contribute "voluntary" labor for infrastructure projects. Property rights are limited. In recent years the Bhutanese government has resettled some northern Bhutanese on land belonging to refugees.

Bolivia

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 8,100,000

PPP: \$2,880

Life Expectancy: 60

Ethnic Groups: Quechua (30 percent), Aymara (25 percent), other Indian (15 percent), mestizo (25-30 percent), European (5 percent)

Capital: La Paz (administrative), Sucre (judicial)

Trend Arrow: Bolivia receives a downward trend arrow due to a series of high-profile government corruption scandals.

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, President Hugo Banzer Suarez, the former dictator turned democrat who had been returned to office two years earlier, presided over a government increasingly mired in corruption scandals that resulted in the resignations of several ministerial and subministerial officers. However, his tough "Dignity Plan," aimed at eradicating all illegal coca crops by the year 2002, appears to have made significant gains. In nationwide municipal elections held December 5, conducted using the electoral code and political party legislation recently approved by congress, the ruling coalition made a strong showing, although the opposition Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) won the largest number of council seats and votes as a single party.

After achieving independence from Spain in 1825, the Republic of Bolivia endured recurrent instability and military rule. However, the armed forces, responsible for more than 180 coups in 157 years, have stayed in their barracks since 1982.

As a result of recent reforms, presidential terms run five years and congress consists of a 130-member house of representatives and a 27-member senate. The principal parties are Banzer's conservative National Democratic Action (ADN); its governing coalition partner, the social-democratic Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR); and the center-right MNR. Banzer had come in first in elections in 1985, but a parliamentary coalition instead selected the octogenarian former president Victor Paz Estenssoro, the founder of the MNR. In 1989 the MIR's Jaime Paz Zamora, who had run third in the polls, became president through an alliance with the ADN.

In 1993, the MIR-ADN candidate was retired general Banzer, who came in second to the MNR's Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada, a planning minister in Paz Estenssoro's 1985-1989 administration. Sanchez de Losada oversaw the massive privatization of Bolivia's state-owned enterprises and, under U.S. pressure, stepped up coca eradication. A series of labor strikes and mass protests in early 1995 was followed by the imposition by Sanchez de Losada of a six-month state of siege.

Throughout 1996, the government privatization program brought regular street protests. As Sanchez de Losada's term ended, a government otherwise hailed for initiatives such as improved access to the courts, efforts to reform a corrupt, inefficient judiciary, and broad decentralization was mired in increasingly bitter labor disputes.

In 1999 Banzer's opponents have used the continued detention in Britain of Cap-

tain General Augusto Pinochet of Chile in efforts to focus attention on Banzer's alleged involvement in Operation Condor, a 1970s plan by regional military regimes to eliminate leftists.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through elections. In 1997, congressional elections were held under new legislation in which in half of the 130 lower house contests were elected individually and directly, rather than from party lists, with the top vote getter representing a single constituency. The national elections held that year were free and fair.

The judiciary, headed by the supreme court, remains the weakest branch of government. Like Bolivia's mayoral, customs, and revenue offices, it is rife with corruption, and is manipulated and intimidated by drug traffickers. Both the Sanchez de Losada and Banzer governments have made serious efforts to improve the administration of justice, including making it more accessible. Since taking office, Banzer has moved to implement previously agreed-upon innovations such as the creation of an independent council in charge of judicial appointments, a public ombudsman, and a constitutional tribunal chosen by congress. The judicial council has suspended dozens of judges and fined or placed on probation hundreds more based on findings of incompetence or unlawful delays of the legal process. In 1999, the head of the federal police was forced to resign following revelations that he helped impede an investigation of corruption in the force.

Government-sponsored as well as independent human rights organizations exist, and they frequently report of security force brutality. The congressional Human Rights Commission is very active and frequently criticizes the government. Activists and their families are subject to intimidation. Prison conditions are poor, with some 5,500 prisoners held in facilities designed to hold half that number, and nearly three-quarters of prisoners are held without formal sentences. In mid-1999, the government announced that the Bolivian military will backstop law enforcement efforts in violent, crime-plagued sections of major urban areas.

Bolivia is the world's second largest producer of cocaine. Evidence abounds that drug money has been used to finance political campaigns and buy government officials, including police and military personnel.

A U.S. sponsored coca-eradication program has angered peasant unions representing Bolivia's 50,000 coca farmers. Critics say that Law 1008, The Law to Regulate Coca and Controlled Substances, passed in 1988, is excessively harsh, restricts suspects' constitutional rights, and violates international norms and standards of due process. Government forces, particularly the troops of the Mobile Rural Patrol Unit (UMOPAR), have in past years committed serious human rights abuses, including murder, arbitrary detention and the suppression of peaceful demonstrations, during coca-eradication efforts in the tropical lowland region of Chapare. Despite recent government successes in eradicating coca crops, local consumption of drugs is reportedly rising.

The constitution guarantees free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize political parties, civic groups, and labor unions. However, freedom of speech is subject to some limitations. Unions have the right to strike. The languages of the indigenous population are officially recognized, but the 40 percent Spanish-speaking

minority still dominates the political process. More than 520 indigenous communities have been granted legal recognition under the 1994 popular participation law, which guarantees respect for the integrity of native peoples. Nevertheless, some Indians are kept as virtual slaves by rural employers through the use of debt peonage, with employers charging them more for room and board than they earn.

The press, radio and television are mostly private. Journalists covering corruption stories are occasionally subject to verbal intimidation by government officials, arbitrary detention by police and violent attacks.

Violence against women is pervasive. In 1999, there was increasing cooperation between Bolivian and Argentine authorities to clamp down on the illegal exploitation of Bolivian children who are lured to work in sweatshops in Argentina.

↓ **Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Polity: International protectorate **Political Rights:** 5
Civil Liberties: 5

Economy: Mixed statist (transitional) **Status:** Partly Free

Population: 3,800,000

PPP: 1,720

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Bosniac (44 percent), Serb (33 percent), Croat (17 percent) (prewar estimates)

Capital: Sarajevo

Trend Arrow: Bosnia-Herzegovina receives a downward trend arrow because a popularly elected entity president was removed from office, as well as numerous local and regional officials; two political parties were banned from participating in local elections; municipal elections were postponed; and reports of widespread corruption throughout Bosnian government and society emerged.



Overview:

Bosnia-Herzegovina enjoyed its fourth year of peace since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) in November 1995, which divided the country into two largely autonomous entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Bosniacs and Croats predominate. Unfortunately, however, the international effort to make the peace process in the country self-sustaining made little progress in 1999. Bosniac-Croat relations in the Federation remained tense, and in the RS, the position of Milorad Dodik, the prime minister supported by the international community, became increasingly tenuous. Finally, reports emerged in 1999 showing that corruption in Bosnia was widespread and endemic, and had perhaps become the single greatest impediment to a successful implementation of the DPA.

In the RS, several major developments shook the political scene, significantly weakening Milorad Dodik's government. On March 5, 1999, the RS president, Nikola Poplasen, who had been popularly elected in elections organized and supervised by the international community, was removed from office by the international High Repre-

sentative in Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, for allegedly obstructing the peace process. Although several public figures in both the RS and the Federation had been removed from office earlier, Poplasen was by far the highest-ranking politician to suffer such a fate. Poplasen, refused to accept the decision, however, and continued to sit in his office in Banja Luka for another six months while international officials were afraid to take any forceful action to remove him. To further compound political uncertainty in the RS, on the same day, the international arbitration commission for the disputed town of Brcko (the one territorial issue left unresolved by the DPA), after three prior postponements, finally announced its decision to remove Brcko from RS jurisdiction and make it a jointly administered municipality.

These two developments significantly destabilized political conditions in both the RS and Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole, and in response, RS officials withdrew their participation from joint institutions. The political situation in the RS became even more volatile after the NATO attack on Yugoslavia commenced on March 24, 1999, and several thousand refugees from Serbia proper made their way to the RS.

In the Federation, meanwhile, the political situation also deteriorated after Jozo Leutar, a high-ranking Croat official in the Federation government, was assassinated in a car bombing in Sarajevo in March. Croat officials immediately blamed Bosniac extremists for the attack, and withdrew their participation from Federation and statewide institutions. Consequently Bosnia was left without a functioning government for several months as both Croat and Serb officials refused to participate in statewide institutions.

In response to these developments, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was forced to postpone the September 1999 municipal elections, for fear that with public opinion so inflamed, many individuals would vote for the more extreme nationalist parties. In October, the OSCE banned the most extreme Serb nationalist party, the Serbian Radical Party (along with a smaller Serb nationalist party), from participating in the upcoming municipal elections for violating directives issued by the OSCE. On November 29, the High Representative removed from office 22 local and cantonal officials for obstructing the peace process, and banned them from running in the April 2000 municipal elections.

Meanwhile, many high-ranking Croat officials continued to voice their unhappiness with the constitutional provisions laid out in the DPA. In October, Croatian president Franjo Tudjman called for the creation of a separate, third entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the Bosnian Croats. His calls were soon echoed by Ante Jelavic, the leader of the main Croat political party in Bosnia, the Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union). Jelavic was at the same time the Croat member of the joint state presidency. Although international officials immediately dismissed such ideas, they were a further sign that the constitutional structure set up by the Dayton Peace Accords received little support among high-ranking officials in the country.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

The return of refugees in Bosnia in 1999 proved disappointing. In September, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees announced that only 10,500 non-Serbs had returned to the RS after Dayton. Overall, some 840,000 Bosnian citizens remained displaced within the country, and some 350,000 were still refugees abroad in 1999. Returnees were frequently the targets of organized mob violence if they attempted to settle in areas in which they belonged to the ethnic minority.

The judiciary in Bosnia is under the influence of the ruling parties and the nationalist leaderships. Judges who show independence often become targets of intimidation, and even when independent decisions are made, local authorities often refuse to carry them out. Citizens' rights to privacy are generally not respected. Police and prison officials throughout the country abuse and physically mistreat persons under arrest, although the number of arbitrary arrests has gone down since the end of the war.

The Bosnian constitution allows for freedom of assembly and association, although citizens' abilities to practice these rights are sometimes limited. Freedom of movement, although significantly improved since the end of the war, remains a problem owing to individual's fears of harassment in areas where they are not members of the ethnic majority. Workers have the right to organize and to strike, although because of the devastated economy and workers' fears that they might lose their jobs, few actual strikes take place.

In August, General Momir Talic, the chief of staff of the RS army, was arrested in Vienna on war crimes charges on the basis of a secret indictment issued by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). By 1999, half of the individuals publicly indicted for war crimes were in custody in The Hague, but the most prominent individuals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, remained at large.

Media in Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to suffer from a lack of resources, and almost all independent and alternative media in the country rely on international donors for their existence. On September 22, a car bomb severely injured Zeljko Kopanja, the founder and publisher of Banja Luka's *Nezavisne Novine*. Kopanja's paper had recently begun to publish a series of articles on war crimes committed by RS forces during the war and on organized criminal activity in Bosnia, and some observers interpreted the attack on Kopanja as a warning to other journalists to avoid such issues.

Religious freedom in Bosnia-Herzegovina is circumscribed according to which territory is under the control of which ethnic group. Bosniacs are virtually unable to practice their religion in the RS, and mosques are also frequent targets of destruction or desecration in Croat-populated areas. In Bosniac-populated urban areas such as Sarajevo and Tuzla, Roman Catholic and Orthodox believers can practice their religious beliefs openly, but Catholic and Orthodox churches are also frequently targets of vandalism. In areas in which they are members of the local ethnic majority, however, Bosniacs, Croats, and Serbs are free to practice Islam, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy, respectively.

Reports that emerged in 1999 also showed that corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina had become widespread and endemic at all levels of government. Many international officials claimed that corruption was the single greatest impediment to economic growth and reconstruction in the country. Reports in Western media claimed that up to \$1 billion had been skimmed or diverted from local taxpayers and from international donations, and had gone into the coffers of the ruling parties. In May, the OSCE's chief of mission in Bosnia, Ambassador Robert Barry, claimed, "You've got to be crazy to invest in this country where it is a given that if you obey the laws you're gonna lose money." In September 1999, the new international High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, announced the formation of a special body to oversee and investigate corruption in Bosnia.

Botswana

Polity: Parliamentary democracy and traditional chiefs

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 1,500,000

PPP: \$7,690

Life Expectancy: 40

Ethnic Groups: Batswana (95 percent), Kalanga, Basarwa and Kgagaladi (4 percent), white (1 percent)

Capital: Gaborone

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Botswana lived up to its reputation as a "guiding star" for democracy in Africa in October 1999 by holding its seventh general elections since independence. The ruling and traditionally dominant Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) won by a wide majority in legislative and local elections, soundly defeating a fractured opposition. The BDP scored a significant breakthrough by winning the Gaborone Central constituency from Michael Dingake, who ran a sluggish third. It is the first time the BDP has held a seat in Gaborone in 15 years. A major change in voting patterns was the election of six women, all from the ruling BDP, to parliament. There were only two women in the previous parliament. Altogether 11 women ran for parliament seats.

Some confusion preceded the elections when President Festus Mogae declared a state of emergency. He did so in order to recall parliament so that about 60,000 registered voters could be added to the voter rolls. They could not be put on the list previously because Mogae had issued a writ announcing the election date before the names had been published for inspection. Despite the gaffe, the elections proceeded peacefully. Voter apathy, however, was high. Only 57 percent of 800,000 eligible voters registered, despite the passing of a new law that lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.

Botswana has an outstanding record in Africa for human rights although there are occasional reports of police misconduct. Relocation of indigenous Basarwa ("red people"), from traditional lands to make way for game parks and cattle ranching had been a persistent problem, but in 1999 the government made it possible for the Basarwa to return.

Botswana is Africa's longest continuous multiparty democracy; elected governments have ruled the country since it gained independence from Britain in 1966. Economic progress has been built on sound fiscal management and low rates of corruption. Poverty remains a widespread problem and is one of the biggest challenges of the new government. As with many other southern African countries, the AIDS epidemic has put a strain on Botswana's resources. The HIV infection rate rose from 4.35 percent in 1992 to 17 percent in 1998.

Analysts believe another drain on funds in the past has stemmed from weapons purchases connected to territorial and riparian disputes with neighboring Namibia. Judgment on the ownership of Kasikili Island delivered in December at the International Court of Justice at The Hague was in Botswana's favor. The island had been a source of tension since 1992 among local people over fishing rights and poaching.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: There have been accusations that the ruling BDP, which has held power since independence, has regularly manipulated the electoral process, but Botswana's elections are considered free and fair. The Independent Election Commission created in 1996 has helped consolidate the country's reputation for fairness in voting. Botswana uses a constituency system in which the candidate who polls the highest number of votes in a constituency becomes the member of parliament.

In October's election the BDP swept 33 of 40 national assembly seats. The opposition had gone into the election holding 13 seats. The historical opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), won 6 seats, while the breakaway Botswana Congress Party (BCP) was reduced to a single seat, a reflection of voter dissatisfaction with the split in 1998. Despite its poor showing, the BCP said it would regroup and stand behind its leader, Michael Dingake, and would never rejoin the BNF.

Botswana's national assembly, elected for five years, chooses the president to serve a concurrent five-year term. The assembly's choice is confirmed by the courts when the winning party receives more than half the seats in the parliament. President Mogae, a former central bank chief, actually succeeded Ketumile Masire as president in April 1998. Mogae was confirmed as the country's leader in October 1999. A referendum on whether the president should be directly elected was withdrawn shortly before a scheduled vote in late 1997.

Botswana's courts are generally considered to be fair and free of direct political interference. Trials are usually public, and those accused of the most serious violent crimes are provided public defenders. The University of Botswana Legal Assistance Center and the Botswana Center for Human Rights offer free legal services, but are limited by a lack of resources.

Treatment of the indigenous Basarwa (Bushmen) has drawn local and international concern because of government relocation schemes, including forcible evictions from traditional lands. Only a few thousand were permitted to practice traditional nomadic lifestyles in the central Kalahari Desert. Almost 50,000 others have been resettled in villages or as laborers on farms. Some Basarwa, however, returned to their traditional areas in 1999 after the government acquiesced to demands.

Human rights workers helped two Basarwa achieve a significant victory in November. The two men had been sentenced to death but were granted a stay of execution only six hours before they were to be hanged. The Botswana human rights organization Ditshwanelo argued that the men spoke a San dialect and did not understand the language used in the courtroom, and they won a mistrial.

There is a free and vigorous press in cities and towns, and political debate is open and lively. The opposition and government critics, however, receive little access to the government-controlled broadcast media. Issuance of licenses for commercial FM radio stations in late 1998 is expected to break this monopoly.

Progress has been slow on improving the rights of women, although analysts say this could begin to change with the election of more women to parliament. Domestic violence is reportedly rampant, and there is little movement to stem it through police action or education, especially in rural areas.

Concentration of economic power has hindered labor organization. While independent unions are permitted, workers' rights to strike and to bargain for wages are restricted. Botswana has made some efforts to diversify its economy, which is overwhelmingly based

on diamond exports. One plan envisages establishing an International Financial Services Center to attract foreign investors. Efforts at privatization are underway.

↓ Brazil

Polity: Federal presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 168,000,000

PPP: \$6,840

Life Expectancy: 67

Ethnic Groups: European (53 percent), black-mixed (46 percent), Indian (less than 1 percent)

Capital: Brasilia

Trend Arrow: Brazil receives a downward trend arrow because of a failure to convict police implicated in rural massacres which contributed to a sense of impunity by rogue officers in the country.

Political Rights: 3

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Faced with fresh evidence of the growing power of narcotics traffickers among Brazil's political and economic elite, in 1999 President Fernando Henrique Cardoso announced the creation of a new commission against organized crime. He made the move after it was revealed that a vast criminal network, composed of parliamentary deputies, judges, and police, immersed in narcotics and arms trafficking, was behind the assassination of dozens of people, including mayors, other judges, and witnesses in criminal cases. The case highlighted concern about the lawlessness found in many rural areas, as well as Brazil's growing role as a key cocaine-smuggling route to Europe.

After gaining independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazil retained a monarchical system until a republic was established in 1889. Democratic rule has been interrupted by long periods of authoritarian rule, most recently under military regimes from 1964 to 1985, when elected civilian rule was reestablished. A new constitution that went into effect in 1988 provides for a president elected for four years, a bicameral congress consisting of an 81-member senate elected for eight years and a 503-member chamber of deputies elected for four years.

Civilian rule has been marked by corruption scandals. The scandal having the greatest political impact led to the impeachment by congress of President Fernando Collor de Mello (1989-92). Collor resigned and was replaced by a weak, ineffectual government led by his vice president, Itamar Franco.

In early 1994, Cardoso, Franco's finance minister and a market-oriented centrist, forged a three-party, center-right coalition around his own Social Democratic Party (PSDB). As his anti-inflation plan appeared to work dramatically, Cardoso, a former Marxist backed by big media and big business, jumped into the lead. In October 1994 Cardoso won the presidency with 54 percent of the vote, against 27 percent for Luis Ignacio "Lula" de Silva, the leader of the leftist Workers' Party (PT) and an early front-

runner. The senate was divided among 11 parties, and the chamber of deputies among 18. Cardoso's coalition did not have a majority in either house.

Cardoso spent 1995 cajoling and horse-trading for the congressional votes needed to carry out his economic liberalization program. That fall, his government was rocked by a bribery and wire tapping scandal. In April 1996, Cardoso indicated that he favored a constitutional amendment to drop the one-term limit, which would allow him to run for reelection in 1998, and in 1997 he was able to secure congressional approval for such a measure.

In 1996, land issues were high on the political agenda. In January, Cardoso announced presidential decree 1775, which allows states, municipalities, and non-Indians to challenge, at the federal level, proposed demarcation of Indian lands. Following the decree, miners and loggers increased their encroachments on Indian land. In another development, a radicalized movement representing landless peasants continued to occupy mostly fallow land in rural areas to pressure the government to settle rural families. The activism contributed to scores of violent conflicts between peasants on the one hand and, on the other hand, the military, police, and private security forces, which act with virtual impunity.

In 1998, Cardoso's first-ballot victory (nearly 52 percent of the votes cast) over Lula, his nearest rival, was tempered somewhat by a less convincing win at the congressional and gubernatorial levels. His win was also overshadowed when published accounts of secretly recorded conversations seemed to indicate that two top officials were steering a bid to privatize part of the state-run telephone holding company to a consortium of personal friends, who ended up losing the auction.

The revelation in 1999 of a vast criminal conspiracy centered in the jungle state of Acre highlighted the lawlessness of Brazil's remote areas and moved Cardoso to take firm measures to combat organized crime. In June, Cardoso's choice for chief of the federal police was forced to resign after holding office for just three days when he was alleged to have participated in the torture of political prisoners during the military regime. At the same time, a power struggle between the state intelligence service (Abin) and the federal police, in which the wiretapping of top political figures, including Cardoso himself, was revealed, contributed to the scandal over the privatization of the national telecommunications system.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change governments through elections. The 1998 elections were considered free and fair, with opposition candidates winning the governorships of three of the biggest states—Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul. Congress remains dominated by the executive branch. Concern has been expressed about Cardoso's use of "provisional measures" (decrees) in order to bypass congress. Corruption is pervasive at all levels of government. A 1999 study showed that nepotism is rife in the congress, where one-third of all deputies have placed their wives, children and relatives on the official government payroll.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and expression and the right to organize political and civic organizations. Cardoso is credited with initiating a marked change in attitudes concerning international criticism on rights issues, from aggressive, nationalistic rejection to dialogue and openness. He created a ministerial-rank secretariat charged with defending human rights. The crime of torture was upgraded from a

misdemeanor to a serious crime punishable by up to 16 years in prison. He has also proposed making all rights violations federal crimes, thus moving their investigation from the jurisdiction of state civil and military police forces.

In the past decade, the murder rate in Brazil has doubled, with the rate of killings in cities such as Sao Paulo reaching as many as 80 in a single weekend. The climate of lawlessness is reinforced by a weak judiciary. Brazil's supreme court is granted substantial autonomy by the constitution. However, the judicial system is overwhelmed (with only 7,000 judges for a population of more than 150 million) and vulnerable to chronic corruption. It has been virtually powerless in the face of organized crime. A national breakdown in police discipline and escalating criminal violence, fueled by a burgeoning drug trade and increasing ties to Italian and other foreign criminal organizations, have added to a climate of lawlessness and insecurity. Human rights, particularly those of socially marginalized groups, are violated with impunity on a massive scale.

Brazil's police are among the world's most violent and corrupt. Grossly underpaid in the lower ranks, their working conditions are poor. Extrajudicial killings are usually disguised as shootouts with dangerous criminals. Torture is routine, particularly against poor criminal suspects, and is practiced by the federal police as well as the state civil and military police. Military policemen in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have secretly been caught on videotape attacking people on the street, extorting money, and opening fire on—and killing—motorists during routine operations. In many cities "death squads," often composed of off-duty state police, terrorize shantytown dwellers and intimidate human rights activists attempting to investigate abuses. In 1999, the first three of the 150 police on trial for the 1996 massacre of 19 landless peasants in Para state were absolved, a finding that underlines the justice system's inability to deal fairly with police brutality.

Since 1994, the federal government has deployed the army to quell police strikes and bring order to Rio de Janeiro's 400 slums, most of which are ruled by gangs in league, or in competition, with corrupt police and local politicians. Public distrust of the judiciary has resulted in poor citizens taking the law into their own hands, with hundreds of reported lynchings and mob executions. In response to U.S. pressure, the Brazilian military is playing an increasing role in antinarcotics efforts.

The prison system in Brazil is anarchic, overcrowded, and largely unfit for human habitation, and human rights groups charge that the torture and other inhumane treatment common to most of the country's detention centers turns petty thieves into hardened criminals. A proposal by Cardoso's new justice minister to radically revamp the penal code so that as many as half of Brazil's 200,000 prisoners (those who do not represent a physical danger to others) could return to the streets and so that those convicted of heinous crimes would have the right to parole created bitter controversy.

The press is privately owned. There are dozens of daily newspapers and numerous other publications throughout the country. The print media have played a central role in exposing official corruption. In recent years TV Globo's near monopoly on the broadcast media has been challenged by its rival, Sistema Brasileiro de Televisao (STB). In a negative development, in December 1999, the chamber of deputies approved a comprehensive "gag" law that would impose stiff penalties on journalists, police, prosecutors and judges who make public any information regarding ongoing criminal investigations or prosecutions.

Large landowners control nearly 60 percent of arable land, while the poorest 30 percent share less than two percent. In rural areas, violence linked to land disputes is

declining, but courts have increasingly supported the eviction of landless farmers. Land disputes have risen sharply in recent years, as numerous invasions of "unproductive" land have been organized by rural activists to draw attention to the plight of more than two million families without land. Thousands of workers are forced by ranchers in rural areas to work against their will and have no recourse to police or courts.

Violence against women and children is a common problem. Protective laws are rarely enforced. In 1991 the supreme court ruled that a man could no longer kill his wife and win acquittal on the ground of "legitimate defense of honor," but juries tend to ignore the ruling. Forced prostitution of children is widespread. Child labor is prevalent, and laws against it are rarely enforced. A recent UNICEF study reported that 53 percent of the 17.5 million children and young people forced to work in Latin America are in Brazil, and of these one million are less than ten years old. In 1999, the government announced a plan it said would abolish child labor by 2003.

Violence against Brazil's 250,000 Indians continues. In May 1998, the coordinator of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples was murdered by unidentified gunmen. The 1988 constitution guarantees indigenous peoples land rights covering some 11 percent of the country, and by law outsiders can enter Indian reserves only with permission. However, the government has completed the demarcation and registration of only 187 of the 559 eligible Indian reservations. Court and administrative rulings have eroded indigenous land claims, putting a third of the promised territory in legal limbo. Decree 1775 has opened Indian land to greater pressure from predatory miners and loggers. In some remote areas, Colombian drug traffickers have been using Indians to transport narcotics.

Industrial labor unions are well organized and politically connected, many are corrupt. The right to strike is recognized, and there are special labor courts. Hundreds of strikes have taken place in recent years against attempts to privatize state industries.

Brunei

Polity: Traditional monarchy **Political Rights:** 7

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Civil Liberties:** 5

Population: 300,000 **Status:** Not Free

PPP: \$29,773

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Malay (64 percent), Chinese (20 percent), other (16 percent)

Capital: Bandar Seri Begawan



Overview:

Brunei, a hereditary sultanate, consists of two noncontiguous enclaves on the northern coast of Borneo. It became a British protectorate in 1888. In 1959, the country's first written constitution provided for five advisory councils: the Privy Council, the Religious Council, the Council of Succession, the Council of Ministers, and the Legislative Council. In 1962, the leftist Brunei People's Party (PRB), which sought to remove the sultan from power, won all ten elected seats in the 21-member Legislative Council. The results were annulled, and a rebellion ensued. Occupying British troops crushed a PRB-

backed rebellion seeking an independent state encompassing nearby British territories. The sultan assumed constitutionally authorized emergency powers for a stipulated two-year period. These powers have since been renewed every two years, and elections have not been held since 1965. Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ascended the throne in October 1967.

Brunei achieved full independence from Great Britain in 1984. In 1985, the government recognized the moderate Brunei National Democratic Party (PKDB) and, a year later, the offshoot Brunei National Solidarity Party (PPKB). In 1998, the sultan dissolved the PKDB and detained two of its leaders for two years, reportedly after the party called for elections. In 1995, the authorities permitted a PPKB general assembly. Abdul Latif Chuchu, one of the two former PKDB leaders detained from 1988 to 1990, was elected as party president. Chuchu later resigned under government pressure, and since then, the PPKB has been inactive. In August 1998, the sultan announced that his son, Prince Billah, was heir to the sultanate.

Relations soured between the sultan and his favorite brother, Prince Jefri, following the collapse of the kingdom's largest private company, Amedeo Development Corporation, in 1998. Corruption and mismanagement resulted in an estimated loss of \$16 billion to \$18 billion. The sultan subsequently removed Prince Jefri as head of the Brunei Investment Agency (BIA), which is valued at more than \$60 billion and manages the royal family's worldwide assets, and appointed another sibling, Prince Mohamed, as the new BIA chief.

For years, the kingdom's population refrained from criticizing the sultan's lifestyle as they benefited from oil sales revenues. However, quiet public dissatisfaction against corruption and abuse of power has grown in recent years as the economy suffers from the Asian financial crisis and a 40 percent drop in world oil prices. This Amedeo scandal increased public pressure, which the government responded to with pay raises for all state workers—which make up 80 percent of the workforce—and a tightening of political control. An Islamic scholar was appointed vice chancellor of the University of Brunei Darussalam and conservatives have sidelined more liberal members within the civil service. The drop in the sultan's fortunes may also affect his conduct of diplomacy, which uses loans, investments, and purchases to buy friends.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Brunei lack the democratic means to change their government. The sultan serves as prime minister (as well as finance and defense minister), rules by decree, and, along with an inner circle of relatives, holds absolute power. The Legislative Council has been fully appointed and the constitution partially suspended since 1970. Currently, only the Council of Ministers, composed largely of the sultan's relatives, and the Legislative Council convene. Since 1992, village chiefs have been chosen for life terms through local elections in which all candidates must have a knowledge of Islam (although they may be non-Muslims) and cannot have past or current links with a political party. The chiefs communicate with the government through a village consultative council, and the sultan appoints the council's advisors. Citizens may petition the sultan. No public political party activity has occurred since 1995. Some members of non-Malay ethnic groups, including ethnic Chinese and others born in Brunei, are not automatically accorded citizenship, and Brunei's colonial-era nationalization laws are generally considered to be in need of reform.

There are privately owned newspapers, but they are either owned or controlled by the sultan's family members, and they practice self-censorship on political and religious issues. A new tabloid paper, the *News Express*, was launched on the eve of the Southeast Asian Games, which Brunei hosted in May 1999. Its debut reflects burgeoning political rivalries, with the sultan playing divide-and-rule among his siblings. The *Borneo Bulletin*, the main paper, is owned by Prince Mohamed, while the *News Express* is owned by Prince Sufri, who is also titular head of the Southeast Asian Games. The government-controlled Radio Television Brunei operates the only local broadcast media. A cable network offers international programming. Foreign journals with articles critical of the royal family or government are not allowed into the kingdom.

Islam is the official religion, and non-Muslims face bans or restrictions on building and repairing places of worship, importing religious books and educational materials, and providing religious education in non-Muslim schools. Since 1991, the sultan has promoted local culture and the primacy of the monarchy as the defender of Islam through a conservative Malay Muslim Monarchy (*Malayu Islam Beraja*, or MIB, in Malay) ideology, apparently to ward off any incipient calls for democratization. Islamic studies and the study of MIB are required in all schools. Although the government approved the establishment of the first apostolic prefecture in the country in 1998, it also moved to curb activities deemed offensive to Islam. The police confiscated Christian and Buddhist icons as well as alcohol and foodstuffs that do not conform to Islamic dietary laws from establishments mainly frequented by foreigners and non-Muslim residents.

The government constrains the activities of international service organizations, including Rotary and Lions Clubs. There are three independent trade unions, which are all in the oil sector. However, they are largely inactive, and their membership comprises less than five percent of the oil industry's workforce. Legislation does not explicitly recognize or deny the right to strike, but in practice, strikes do not occur.

The judiciary is independent. A 1996 appellate-level decision formally established the courts' power to discharge and acquit a defendant even if not requested to do so by the prosecution. Defendants enjoy adequate procedural safeguards, and, in civil cases, there is a right of appeal to the Privy Council in London. Although Sharia (Islamic law) supersedes civil law in some areas, it is not applied to non-Muslims. The police force is under civilian control. Police have broad powers to arrest without warrants, but in practice they generally obtain a warrant from a magistrate. The Internal Security Act (ISA) allows the government to detain suspects without a trial for renewable two-year periods. The ISA has occasionally been used to detain political dissidents.

Although the law permits government intrusion into the privacy of individuals, families, or homes, this rarely happens. Citizens can travel freely within the country and abroad. Under Sharia, Muslim women face some discrimination in divorce, inheritance, and child custody matters. There are occasional reports of physical abuse and ill treatment of female domestic servants and foreign workers.

Bulgaria

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 8,200,000
PPP: \$4,604
Life Expectancy: 71
Ethnic Groups: Bulgarian (85 percent), Turk (9 percent), Macedonian (3 percent), Gypsy (3 percent)
Capital: Sofia

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free



Overview:

Bulgaria's ruling Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) suffered a surprisingly poor showing against the opposition Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in October local elections, a result which many analysts attributed to factors including popular discontent with often painful economic reforms stipulated by international lending institutions. The outcome of the vote was watched closely as a midterm test for the center-right government and its Western-oriented policies before the country's next general election in 2001. In mid-December, one of Prime Minister Ivan Rostov's key policy goals was fulfilled when Bulgaria received an invitation from the European Union (EU) to begin membership talks.

Occupied by the Ottoman Empire from 1396 to 1878, Bulgaria achieved full independence only in 1908. Long-standing territorial ambitions led to Bulgaria's alliance with Germany in both world wars before the Soviet invasion in 1944 and subsequent establishment of a Communist-led government. From 1954 until 1989, the country was ruled by Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov, who resigned in the wake of a mass pro-democracy rally in Sophia and political changes sweeping Eastern Europe. In the October 1996 presidential election, the UDF's Petar Stoyanov defeated BSP candidate Ivan Marazov in two rounds of voting. With the exception of a short-lived, UDF-led government elected in 1991, Bulgaria's parliament continued to be dominated by former Communists until 1997.

Sparked by a deepening economic crisis and growing crime and corruption, a week of mass street demonstrations in November 1996 succeeded in forcing the ruling BSP to agree to early parliamentary elections the following year. One month later, Prime Minister and BSP head Zhan Videnov resigned. In the April 1997 vote for the national assembly, the UDF and its allied factions won 52 percent of the vote and 137 of 240 seats. The BSP captured 58 seats; the ethnic-Turkish-based Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), 15; the Euroleft, 14; and the Bulgarian Business Bloc, 12. UDF leader Ivan Rostov was named prime minister.

During 1999 local elections, low voter turnout in the first round of voting on October 16 forced a runoff ballot to be held seven days later. The UDF captured 101 out of the total 262 municipalities, including the first and second cities of Sophia and Plovdiv, followed closely by the BSP with 94. The MRF party took 14 municipalities; the small Euroleft party, 7; and independent candidates, 29. Although the results were a dra-

matic improvement for the UDF over its overwhelming defeat in the last local elections held in 1995, they represented a disappointment compared to the party's landslide victory in the 1997 parliamentary vote. Analysts have blamed the UDF's poor showing on voters' discontent with painful economic reforms and government corruption, as well as their dissatisfaction with specific UDF candidates. However, the election's outcome is likely to pose little immediate threat to the course of Bulgaria's reform program, which has won praise from Western financial institutions.

In May, parliament approved a request by NATO to use Bulgaria's airspace in its bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. The vote followed a heated political debate and public rallies for and against the decision. Opponents of the move, including the BSP, said that Bulgaria would be pushed indirectly into an illegal war threatening to destabilize the entire region; while supporters argued that the country would reap political benefits, including eventual EU and NATO membership.

In late November, Bulgaria agreed to an early shutdown of four reactors at the Kozloduy nuclear power plant, considered to be one of Europe's most dangerous installations. The decision followed a one-day meeting with representatives of the European Union (EU), which had linked closing the Soviet-designed reactors with Bulgaria's admission to the EU. In exchange for the closures of the reactors, which produce nearly half of the country's electricity, the EU agreed to provide Bulgaria with financial compensation. In mid-December, Bulgaria was formally invited to begin membership talks with the EU.

Bulgaria's ongoing economic reform program resulted in several positive developments throughout the year, including single-digit inflation, a fall in interest rates, and accelerated privatization in the second half of 1999. However, the lingering effects of the war in Kosovo, which disrupted Bulgaria's trade routes to central and western Europe, and last year's Russian crisis, contributed to a large trade deficit and one of the lowest levels of foreign investment in the region.

On December 19, Prime Minister Kostov announced a major cabinet reshuffle, the first since his UDF party won elections in April 1997. The formal reason given for the changes was to smooth membership talks with the EU. However, many analysts concluded that the reshuffle was intended to accelerate reforms and to boost public confidence by removing top officials facing allegations of corruption.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bulgarians can change their government democratically. The president is elected for a five-year term, and the unicameral national assembly, composed of 240 members, is elected every four years. The 1996 presidential, 1997 parliamentary, and 1999 local votes were regarded as free and fair by international election observers.

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, the country's media suffer from economic hardships, pressure by government authorities and economic groups, and punitive libel and slander laws. State and local officials and businesses attempt to intimidate journalists into providing favorable coverage of their activities, and there have been numerous reports of police abuse of journalists. In June, Alexei Lazarov, a writer with the respected *Kapital* newspaper, was beaten and stabbed by three unknown assailants. The attack appeared to have been connected to Lazarov's recent reports on alleged improprieties in the privatization of the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company. The major print media are privately owned, although most of the regional press depend on local government ownership or subsidies. More than 60

private radio stations, most of them local, operate throughout the country. While there are several privately owned regional television stations, there is no national independent television network.

While freedom of worship is generally respected, the government restricts this right for some non-Orthodox religious groups. Organizations whose activities have a religious element are required by law to register with the Council of Ministers. Some groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, have faced harassment and interference in their activities before or in the absence of registration.

The constitution permits the formation of trade unions, and the 1992 Labor Code recognizes the right to strike and bargain collectively. Bulgaria's two largest unions are the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, a successor to the Communist-era union, and Podkrepa, an independent federation established in 1989. Estimates of the country's unionized workforce range from 30 to 50 percent, although this number is decreasing as large enterprises lay off workers and many new positions are created in smaller, non-union businesses.

The judiciary is legally guaranteed independence and equal status with the executive and legislative branches of government. However, corruption, inadequate staffing, and low salaries continue to hamper the system. Security forces frequently mistreat prisoners and detainees, and ethnic Roma (Gypsies) are often targets of abuse by police and private citizens.

Freedom of movement within the country and emigration rights are generally respected. Private property rights are formally protected, although corruption, organized crime, and government control of significant sectors of the economy impede competition and equality of opportunity.

Women are underrepresented in government and politics, though several hold elective or appointive offices at high levels. Domestic violence and the trafficking of women for prostitution are serious problems.

Burkina Faso

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 4*

Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 4

Population: 11,600,000 **Status:** Partly Free

PPP: \$1,010

Life Expectancy: 47

Ethnic Groups: Mossi, Gurunsi, Senufo, Lobi, Bobo, Mande, Fulani

Capital: Ouagadougou

Ratings Change: Burkina Faso's political rights rating changed from 5 to 4 due to the government's efforts to include members of the opposition in the cabinet, and to the work of a group of elder advisers appointed by the government to seek solutions to the country's various problems.



Overview:

In an apparent effort to appease critics and stem further protests triggered by the 1998 murder of a prominent journalist,

the government of President Blaise Compaoré invited members of the opposition into a newly formed cabinet in October 1999. Radical opposition parties refused to join, partly on the grounds that no one has been detained in connection with the journalist's murder despite the implication of six presidential guards by an independent commission. Prime Minister Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo said the door was still open for those parties that had initially refused to join. There was some criticism of the inclusion of army officers in the cabinet.

The formation of a broad-based government was proposed in August 1999 by a group of elder advisers, which is made up of former presidents, government ministers, and traditional chiefs. The government-appointed group works independently and has been seeking an end to the political crisis that was sparked by the murder in December 1998 of Norbert Zongo. He was a well-known journalist who was critical of the government and had been investigating the torture death in January 1998 of David Ouédraogo, the chauffeur of Francois Compaoré, the president's brother and adviser. Ouédraogo died while in custody of the presidential security force. Zongo's badly burned body was discovered in a vehicle outside the capital, along with three others, including his brother. There appeared to be no evidence of an accident. Zongo's death touched off demonstrations in Ouagadougou in January 1999 and strikes in May. Up to 100 people were reported to have been detained briefly after the January demonstrations, including the opposition leader Hermann Yaméogo.

The government announced in October 1999 that it was setting up two consultative committees for political and national reconciliation. The political committee is to revise the electoral code and rules for the Independent National Electoral Commission, improve access of political parties to state media, and review Article 37, which had been changed in 1998 to allow the president to have unlimited terms in office. The group of elders has recommended that Article 37 be changed back, to allow a two-term limit. The National Reconciliation Committee is to address political violence and measures for reconciliation.

Burkina Faso's human rights record is mixed. While civil society and the independent media generally operate without official interference, serious abuses by security forces go unpunished. The country has come under widespread criticism from both within West Africa and abroad for allegedly allowing its territory to be used for illegal arms shipments destined for Sierra Leone and Liberia.

After gaining independence from France in 1960 as Upper Volta, Burkina Faso suffered a succession of army coups. In 1983, Compaoré installed himself as president in a violent coup against members of a junta that had seized power four years earlier and had pursued a watered-down Marxist-Leninist ideology. The populist, charismatic president Thomas Sankara and 13 of his closest associates were murdered. More Sankara supporters were executed two years later.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Burkina Faso's 1991 constitution guarantees its people the right to elect their government freely through periodic multi-party elections. In practice, this right has not been realized. Presidential polls in December 1991 were marred by widespread violence and an opposition boycott. Opposition parties and independent observers charged that 1997 legislative elections for five-year national assembly terms were marred by fraud. Opposition disunity and electoral rules sharply combined to reduce the opposition's represen-

tation in the legislature to well below the 31 percent of the popular vote that opposition parties had received. This further reduced the role of the country's 60 opposition parties in shaping national policy. The ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) took 101 of 111 national assembly seats.

The Independent National Electoral Commission established in May 1998 did not have control over important parts of the electoral process, particularly electoral rolls and voter cards. Compaoré was returned to office for a second seven-year term in November 1998 with nearly 88 percent of the vote. The polls were marked by heavy use of state patronage, resources, and media.

The Burkinabé judiciary is subject to executive interference in political cases, but is more independent in civil and criminal cases. National security laws permit surveillance and arrests without warrants. Police routinely ignore prescribed limits on detention, search, and seizure. Prison conditions are harsh, with overcrowding, poor diets, and minimal medical attention.

Freedom of assembly is constitutionally protected and generally respected, with required permits usually issued routinely. Many nongovernmental organizations operate openly and freely, including human rights groups which have reported detailed accounts of abuses by security forces. Burkina Faso is a secular state, and religious freedom is respected.

At least a dozen private radio stations, a private television station, and numerous independent newspapers and magazines function with little governmental interference. The media, which are often highly critical of the government, play an important role in public debate.

Customary law sanctions discrimination against women and is used by traditional courts to resolve civil and family disputes, especially in rural areas. Constitutional and legal protections for women's rights are nonexistent or poorly enforced. Women's educational and employment opportunities are scarce in the countryside. Women hold few parliamentary seats or senior government posts. Female genital mutilation is still widely practiced, even though it is illegal and a government campaign has been mounted against it.

Labor unions are a strong force in society and have staged strikes about wages, alleged human rights abuses, and the impunity of security forces. Several labor confederations and independent unions bargain with employers. Efforts to reform the civil service have been met with marches and strikes, but are considered a vital element of economic progress and improvement in public administration.

Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries. More than 80 percent of its 11 million people rely on subsistence agriculture. A worldwide fall in the price of gold caused the country's biggest gold mine to close down in 1999. Reports of widespread official corruption persist, although the government has taken action against some officials.

Burma (Myanmar)

Polity: Military dictatorship **Political Rights:** 7

Economy: Statist **Civil Liberties:** 7

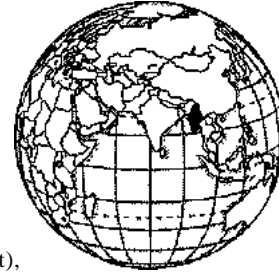
Population: 48,100,000 **Status:** Not Free

PPP: \$1,199

Life Expectancy: 61

Ethnic Groups: Burman (68 percent), Shan (9 percent), Karen (7 percent), Rakhine (4 percent), Chinese (3 percent), Mon (2 percent), Indian (2 percent), other (5 percent)

Capital: Rangoon



Overview:

Two years after the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) admitted Burma and claimed that the move would encourage the ruling junta to improve its human rights record, in 1999 the military showed no signs of easing its harassment of dissidents or its abuses against ordinary civilians.

Following the Japanese occupation in World War II, Burma achieved independence from Great Britain in 1948. The army overthrew an elected government in 1962 amid an economic crisis and insurgencies by ethnic-based rebel groups. During the next 26 years General Ne Win's military rule impoverished what had been one of Southeast Asia's richest countries.

In August and September 1988, the army opened fire on massive, peaceful, student-led pro-democracy demonstrations, killing an estimated 3,000 people. Army leaders General Saw Maung and Brigadier General Khin Nyunt created the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to rule the country.

In 1990, the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) won 392 of the 485 parliamentary seats in Burma's first free elections in three decades. The SLORC then refused to cede power and jailed hundreds of NLD members. In 1993, a state-controlled constitutional convention drafted guidelines granting the military 25 percent of seats in a future parliament and formalizing its leading role in politics. The convention has met sporadically since then.

In 1995, the SLORC released the NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's preeminent pro-democracy campaigner, after six years of house arrest. The generals have rejected the 1992 Nobel Laureate's calls for a dialogue on democratic reform. In December 1996, authorities quelled student demonstrations by shutting universities and detaining scores of people.

In November 1997, the SLORC reconstituted itself as the State Peace and Development Council. The relatively young generals who took charge sidelined more senior officers and subsequently removed some of the more blatantly corrupt cabinet ministers. The junta appeared to be trying to improve its international image, attract foreign investment, and encourage an end to U.S.-led sanctions. Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, the intelligence chief and formally one of the junta's top five members, continues to be the regime's strongman. In 1998, the junta intensified its arrests and harassment of NLD members after the party called for the parliament elected in 1990 to be convened. Riot police also reportedly arrested dozens of anti-junta protesters at Rangoon University in

August. In August and September 1999, authorities arrested several hundred NLD activists and other dissidents ahead of expected demonstrations on Four Nines Day, September 9, 1999, to commemorate the army's crackdown on August 8, 1988. The protests failed to materialize.

The ethnic minorities that constitute more than one-third of Burma's population have been fighting for autonomy from the Burman-dominated central government since the late 1940s. Since 1989, the SLORC has co-opted 16 ethnic rebel armies with ceasefire deals that allow them to maintain their weapons and territory. The ceasefires have helped the regime and many former rebel groups to become major heroin traffickers.

The 1999 winter-spring dry season again witnessed increased fighting between the army and the predominantly Christian Karen National Union (KNU), the largest active insurgency group. Regular troops and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, a pro-regime militia of KNU defectors, burned and looted villages in the eastern hills and attacked Karen refugee camps inside Thailand.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Burma continued to be ruled by one of the world's most repressive regimes. The junta controls the judiciary, and the rule of law is nonexistent. The SLORC has imprisoned or driven into exile most of its vocal opponents; severely restricted freedom of speech, press, and association, and other fundamental rights; and used a tightly controlled mass movement, the Union Solidarity Development Association, to monitor forced labor quotas, report on citizens, and intimidate opponents.

The army is responsible for arbitrary beatings and killings of civilians; forcibly uses civilians as porters, unpaid laborers, and human mine sweepers under brutal conditions, with soldiers sometimes killing weakened porters, or executing those who resist; summarily executes civilians who refuse to provide food or money to military units; arrests civilians as alleged insurgents or insurgent sympathizers; and commits widespread incidents of rape. The army's use of forced labor is greatest in the seven ethnic minority-dominated states. The laborers toil under harsh conditions and receive no compensation. In March, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Burma reported that these abuses continued to be widespread and that the situation was deteriorating.

Throughout the 1990s, the *tatmadaw*, or Burmese armed forces, forcibly relocated civilians as part of its counterinsurgency strategy against ethnic-based rebel armies. In 1996, the *tatmadaw* began major forced relocation operations in Shan, Karenni, and Karen states. Soldiers forcibly relocated more than 300,000 Shan civilians in Shan state alone. In June 1999, Amnesty International released reports documenting abuses by the *tatmadaw* against civilians in the context of forced relocation in these three states. The *tatmadaw* forced tens of thousands of civilians into designated relocation centers that lacked adequate food, water, health care, and sanitation facilities. Some civilians took to the forest, where they encountered equally inhospitable conditions.

In May, the *Washington Post* reported that in recent months authorities had begun village-by-village crackdowns, executing civilians who had allegedly aided the insurgents. By mid-1999, Thailand hosted some 120,000 mainly Karen, Karenni, Shan, and Mon refugees. Refugees reported abuses by the *tatmadaw* including forced labor and portering; arbitrary arrests and torture to punish alleged contact with rebel groups; and extrajudicial killings as punishment for returning to their villages or for being unable to

perform pottering duties. Amnesty International also reported that armed opposition groups from Shan, Karen, and other communities committed killings and other abuses against ethnic Burman civilians in these states. On Burma's western frontier, ethnic Chin communities also faced forced labor and other abuses.

In the early 1990s, some 260,000 Muslim Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh to escape extrajudicial executions, rape, religious persecution, land confiscation, and other abuses in northern Arakan state. By mid-1997, all but 21,000 had been repatriated to Burma, but new refugees continued to cross into Bangladesh. The Rohingya refugee issue occurs in the context of the regime's broader persecution of the Muslim minority. The 1982 Citizenship Act was designed to deny citizenship to the Rohingyas and make them ineligible for basic social, educational, and health services. In August, church leaders in India said at least 1,000 ethnic Nagas had fled into India to escape forced conversions to Buddhism by the Burmese army.

In 1998, the opposition leader Suu Kyi estimated that there are between 1,000 to 2,000 political prisoners in Burmese jails. The same year, the London-based *Financial Times* carried a study showing that 78 NLD members of parliament (MPs) elected in 1990 have spent time in prison, 20 more were in exile, and 112 had either resigned or had been disqualified. In 1999, officials said 107 NLD MPs were imprisoned or detained. The junta used numerous broadly drawn laws to criminalize peaceful pro-democracy activities including distributing pamphlets, and distributing, viewing or smuggling out videotapes of Suu Kyi's public addresses. For example, Decree 5/96 of 1996 authorizes jail terms of 5 to 25 years for aiding activities "which adversely affect the national interest." The decree also authorizes the home ministry to ban any organization violating a separate law against public gatherings of five or more people.

Prison conditions are abysmal, and authorities routinely torture political prisoners and common criminals. More than 40 political prisoners have died in Insein prison since 1988. In May, the junta gave the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) permission to visit political prisoners for the first time since 1995, when the ICRC withdrew and accused the junta of impeding its work. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that authorities began removing the most sensitive political prisoners to other jails, and that the 48 prisons open to the ICRC represented just 5 percent of Burma's 900-plus jails.

The junta continued to control tightly all publications and broadcast services. Several journalists remained imprisoned. Since 1996, unauthorized Internet use has been punishable by lengthy jail terms.

The Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence continued to arbitrarily search homes, intercept mail, and monitor telephone conversations. The regime's high-tech information warfare center in Rangoon can reportedly intercept telephone, fax, e-mail, and radio communications. In 1999, the government continued to slowly reopen universities since their closure in 1996, which has kept an estimated 400,000 students away from classes. When open, universities are closely monitored by authorities.

Criminal gangs have trafficked thousands of Burmese women and girls, many from ethnic minority groups, to Thailand for prostitution. The army forcibly recruits children and routinely uses child porters.

Authorities continued to closely monitor monasteries, interfere in Buddhist religious affairs, and hold many of the 300 monks arrested during a violent 1990

crackdown on monasteries. Reports in 1997 suggested that 16 monks had died in prison.

Trade unions, collective bargaining, and strikes are illegal. Several labor figures continued to serve long terms for their political and labor activities. In June, the International Labor Organization condemned Burma for its widespread use of forced labor. The junta's severe economic mismanagement has kept the population impoverished, drained virtually all hard currency reserves, and resulted in an inflation rate of at least 70 percent in 1999. Pervasive official corruption and the army's arbitrary taxes, levies, and seizures of food exacerbate the plight of ordinary citizens. Western and multilateral aid remained suspended because of the regime's human rights record.

Burundi

Polity: Dictatorship
(military-dominated)

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 5,700,000

PPP: \$637

Life Expectancy: 46

Ethnic Groups: Hutu [Bantu] (85 percent),
Tutsi (14 percent), Twa [Pygmy] (1 percent)

Capital: Bujumbura

Ratings change: Burundi's political liberties rating changed from 7 to 6 due to the effect of an internal political accord and ongoing negotiations to resolve the nation's crisis.

Political Rights: 6*

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Burundi's overall political environment in 1999 was characterized both by slow and uncertain progress towards creating a new political equilibrium and by continued violence and civil strife within the country. Negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania, mediated by former President Nyerere of Tanzania took place intermittently during the year to develop a commonly agreed-upon framework for addressing the country's deep polarization. By year's end, however, no final agreement had yet been reached. Violence within the country, generated both by the government security forces and Hutu guerilla groups, claimed an increasing number of lives as the year progressed. Polarization and suspicion between the country's Hutu majority and Tutsi minority ethnic groups remain high, and continued instability within the region further complicates efforts at reconciliation.

With the exception of a brief period following democratic elections in 1993, the minority Tutsi ethnic group has governed the country since independence in 1962. The military, judiciary, educational system, business, and news media have also been dominated by the Tutsi. Violence between the country's two main ethnic groups has occurred repeatedly since independence, but the assassination of the newly elected Hutu President Melchoir Ndadaye in 1993 resulted in sustained and widespread violence. Since 1993 an estimated 200,000 Burundi citizens, out of a population of 5.5 million, are estimated to have lost their lives.

Ndadaye's murder fatally weakened the hold on power of the Hutu-backed political party, FRODEBU. Negotiations on power sharing took place over the succeeding months, as ethnically backed violence continued to wrack the country. Cyprien Ntaryamira, Ndadaye's successor, was killed along with Rwanda president Juvenal Habyarimana in 1994 when their plane was apparently shot down while approaching Kigali airport. The event intensified killings in Burundi.

Under a 1994 power-sharing arrangement between the main political parties, Hutu politician Sylvestre Ntibantunganya served as Burundi's new president until his ouster by former President Pierre Buyoya in a 1996 military coup, which Buyoya claimed to have carried out to prevent further human rights violations and violence. Peace and political stability within the country continued to be elusive as armed insurgents sporadically staged attacks and the government security forces pursued an often ruthless campaign of intimidation. Since then, the search for peace has led to an agreement to allow a measure of political space for the parliament, which has a FRODEBU majority, and the beginning of negotiations in Arusha in 1998.

The Arusha negotiations on ending the civil war resumed in January 1999. Regionally imposed economic sanctions were provisionally lifted that month in recognition of progress made in the negotiations. These reflect an effort at broad-based consensus-building among the nation's political forces. Eighteen organized groups from across the political spectrum continue to discuss recommendations from committees on the nature of the conflict, reforms in the nation's governing institutions, security issues, and economic restructuring and development. Progress through the year was intermittent and slow. The form of the political institutions through which power would be shared, and the reform of the military proved to be especially sensitive and difficult issues.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Political and civil liberties within Burundi continue to be circumscribed, although parties and civic organizations do function. President Buyoya is an unelected chief of state. The constitution was suspended when he took power, as was the legitimately elected parliament. In June 1998 a transitional constitution was put into place; it reinstated and enlarged the parliament through the appointment of additional members and created two vice presidents. The parliament's powers remain limited in practice, although it provides an outlet for political expression and remains an important player in determining the nation's future. It is not clear when the next presidential and parliamentary elections will be held, or under what conditions.

There are over a dozen active political parties, ranging from those that champion extremist Tutsi positions to those that hold extremist Hutu positions. Most are small in terms of membership. FRODEBU and the Tutsi-dominated Unity for National Progress (UPRONA) party remain the leading political parties.

Burundians continue to be subject to arbitrary violence, whether from the government or from guerilla groups. Although detailed, specific figures on the number of dead or injured are difficult to obtain, widespread violence continued in parts of Burundi in 1999. This has been documented by respected independent organizations inside and outside Burundi, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the ITEKA Human Rights League. Amnesty International reported, for example, that at least 500 civilians were killed by government soldiers in the Bujumbura area alone between

November 1998 and March 1999. Scores more are reported to have been subsequently killed, and violence increased as the year progressed. Hundreds were reportedly massacred by the Burundian army in early August, to cite one example, after rebel forces attacked a marketplace outside the capital of Bujumbura. In response, Hutu rebels attacked Tutsi neighborhoods on the night of August 28, killing more than 30 people, including many children. In addition to government security force operations, there has been intense activity by armed opposition groups, particularly in the province of Rural Bujumbura and the southern provinces of Makamba, Bururi, Rutana, and Ruyigi.

Reprisals by the armed forces have often been brutal and indiscriminate and have resulted in hundreds of extrajudicial executions, mainly of members of the Hutu ethnic group. Much of this violence has been committed in zones where the local civilian and military authorities ordered the civilian population to leave the area because of counterinsurgency operations. While this is ostensibly a measure aimed primarily at protecting the civilian population, members of the government and the armed forces have publicly stated that people remaining in the areas would be considered to be linked to the armed groups, and therefore would be military targets. The continued impunity of the armed forces, and the weakness of the Burundian judicial system are important contributing factors to the violence.

Citizens have also been subject to arbitrary displacement from their homes. In September 1999, after a major relocation exercise near the capital, Bujumbura, the United Nations estimated there were more than 800,000 people—12 percent of the population—in these sites. In October, Amnesty International reported that as many as 260,000 people had recently been moved from their homes by the military in the area around the capital, Bujumbura. The report stated that virtually the whole population of Rural Bujumbura had been forcibly moved from their homes as a counterinsurgency measure.

Some different viewpoints are expressed in the media, although they operate under significant self-censorship and the opposition press functions sporadically. The government-operated radio station allows a measure of diversity. The European Union has funded a radio station. The Hutu extremist radio broadcasts sporadically and has a limited listening range.

Women have limited opportunities for advancement in the economic and political spheres, especially in the rural areas. Approximately 80 percent of Burundi's population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, with few links to the modern economy.

Constitutional protections for unionization are in place, and the right to strike is protected by the labor code. The Organization of Free Unions of Burundi is the sole labor confederation and has been independent since the rise of the multiparty system in 1992. Most union members are civil servants and have bargained collectively with the government. Freedom of religion is generally observed.

Cambodia

Polity: Dominant party (insurgency) **Political Rights:** 6
Economy: Statist **Civil Liberties:** 6
Population: 11,900,000 **Status:** Not Free
PPP: \$1,290
Life Expectancy: 53
Ethnic Groups: Khmer (90 percent), Vietnamese (5 percent), Chinese (1 percent), other (4 percent)
Capital: Phnom Penh



Overview:

With the end of active Khmer Rouge insurgency, in 1999 Cambodia experienced domestic peace for the first time since the mid-1960s. Premier Hun Sen continued to run a corrupt, authoritarian regime propped up by key generals and business cronies.

After achieving independence from France in 1953, Cambodia was ruled in succession by King Norodom Sihanouk, the U.S.-backed Lon Nol regime in the early 1970s, and the Maoist Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979. The radical agrarian program of the Khmer Rouge killed at least 1.7 million of Cambodia's 7 million people through executions, overwork, and starvation. Vietnam invaded in December 1978 and installed the Communist Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP).

A 1980s civil war between the KPRP government and the allied armies of Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and former Premier Son Sann ended with an internationally brokered 1991 peace accord, although the Khmer Rouge eventually continued its insurgency. In violation of the accord, the KPRP government, headed by the Khmer Rouge defector Hun Sen, maintained control of 80 percent of the army, most key ministries, and provincial and local authorities. In Cambodia's first free national assembly elections, organized by the United Nations in 1993, the royalist opposition United Front for an Independent, Neutral and Free Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), headed by Prince Norodom Ranariddh, a son of Sihanouk's, defeated the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the successor to the KPRP.

Hun Sen forced Ranariddh into accepting a coalition government with the two leaders as co-premiers. The new government quickly moved to repress dissent. By 1996, Hun Sen had used his continuing control of the army and political institutions to consolidate near total power. On July 5-6, 1997, Hun Sen seized full power in a violent coup following efforts by both leaders to attract defectors from the crumbling Khmer Rouge.

Aiming to hold a controlled election that would meet the international community's minimum standards to resume aid, Hun Sen agreed to a Japanese plan under which two show trials held in March 1998 convicted Ranariddh in absentia of conspiracy and weapons smuggling, with King Sihanouk then issuing a royal pardon. Despite considerable constraints, opposition parties ran vigorous campaigns for the July 26, 1998, elections, which drew a turnout of more than 90 percent. The CPP won a reported 41.4 percent of the vote and about 59 seats, but the CPP-controlled National Election Council (NEC) changed the electoral formula to hand the CPP a majority with 64 seats.

FUNCINPEC won 43 seats, and the Sam Rainsy Party, led by Cambodia's leading dissident, 15. In November, Ranariddh brought FUNCINPEC into a governing coalition.

In December, two senior Khmer Rouge figures—Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea—defected to the government, and in March 1999, authorities arrested Ta Mok, the last leading at-large Khmer Rouge member. In August, Hun Sen rejected a UN plan to try Khmer Rouge leaders for genocide with foreign judges constituting the majority on the bench. Ieng Sary and other senior Khmer Rouge leaders who have defected to the government since 1996 continued to rule a semiautonomous zone in western Cambodia.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Cambodia's 1998 elections were neither free nor fair. The campaign was held in a climate of violence amid continued political killings. Hun Sen wielded his near monopoly over the civil service, local administration, military police, and Khmer-language media to a decisive advantage, particularly in the provinces. Hun Sen supporters held 10 of 11 seats on the NEC, which changed the electoral formula as ballots were being counted to give the CPP a parliamentary majority. Authorities denied opposition parties access to broadcast media, disrupted some opposition rallies, and banned political demonstrations in Phnom Penh during the election campaign.

Politicians have deliberately kept institutions weak. The rudimentary judiciary is politically controlled. In February 1999, a UN experts group reported that Cambodia's judiciary lacked the independence and capacity to try Khmer Rouge leaders for crimes against humanity and for genocide in the 1970s. Prisons are dangerously overcrowded and unsanitary, and authorities abuse inmates.

The CPP has carried out political violence with impunity, acting through the army or paid thugs. There were 41 killings of FUNCINPEC officials and others following the 1997 coup and at least 21 political killings, mainly of FUNCINPEC supporters, in the two months prior to the 1998 elections. In September 1999, authorities arrested two members of the Sam Rainsy Party on the apparently spurious charge of being behind an alleged 1998 assassination attempt on Hun Sen. Security forces routinely harass and intimidate nongovernmental human rights activists. In the countryside, the central government has little authority and soldiers commit rape, extortion, banditry, and extrajudicial killings with impunity.

The private press operates under severe pressure. Journalists are routinely harassed, threatened, and attacked. There have been no convictions in the murders of at least four journalists since 1993. The 1995 press law permits the government to suspend publication of a newspaper for up to one month without a court order and subjects the press to criminal statutes. In recent years, authorities have temporarily suspended several publications. Hun Sen and his allies control the ten radio stations and six television stations.

The constitution refers only to the rights of the ethnic Khmer majority, which complicates the legal status of the estimated 200,000 to 500,000 Vietnamese residents. Khmer Rouge guerrillas massacred scores of Vietnamese villagers in the 1990s.

Traditional norms relegate women to an inferior status, and domestic violence is common. There are several thousand street children in Phnom Penh, and child prostitution is a significant problem. Several independent trade unions exist. Factory conditions are poor and employers flout international labor norms with impunity. Authori-

ties barred the Free Trade Union of Workers, Cambodia's largest union, from holding a May Day march in Phnom Penh to protest against low wages and poor working conditions.

Official corruption is widespread. Cambodia is a haven for international criminals, money laundering, gun running, drug trafficking, illegal logging, and mainland Chinese prostitution rings. Many prostitutes are subject to violence and are forced to work against their will, having been kidnapped, duped, or sold to brothel owners by relatives.

Cameroon

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 7

Economy: Capitalist
(highly corrupt) **Civil Liberties:** 6*
Status: Not Free

Population: 15,500,000

PPP: \$1,890

Life Expectancy: 55

Ethnic Groups: Cameroon Highlander (31 percent),
Equatorial Bantu (19 percent), Kirdi (11 percent), Fulani (10 percent),
Northwestern Bantu (8 percent), Eastern Nigritic (7 percent), other African (13 percent)

Capital: Yaounde

Ratings Change: Cameroon's civil liberties rating changed from 5 to 6 due to increased attacks on the press and numerous extrajudicial executions.



Overview:

A new coalition government, formed in 1998, that included parties apart from the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) did little to improve the administration's record on political and human rights. President Paul Biya and his supporters continued to wield nearly all the power in this ethnically and linguistically divided country. Cameroon's main opposition leader, John Fru Ndi of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), warned that the political stalemate could lead to widespread unrest. Attempts at dialogue in 1999 failed, largely because the government continued to reject the SDF's demands for an amendment to the constitution which would provide for an independent electoral commission to oversee future elections. The SDF and three other opposition parties boycotted the 1997 presidential election because there was no such commission.

Cameroon has an appalling human rights record. Journalists and members of the political opposition face persistent harassment and arrest. Scores of people were extrajudicially executed by security forces in 1999. Security forces operate with impunity and prison conditions are life threatening.

Cameroon's population comprises nearly 200 ethnic groups. The country was seized during World War I, in 1916, and divided between Britain and France after having been a German colony from 1884. Distinct Anglophone and Francophone areas were reunited as an independent country in 1961. Approximately one-fourth of Cameroonians are Anglophone, and this linguistic distinction constitutes the country's most potent political division. For more than three decades after independence, Cameroon was ruled under a repressive one-party system. In 1992 and 1997 President Biya held fraudulent multiparty elections, which he won after a boycott by the SDF.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Although Cameroon's constitution provides for a multiparty republic, citizens have not been allowed to choose their government and local leaders by democratic means. Presidential elections have been devalued by rampant intimidation, manipulation, and fraud. Legislative elections have been equally fraudulent. The ruling CPDM won 116 seats and the SDF won 43 in polling in 1997 overseen by regime loyalists in the ministry of territorial administration. Demands for creation of an independent election commission were dismissed by the Biya regime, and most election observers were barred.

Institutions of representative government are largely a facade. The national assembly meets only about two months each year; for the other ten months, the president rules by decree. Constitutional amendments in 1995 gave even more power to the presidency and only nominally strengthened a pliant judiciary.

The president's own Beti ethnic group often receives preference in employment. In the north, powerful traditional chiefs known as *lamibée* run their own private militias, courts, and prisons, which are used against the regime's political opponents. Torture and ill treatment of prisoners and detainees are routine in Cameroon, despite legislation passed in January 1997 that prohibits torture. Indefinite pretrial detention under extremely harsh conditions is permitted after a warrant is issued or to "combat banditry."

Several hundred people have been extrajudicially executed since a campaign against armed robbery began in the north of the country in March 1998, according to Amnesty International. More than 50 people from Cameroon's Anglophone provinces were detained for more than two years in connection with violent events in March 1997 before finally being brought before a military tribunal in May 1999. Authorities blamed the violence, in which three gendarmes were killed, on the Southern Cameroons National Council, which supports independence for Cameroon's two English-speaking provinces, and the affiliated Southern Cameroons Youth League. At least ten of those arrested subsequently died as a result of torture or lack of medical care. The trial of these prisoners and some 20 other defendants was neither independent nor impartial, Amnesty International said. At the conclusion of the trial in October, three people were sentenced to life and 30 others were sentenced to terms of up to 20 years.

Cameroon's executive branch controls the judiciary and appoints provincial and local administrators. Various intelligence agencies operate with impunity, and opposition activists are often held without charges. Numerous nongovernmental organizations, however, still operate. Freedom of religion is generally respected.

Serious restrictions on and intimidation of media inhibit open political exchange. Authorities censor, suspend, seize, and close independent publications, which in any case have little impact outside of urban areas. Criminal libel law is regularly used to silence regime critics. Anselme Mballa, editor in chief of *Le Serment*, was sentenced to prison in July 1999 in connection with an article critical of a government minister. Several other journalists were detained during the year.

In 1990 the national assembly passed a bill calling for liberalizing the audio and visual media, but Biya has yet to sign the decree that would bring the bill into force. Radio Reine, run by the Roman Catholic Church, is one of the country's newest government-tolerated private radio stations. The government reportedly has approved a Canadian-funded project to set up five rural radio stations. The project takes advantage of a legal loophole that requires private, but not necessarily community, broadcasters to have a license.

Violence against women is reportedly widespread. Women are often denied inheritance and land ownership rights even when these are codified, and many other laws contain unequal gender-based provisions and penalties. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced in some parts of the country.

Trade union formation is permitted under the 1992 labor code, but some of the code's provisions have not been implemented and many government workers are not covered. The Confederation of Cameroonian Trade Unions (CCTU) is technically independent, but still influenced or intimidated by the ruling party. In 1996, the regime launched the Union of Free Trade Unions of Cameroon to further undermine union autonomy.

Privatization is underway, but graft and the absence of independent courts inhibit business development. Transparency International has ranked Cameroon as the world's most corrupt country. There are hopes that a proposed pipeline running from Chad through Cameroon will help bring in jobs, and civil society has been active in trying to assure that the needs of the local population are met. But the project has been delayed now that two key members of the pipeline consortium announced that they were reassessing their level of financial involvement.

Canada

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 30,600,000

PPP: \$22,480

Life Expectancy: 79

Ethnic Groups: British (40 percent), French (27 percent), other European (20 percent), Indian and Inuit (1.5 percent), other, mostly Asian (11.5 percent)

Capital: Ottawa

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

The status of Quebec continued to be the most contentious issue in Canadian politics. Four years after Canada's divisive 1995 referendum on independence for Quebec, separatism for the province remained a primary political issue. Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard has periodically threatened to hold another referendum on the province's status. In the meantime, Prime Minister Jean Chretien's Liberal government, which was narrowly re-elected in 1997, worked to strengthen Canada's federal system.

Colonized by French and British settlers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Canada came under the control of the British Crown under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. After granting home rule in 1867, Britain retained a theoretical right to overrule the Canadian Parliament until 1982, when Canadians established complete control over their own constitution. The country is governed by a prime minister, a cabinet, and the parliament. The parliament includes an elected 301-member house of commons and an appointed 104-member senate. The British monarch remains nomi-

nal head of state, represented by a ceremonial governor-general appointed by the prime minister.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Canadians can change their government democratically, and as a result of government canvassing, Canada has nearly 100 percent effective voter registration. Prisoners have the right to vote in federal elections, as do citizens who have lived abroad for fewer than five years. In the 1993 elections, the government held three days of advance voting for people unable to vote on election day.

In 1995, a federal law prohibiting the broadcasting of public opinion poll results two days prior to and during federal elections was upheld. A 1988 act to limit all forms of cigarette advertisement, however, was struck down as a violation of free speech. After passage in the house of commons, a modified, less comprehensive bill was passed by the senate in 1997.

The judiciary is independent. Limitations on freedom of expression range from unevenly enforced "hate laws" and restrictions on pornography to rules on reporting. Recently, there have been complaints that the judiciary has become overly activist and has issued decisions that have the effect of usurping the powers of the legislature.

The media are generally free, although they exercise self-censorship in areas such as violence on television.

Civil liberties have been protected since 1982 by the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but have been limited by the constitutional "notwithstanding" clause, which permits provincial governments to exempt themselves by applying individual provisions within their jurisdictions. Quebec has used the clause to retain its provincial language law, which restricts the use of English on signs. The provincial governments, with their own constitutions and legislative assemblies, exercise significant autonomy. Each has its own judicial system as well, with the right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Canada's criminal law is based on British common law and is uniform throughout the country. Its civil law is also based on the British system, except in Quebec, where it is based on the French civil code.

In 1996, parliament amended the constitution to outlaw discrimination based on "sexual orientation" by adding this term to a 1977 Human Rights Act list that includes age, sex, race, religion, and disability. Canada has also taken important steps to protect the rights of native groups. In April 1999, Canada created a new territory, Nunavut, consisting of regions of the country's vast north. The new territory is largely populated by Inuits, an indigenous group.

Canada boasts a generous welfare system that supplements the largely open, competitive economy. Property rights for current occupants are generally strong, but increasing Indian land claims have led to litigation and strained relations between the government and Canadian Indians.

Trade unions and business associations enjoy high levels of membership and are free and well organized.

Religious expression is free and diverse, but religious education has been the subject of controversy in recent years. Many provinces have state-supported religious school systems that do not represent all denominations.

Despite restrictions announced in 1994, the flow of immigrants into the country

remains strong. Concern has been expressed about the possibility of terrorists taking advantage of the country's liberal immigration policies. In August 1999, there were demands for a crackdown on illegal immigrants after several boatloads of undocumented Chinese landed on Canada's western coast.

Cape Verde

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed statist
Population: 400,000
PPP: \$2,990
Life Expectancy: 70
Ethnic Groups: Creole [mulatto] (71 percent), African (28 percent), European (1 percent)
Capital: Praia

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

Cape Verde was preparing for local elections in February 2000 and legislative and presidential elections later in the year. The ruling Movement for Democracy (MPD) had some internal squabbles in 1999 when a handful of members challenged Prime Minister Carlos Alberto Wahnnon de Carvalho Veiga's favored choice to replace him as chairman of the party when he steps down. The challenge resulted in Veiga's call for a vote of confidence among members of the MPD's central committee, which he won with a vote of 80 percent, thus demonstrating his strength. The main challenger to Veiga's choice of party chairman is no longer a member of the central committee. The prime minister reportedly plans to step down, and analysts say he would be a favorite to win should he decide to run in upcoming presidential elections.

The West African archipelago appears to have made a firm transition to multiparty democracy, but extreme poverty has so far allowed no party to offer much material incentive for supporting constitutional rule. The government's austerity program is unpopular, but has drawn increased donor assistance. Very low voter turnout marked President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro's 1996 reelection to a second five-year term. His free market policies are also supported by the prime minister and the MPD, which holds 50 of 72 seats in parliament.

After achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, Cape Verde was governed under Marxist, one-party rule by the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde for 16 years. The MPD won a landslide 1991 victory in the first democratic elections after Cape Verde became the first former Portuguese colony in Africa to abandon Marxist political and economic systems. In December 1995, the MPD was returned to power with 59 percent of the vote.

The country's stagnant economy has been bolstered somewhat by increased exports and tourism, but infrastructure improvements are still needed to assist in private sector development. Cape Verde is one of Africa's smallest and poorest lands. It has few exploitable natural resources and relies heavily on imported food. Foreign aid and

remittances by Cape Verdean expatriates provide a large portion of national income. The government is pursuing privatization and seeking international investment from business and from the country's large diaspora. Cape Verde has enthusiastically joined Portugal's efforts to create a Lusophone commonwealth.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The president and members of the national people's assembly, including six representatives chosen by citizens living abroad, are elected through universal suffrage in free and fair elections. Since the country's 1991 transition to multiparty democracy, Cape Verdeans have changed their government twice by democratic means. The 1992 constitution circumscribed the powers of the presidency, which was left with little authority beyond the ability to delay ratification of legislation, propose amendments, and dissolve parliament after a vote of no-confidence. Referenda are permitted in some circumstances, but they may not challenge civil liberties or the rights of opposition parties.

Human rights groups, including the National Commission of the Rights of Man and the Organization of Cape Verdean Women, operate freely. There are no reported political prisoners.

Reforms to strengthen an overburdened judiciary were implemented in 1998. Composed of a supreme court and regional courts that generally adjudicate criminal and civil cases fairly, the judiciary is independent, although cases are frequently delayed. Free legal counsel is provided to indigents, defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and trials are public. Judges must bring charges within 24 hours of arrests. The police, which were controlled by the military until 1994, are now answerable to civilian authority.

The freedom of peaceful assembly and association is guaranteed and respected. The constitution requires the separation of church and state, and religious rights are respected in practice. The vast majority of Cape Verdeans belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

Freedom of expression and of the press is guaranteed and generally respected in practice. No authorization is needed to publish newspapers and other publications. Nevertheless, the press and the radio and television broadcasts are largely state controlled. Criticism of the government is limited by self-censorship resulting from citizens' fear of demotion or dismissal.

Discrimination against women persists despite legal prohibitions against gender discrimination, as well as provisions for social and economic equality. Many women do not know their rights or do not possess means to seek redress, especially in rural areas. Women receive less pay for equal work and are excluded from traditionally male professions. They are also subject to allegedly common, but seldom reported, domestic violence. Serious concerns about child abuse and the prevalence of child labor persist. Campaigns to promote women's civil and human rights and awareness of child abuse have been mounted by local nongovernmental organizations with international assistance.

The constitution protects the right to unionize, and workers may form and join unions without restriction. Two confederations, the Council of Free Labor Unions and the National Union of Cape Verde, include 25 unions with approximately 27,000 members.

↑ Central African Republic

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 3,400,000

PPP: \$1,330

Life Expectancy: 46

Ethnic Groups: Baya (34 percent), Banda (27 percent), Mandjia (21 percent), Sara (10 percent), Mboum (4 percent), M'Baka (4 percent)

Capital: Bangui

Trend Arrow: Central African Republic receives an upward trend arrow for holding peaceful and free presidential elections following years of political instability.



Overview:

President Ange-Félix Patassé won presidential elections in September 1999 for another six-year term, defeating a former military ruler, André Kolingba, the most prominent of nine candidates vying to oust Patassé. The incumbent narrowly won the first round, eliminating the need for a runoff. United Nations peacekeepers watched over the voting, and international observers judged the vote to be free, although there were reports of irregularities such as ballot shortages in some areas with a strong opposition following. Kolingba and other candidates claimed fraud.

Sporadic violence preceded the poll. Two ruling party supporters were killed and dozens injured in an attack by Kolingba supporters during a rally called by Patassé's Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People. A number of political activists were arrested on illegal weapons charges.

Some opposition members have joined the new cabinet, which also includes military officers and representatives from civil society. Kolingba's opposition coalition, Union of Forces for Peace, said it would not take part in the new government. At least two parties have withdrawn from the coalition. The election and formation of a broad-based government, among other measures, are intended to resolve a political and economic crisis that helped touch off three army mutinies in 1996 and 1997 that wracked the capital. Order was restored only through a vigorous French military intervention. A UN mission in April replaced an African force that helped maintain security following the army uprisings. The UN mandate expires in February 2000 but additional UN military and police advisers could be sent in subsequently to help consolidate peace.

The UN Security Council expressed concern in July over what it said was "minimal progress" in implementing key political and economic reforms and highlighted the need to form a multiethnic army. Profound divisions linger within the security forces that could reverse steps made toward peace. Patassé's own presidential guard, the Special Forces for the Defense of Democratic Institutions, is largely drawn from his base in the north, while the southern-dominated military, still loyal to Kolingba, is waiting for pension and severance payments.

The CAR, a sparsely populated country, gained independence from France in 1960 after a period of particularly brutal colonial exploitation. Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa

seized power in 1967 and, as self-declared emperor, imposed an increasingly bizarre personal dictatorship on the renamed Central African Empire. After Bokassa began to murder schoolchildren, French forces finally ousted him in 1979. A French-installed successor was deposed by General Kolingba in 1981. Kolingba accepted a transition to a multiparty system that led to democratic elections in 1993, which Patassé won.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Presidential and legislative elections were held in 1993 in line with the 1986 constitution, giving the CAR's people their first opportunity to choose their leaders in an open and democratic manner. President Patassé's triumph was not matched by his party in the December 1998 national assembly elections, which produced a nearly even split between his supporters and his opponents. Political tensions rose early in 1999 when allegations surfaced that a politician had been bribed to switch sides to the ruling party, giving it the majority in parliament.

Open public discussion is permitted, but constitutionally guaranteed freedom of assembly is not always honored by authorities. A labor leader was detained in January 1999 for organizing a demonstration and strike supported by the opposition over the parliamentary bribery issue. Authorities barred organizers from holding further meetings. Several human rights and other nongovernmental organizations operate unhindered. Broad prohibitions against "fundamentalism" are widely considered to be aimed at Islamist tendencies and could provide scope for official restrictions on worship. Religious groups must register with the government, although religious freedom is respected in practice.

Corruption, political interference, and lack of training hinder the efficiency and impartiality of judicial institutions. Limitations on searches and detentions are often ignored. Conditions for prisoners, including many long-term pretrial detainees, are extremely difficult and sometimes life threatening. Police brutality is also a serious problem, and security forces act with impunity. The UN is to help restructure the military, which would involve the demobilization of about 800 soldiers and the presidential guard, and train 180 new police recruits. Extrajudicial executions of criminal suspects are reported, and robbery and other abuses by various military factions have become a serious problem in the capital. More than 20 suspected criminals were executed without trial in 1999, and some died in prison as a result of torture.

The UN-sponsored Radio Minurca provides nonpartisan civic and voter educational programming, as well as rebroadcasts of international news. Other broadcast media are dominated by the state and offer little coverage of opposition activities. Radio call-in shows were taken off the air ahead of the presidential elections. The only licensed private radio stations are music- or religion-oriented. Private print media have suffered little from direct governmental interference, but several journalists have been sued under draconian criminal libel laws for printing accusations of official malfeasance. The editors of four independent newspapers were questioned by military judicial authorities in November following reports that implicated the presidential guard in the killings of two soldiers. In December, President Patassé warned that action would be taken against media "that has a tendency to incite rebellion."

Societal discrimination in many areas relegates women to second-class citizenship, especially in rural areas, and constitutional guarantees for women's rights are generally not enforced. However, women have made some gains in the political sphere; three

cabinet ministers are women, and 80 women contested the national assembly elections in 1998. Eight now hold seats. Female genital mutilation is still practiced, but is reportedly diminishing.

The CAR's largest single employer is the government, and government employee trade unions are especially active. Worker rights to form or join unions are legally protected, and five labor federations compete for union affiliates. Before unions may call strikes, a conciliation process is required. Wage guidelines are set by the government in consultation with employers and unions, but unions sometimes reach agreements with employers through collective bargaining. A broad privatization program is underway, but corruption and economic mismanagement have stifled growth. Most of the country's people are subsistence farmers.

Chad

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary (military-dominated)

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 7,700,000

PPP: \$970

Life Expectancy: 48

Ethnic Groups: Sara (28 percent), Sudan and Arab (12 percent), many others

Capital: N'Djamena

Ratings change: Chad's civil liberties rating changed from 4 to 5 due to an escalation of armed conflict in the north of the country and the government's pressure on those, including the press, suspected of sympathizing with the rebels.

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5*

Status: Not Free



Overview:

An economically crucial and environmentally sensitive pipeline project was put on hold after two members of the pipeline consortium had second thoughts. Royal/Dutch Shell and Elf Aquitaine said they were reassessing their level of financial involvement, and Exxon is looking for potential new partners. The World Bank has imposed several prerequisites for approving loans requested by Chad and Cameroon for the \$3 billion pipeline in an effort to minimize potential environmental and social problems such as those experienced in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Hundreds of national and international nongovernmental organizations have petitioned the World Bank to put the project on hold for two years, citing the need to inform and educate the local population, minimize threats to the environment, and address human rights issues. These efforts have helped strengthen civil society in the country. Libya has reportedly offered financing for the project if none other is available. The pipeline could bring Chad, one of the world's poorest countries, billions of dollars in new revenue.

Government forces have suffered steady casualties in their struggle with rebels from the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT) in the north, although officials attribute many of the deaths to mining accidents. The government had begun ef-

forts to engage the group in negotiations in mid-year, but talks initially proved unsuccessful: There are indications that the movement has expanded its ethnic base and its numbers, after beginning as mainly a Toubou force. It is headed by former defense minister Youssouf Togoïmi.

President Idriss Déby's continuing reliance on his northern Zaghawa clan as his main power base, despite the formality of multiparty elections, is hindering the country's democratic transition. Lawmakers made a few small steps towards improving the judiciary and transparency in government in June 1999 when legislation was passed to establish a supreme court and an office that audits and oversees government expenditures. France, which remains highly influential in Chad, maintains a 1,000-member garrison in the country and serves as Déby's main political and commercial supporter. Brutality by soldiers and rebels marked insurgencies in the vast countryside, but the large-scale abuses of the past have slightly abated.

Chad has been in a state of almost constant war since achieving its independence from France in 1960. President Déby gained power by overthrowing Hissein Habre in 1990. Turmoil exacerbated by ethnic and religious differences is also fanned by clan rivalries and external interference. The country is divided by Nilotic and Bantu Christian farmers who inhabit the country's south and Arab and Saharan peoples who occupy arid deserts in the north.

Chad was a militarily dominated one-party state until Déby lifted the ban on political parties in 1993. A national conference that included a broad array of civic and political groups then created a transitional parliament, which was controlled by Déby's Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS). Scores of political parties are registered. Chad's army and political life are dominated by members of the small Zaghawa and Bideyat groups from President Déby's northeastern region. This is a source of ongoing resentment among the more than 200 other ethnic groups in the country. The formal exercise of deeply flawed elections and democratic processes has produced some opening of Chadian society, but real power remains with President Déby.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Chad has never experienced a peaceful, fair, and orderly transference of political power, and both presidential and legislative elections have been marred by serious irregularities and indications of outright fraud. President Deby's 1996 victory in Chad's first multiparty election was strongly endorsed by France, despite opposition and independent criticism. It is impossible to ascertain if President Déby's second-round victory with 69 percent of the vote was credible. Déby's most potent challengers were disqualified, opposition activists were intimidated, and the vote count was manipulated. Allegations of fraud also devalued the 1997 legislative elections. The current coalition government is dominated by the MPS with 65 seats, but also includes the Union for Renewal and Democracy, which has 29 of the 125 seats. Intimidation and harassment by the National Security Agency hinder opposition efforts to organize.

In 1999, killings and torture with impunity by Chadian security forces and rebel groups reportedly continued, although they eased slightly. Tens of thousands of Chadians have fled their country to escape the violence. Several of the 20 or more armed factions have reached peace pacts, but many of these agreements have failed. Chad's long and porous borders are virtually unpoliced. Trade in weapons among nomadic Sahelian peoples is rife, and banditry adds to the pervasive insecurity.

The rule of law and the judicial system remain weak, with courts heavily influenced by the executive. Security forces routinely ignore constitutional protections regarding search, seizure, and detention. Overcrowding, disease, and malnutrition make prison conditions life threatening, and many inmates spend years in prison without charges.

State control of broadcast media allows little exposure for dissenting views. Newspapers critical of the government circulate freely in N'djamena, but have scant impact among the largely rural and illiterate population. The minister of communications threatened to use "all legal measures" possible in August 1999 to punish the newspaper *L'Observateur* after it published an interview with the MDJT rebel leader Youssouf Togoïmi, but no punitive action was taken.

Despite harassment and occasional physical intimidation, the Chadian Human Rights League, Chad Nonviolence, and several other human rights groups operate openly and publish findings critical of the government. Although religion is a source of division in society, Chad is a secular state and freedom of religion is generally respected. Women's rights are protected neither by traditional law nor the penal code, and few educational opportunities are available. Female genital mutilation is commonplace.

Workers' right to organize and to strike is generally respected, but the formal economy is small. Union membership is low. Most Chadians are subsistence farmers.

Chile

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 15,000,000

PPP: \$12,730

Life Expectancy: 75

Ethnic Groups: European and European-Indian (95 percent), Indian (3 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Santiago

Ratings Change: Chile's political rights rating changed from 3 to 2 due to free and fair presidential elections held in 1999 and a decrease in overt military tutelage over the country's democratic institutions.

Political Rights: 2*

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

A photo finish between presidential candidates from the left and the right in December 1999 elections meant neither candidate won sufficient support to avoid a January 16, 2000 runoff election to succeed President Eduardo Frei, who will step down on March 11 at the end of his six-year term. The continued house arrest in England of General Augusto Pinochet, who is awaiting extradition to Spain to answer charges of human rights abuse, actually helped the rightist candidate to escape from the shadow of the aging dictator, his former boss. Meanwhile the Chilean courts began to move against some of Pinochet's erstwhile uniformed allies for their role in the political repression that left some 3,000 dead in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Republic of Chile was founded after independence from Spain in 1818. Democratic rule predominated in this century until the 1973 overthrow of Salvador Allende by the military under Pinochet. The 1980 constitution provided for a plebiscite in which voters could reject another presidential term for Pinochet. In 1988, 55 percent of voters said no to eight more years of military rule, and competitive presidential and legislative elections were scheduled for 1989.

In 1989 Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin, the candidate of the center-left Concertación for Democracy, was elected president over two right-wing candidates, and the Concertación won a majority in the chamber of deputies. But with eight senators appointed by the outgoing military government, it fell short of a senate majority. Aylwin's government was unsuccessful in its efforts to reform the constitution and was stymied by a right-wing senate bloc in its efforts to prevent Pinochet and other military chiefs from remaining at their posts until 1997.

Eduardo Frei, a businessman and the son of a former president, was the Concertación candidate in the December 1993 elections and won handily over right-wing candidate Arturo Alessandri. Frei promised to establish full civilian control over the military but also did not have the votes in congress. In 1995, the military defiance of a supreme court ruling that Pinochet's secret police chief be jailed for the 1976 murder of an exiled opposition leader in Washington, D.C., finally ceased, and the army general was imprisoned. However, Frei had to retreat from demanding full accountability for rights violations under military rule.

The senate has 48 seats, including a "senator-for-life" position for Pinochet when he retires and 9 designated senators mandated by the 1980. In October 1997 Frei selected the army chief of staff as Pinochet's replacement—from a list of names submitted by the 82-year-old general. In December, the ruling coalition won a convincing victory in an election in which all 120 lower house and 20 senate seats were open. However, the binomial electoral system, which allows a party receiving only 33 percent of the votes to share power in two-seat constituencies with a parties receiving as much as 66 percent, resulted in pro-Pinochet forces retaining their veto on constitutional reforms.

Pinochet's detention produced a strong political polarization in Chile and resulted in several emergency meetings called by the new leadership of the armed forces, as well as a reunion of the National Security Council. The country, said one top general, was "in a critical situation." However, as the months of imprisonment lengthened for Pinochet in 1999, tempers subsided somewhat. A number of the generals' cronies were called into account by the courts for their own repressive roles, while the current armed forces sought a dialogue with rights groups and relatives of the missing.

On December 12, 1999, Ricardo Lagos, 61, a moderate socialist and the leader of the Concertación coalition, faced right-wing Alliance for Chile candidate Joaquin Lavín, the mayor of a Santiago suburb and a former advisor to Pinochet, winning 47.96 percent to Lavín's 47.52 percent. Both candidates, however, fell short of the 50 percent majority needed to win outright in a first round, whose results showed a strong polarization between right and left. Lavín's strong showing—historically the right never received more than 40 percent of the votes—was bolstered by an 11 percent unemployment rate and concerns about crime.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government democratically. The 1999 national elections were considered to be free and fair,

although low registration rates among young voters are a cause for concern. The Pinochet extradition crisis showed that Chile's democratic transition remains incomplete and requires constitutional reforms to ensure civilian control of the military. Failure to eliminate some of the most egregious features—such as nine appointed senators, four named by the military—of the 1980 constitution imposed by the Pinochet dictatorship heightened the sense of emergency sparked by the retired general's October 1998 detention in London. Since Pinochet's arrest, however, some 40 officers have been arrested on charges of murder, torture, and kidnapping. And in 1999, Frei, making use of his constitutional prerogatives, announced that, barring a constitutional reform, he would join Pinochet as a senator-for-life.

In 1990, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed to investigate rights violations committed under military rule. Its report implicated the military and secret police leadership in the deaths or forcible disappearances of 2,279 people between September 1973 and March 1990. However, in 1978, the Pinochet regime had issued an amnesty for all political crimes, and the supreme court, packed by Pinochet before leaving office, has blocked all government efforts to lift it.

The amnesty has not stopped civilian governments from investigating rights cases. Hundreds of cases involving incidents after 1978 have been brought to civilian courts, resulting in a handful of convictions. In late 1995, however, the aging supreme court, possibly under pressure from the military, began dismissing dozens of cases with alacrity and without the inquests required by law. On a positive note, in June 1999, a civilian judge decided that five senior military officers—members of the so-called Caravan of Death that summarily executed 72 political prisoners in several cities—should be tried for the crimes committed in 1973. The army commander, General Ricardo Izurieta, has also begun a dialogue with human rights groups that may help not only to clarify the fates of many disappeared political activists, but also to identify those military officers who ordered their torture and death. In September, the supreme court ratified a lower court ruling that the amnesty declared by Pinochet's regime was not applicable to cases in which people disappeared, because the absence of the victims' bodies meant the crime committed was kidnapping, not murder. Thus the crimes committed continued beyond the 1978 deadline established by the regime.

In Chile, military courts can bring charges against civilians for sedition, which is defined as any comment that may affect the morale of the armed forces or police. As the offended party is the armed forces, the military tribunal plays the role of victim, prosecutor, and judge. Physical abuse of prisoners, particularly by the Carabinero uniformed police, remains a problem.

Most laws limiting political expression and civil liberties were eliminated by constitutional reforms in 1989. However, a 1958 State Security Law punishes those who "defame, libel, or calumniate" the president, government ministers, parliamentarians, senior judges, and the commanders in chief of the armed forces. In January 1998 two journalists were jailed overnight for saying that a former supreme court justice, facing allegations of narcotics-related corruption and two impeachment motions, was "old, ugly, and had a murky past."

Scores of publications present all points of view, although self-censorship regarding Chile's recent political history is widespread. (For example, following a landmark January 1998 decision by a Chilean judge to launch a criminal investigation over Pinochet's presumed role in mass killings, Chilean newspapers buried the story in their

inside pages.) Radio is both public and private. The national television network is state-run, but open to all political voices. However, certain movies have been banned. In 1999, a Chilean judge ordered the immediate confiscation of all copies of *The Black Book of Chilean Justice*, a well-researched exposé of corruption in the judiciary. Its author, journalist Alejandra Matus, was forced to flee to the United States.

Chile has a strong trade union movement. Government corruption is comparatively minor, when compared to other governments in the region, although military graft has been allowed to remain uninvestigated. Chile has around one million indigenous people, nearly all of them Mapuches. A 1993 indigenous rights law guaranteed that Indian lands could not be embargoed, sold, expropriated, or taxed. New development projects, promoted by the government, continue to threaten Mapuche lands in the south of Chile, where highly charged land disputes have resulted in the region's being dubbed the country's "little Chiapas." The appointment of a non-Native American to head the government's Indian development agency was viewed by Mapuches as emblematic of the agency's failure to protect them. In 1999, Indian rights groups, which have few ties to traditional political parties, became increasingly radicalized in the face of government inaction.

China

Polity: Communist one-party
Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Economy: Mixed statist
Status: Not Free
Population: 1,254,100,000
PPP: \$3,130
Life Expectancy: 71
Ethnic Groups: Han Chinese (92 percent), Tibetan, Mongol, Korean, Manchu, and other (8 percent)
Capital: Beijing



Overview:

China's leaders marked 50 years of Communist Party rule in October 1999 with massive, tightly controlled festivities in Beijing, while ordinary Chinese contended with rising unemployment, weak economic growth, and continued, rampant corruption and arbitrary rule in a period of wrenching economic and social change. During the year, authorities escalated a crackdown on political dissidents, labor and peasant activists, and religious leaders.

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, following victory over the Nationalist Kuomintang. Mao's death in 1976 largely ended the brutal, mass ideological campaigns that had politicized nearly every aspect of daily life and had resulted in millions of deaths. Deng Xiaoping emerged as paramount leader and, in December 1978, began China's gradual move from central planning to a market economy.

The April 1989 death of Hu Yaobang, who in 1986 had been ousted as CCP secretary general for tolerating student demonstrations, touched off weeks of student-led

pro-democracy protests in Beijing and other cities that ended in the bloody army crackdown around Tiananmen Square on June 3-4, 1989. Hardliner Jiang Zemin, the Shanghai mayor and party boss, replaced the relatively moderate Zhao Ziyang as CCP secretary general.

After a period in which hardliners appeared to control policy decisions, in early 1992 Deng signaled support for market reforms by making a highly symbolic visit to two Special Economic Zones on the southern coast. Jiang assumed the presidency in 1993, and since then the CCP has staked its postrevolutionary legitimacy on raising living standards through modest economic reform, while curbing dissent.

Deng remained paramount leader until his death in February 1997. At the CCP's 15th Congress in September 1997, Jiang consolidated his authority by ousting several potential rivals from top posts and forcing several military figures out of politics.

At the 1998 annual session of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress (NPC), Zhu Rongji, the architect of the economic reform process since the mid-1990s, took over as premier from Li Peng. The NPC also confirmed Hu Jintao, the youngest member of the CCP politburo's seven-member standing committee and the presumed heir apparent to Jiang, as politburo president. In December, authorities sentenced three leaders of the fledgling opposition China Democracy Party (CDP) to jail terms of up to 13 years.

In 1999, authorities arrested scores of second-tier organizers of the banned CDP and other dissidents in advance of the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown. In April, some 10,000 members of the mystical Falun Gong sect protested outside the leadership compound in Beijing to demand official status for their beliefs in what was the biggest demonstration in the capital since 1989. Following revelations that many party members and senior military officers belonged to the group, authorities banned Falun Gong on July 22 and detained thousands of followers, releasing most shortly afterward. In late December, authorities sentenced four Falun Gong practitioners in Dalian city to labor camps after they posted on the Internet details of police mistreatment of them. Some 70 million people are believed to follow Falun Gong.

The crackdown on perceived threats to CCP authority came in the context of continued economic problems. Following several years of rapid economic growth, in 1998 the government began resorting to heavy infrastructure spending to boost economic growth in the face of weak domestic consumption and slowing exports and foreign direct investment. State-owned enterprises (SOE) produce less than half of total goods but employ more than half of urban workers, and their debts account for most of the nonperforming loans in the largely insolvent banking system. Efforts to shut down or privatize most small- and medium-size SOEs by the middle of the next decade have led to millions of layoffs and violent worker protests in a country with minimal welfare benefits and limited worker rights.

In recent years, farmers have also staged numerous protests over arbitrary taxes, official corruption, and low grain prices. Meanwhile, government social policies continue to favor urban areas, and economic policies favor the booming coast, contributing to widening income inequalities, limited rural development, and a "floating population" of 80 million to 100 million migrants that has sought work in the cities.

In recent years, authorities have arbitrarily detained thousands of people and committed torture and other abuses in the vast northwestern Xinjiang "Autonomous Region," where 7 million Turkic-speaking Uighurs and other, smaller Muslim groups ac-

cuse Beijing of exploiting the region's rich mineral resources, controlling religious affairs, and altering the demographic balance by encouraging an influx of Han Chinese who are rewarded with top jobs. While most dissent is peaceful, since 1996 Uighur activists have clashed violently with police on several occasions and are suspected in several bombings and assassinations. In August, Amnesty International said it had recorded 190 executions in Xinjiang since 1997, mostly of Uighurs convicted for "subversion" or "terrorism" in unfair trials.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Chinese citizens lack the democratic means to change their government. The CCP holds absolute power, has imprisoned nearly all active dissidents, uses the judiciary as a tool of state control, and severely restricts freedom of speech, press, association, and religion. China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1998 but has not ratified it, and compliance has been limited.

In practice there is little separation between party and state. The National People's Congress is nominally the highest organ of state authority under the 1982 constitution, but in practice the body has little independent power and has never voted to reject legislation. However, in recent years delegates have registered protest votes over the government's handling of rising crime rates and other issues.

Under the 1987 Village Committees Organic Law, some 60 percent of the country's 928,000 village bodies are chosen through local elections. However, only pre-screened CCP candidates and some independents can compete. Moreover, unelected CCP secretaries have far greater powers than the elected leaders, and key administrative powers are held by county, rather than village, governments. Independents have won seats in many villages, but throughout the country balloting is characterized by irregularities and unfair procedures. The CCP has not indicated that it plans to extend the balloting to the county level or higher.

The CCP controls the judiciary and directs verdicts and sentencing in sensitive cases. Judges are poorly trained and are generally retired military officers selected on the basis of party loyalty. Bribery of judges is rampant, and local governments frequently intervene in ordinary cases. Suspects are routinely tortured to extract confessions.

Nevertheless, in recent years authorities have made some efforts to strengthen the rule of law and make the legal system less arbitrary in nonpolitical cases. Revisions to the Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) in 1997 granted a greater role to defense lawyers and increased their access to defendants; limited administrative detention to 30 days; ended the presumption of guilt (although it did not establish a presumption of innocence); and barred judges from ordering quick trial and execution for crimes that allegedly "seriously endanger public order." However, these protections are apparently honored mainly in the breach. Moreover, the revisions strengthened the role of party-controlled "adjudicative committees" in handling major cases and introduced new summary trial procedures in certain cases. In March 1999, the judiciary opened many trials to the public, although politically sensitive cases remain closed.

In recent years, ordinary citizens have increasingly sued township governments, employers, state enterprises, and local police in an unprecedented challenge to what had been unquestioned official authority over their lives, in some cases winning out-of-court settlements or outright victories. Plaintiffs are also increasingly winning class-action lawsuits. The courts generally accept only lawsuits that dovetail with central

government policies and priorities, such as finding an orderly means to handle labor grievances, or that are useful in curbing arbitrary action by increasingly autonomous local officials. Moreover, judges are often reluctant to rule against local governments, which provide their salary and appointments. Local governments have responded to lawsuits by harassing the plaintiffs, and favorable judgments are hard to enforce.

Despite the CPL revisions mentioned above, authorities can still arbitrarily detain dissidents and ordinary criminals through several extrajudicial administrative procedures, contributing to a vast network of forced labor camps. A system of *laogai*, or "reform through labor," camps hold prisoners without trial in brutal conditions, many for political or religious views. In September, the New York-based Human Rights in China reported that police detain up to 2 million illegal urban migrants, street children, beggars, and others each year in "custody and repatriation" centers that lack rudimentary sanitation and other basic needs.

The 1997 criminal code revisions also eliminated the category of "counterrevolutionary" crimes, under which courts have imprisoned thousands of dissidents. But the revisions also expanded the category of "endangering state security," itself a sweeping, undefined term that, along with the crime of "leaking state secrets," is applied to a broad range of political and nonpolitical activities. Human Rights Watch/Asia noted the revised code incorporates key elements of the 1993 State Security Law, which can be used to punish Chinese groups and individuals for working with foreign organizations or individuals, expands the criminal concept of "state secrets," and creates a separate article aimed at pro-independence and autonomy movements in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Tibet. (A separate report on Tibet appears in the Related Territories section.)

The government is likely holding several thousand political prisoners, although the exact number is difficult to determine. They include hundreds of Chinese who are imprisoned for their peaceful participation in the 1989 pro-democracy protests. The leadership has thus far rejected calls to reassess the official verdict of the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations as a counterrevolutionary rebellion. By early August 1999, courts had sentenced seven members of the CDP to prison terms generally ranging between 8 and 13 years on subversion charges, with some trials lasting just a few hours. Unrelenting police harassment prevents many dissidents from holding jobs or otherwise leading normal lives.

Authorities routinely abuse prisoners and often encourage inmates to beat political prisoners. Nearly 70 crimes are punishable by the death penalty, and in recent years the state has executed numerous people for nonviolent offenses including hooliganism, theft of farm animals or rice, or forging of tax invoices. Authorities have executed others during crackdowns on corruption and drug trafficking, often immediately following summary trials.

Although the media have diversified considerably in recent years in terms of subjects covered, the government continues to maintain tight control over political content. In recent years there has been a proliferation of nonpolitical talk-radio shows and tabloid magazines, and the market-driven press is allowed to report on inefficient government agencies, environmental damages, official corruption, and other issues that dovetail with Beijing's interests. Yet the media never directly criticize the CCP's monopoly on power or top leaders. At least a dozen journalists are in prison over their reporting. In 1998 and 1999, the State Press and Publishing Bureau and the Commu-

nist Party's Department of Propaganda warned, suspended, or banned several liberal magazines, newspapers, and book publishers, or purged their staffs.

In recent years, authorities have issued regulations to control Internet access and content for the country's one million users and have closed dozens of Internet Web sites. In January 1999, a court sentenced an Internet entrepreneur in Shanghai to two years in prison for providing e-mail addresses to a U.S.-based online magazine, the first person in China to be imprisoned on charges of subversion related to Internet use.

Beijing tolerates the existence of several thousand nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on areas the government has neglected and does not consider politically threatening, including the environment and the rights of women and migrant workers. Authorities use a complex process to weed out groups that could potentially oppose the government. State Council Order No. 43 of 1989 banned "identical or similar social organizations . . . within the same administrative area," thereby outlawing independent labor organizations or other NGOs that serve a function ostensibly covered by an existing government-sponsored organization. NGOs must report to specific government departments, and authorities can arbitrarily shut them at any time.

Freedom of assembly is limited. In recent years authorities have tolerated numerous public protests regarding labor, housing, and other ostensibly local issues but have forcibly dispersed others, particularly in the countryside. In August, a Hunan province court imprisoned nine farmers for organizing a January protest against arbitrary local taxation that drew more than 10,000 farmers.

The government tightly controls organized religious practice. Authorities pressure Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to register with either the official Catholic Patriotic Association or its Protestant counterpart. In return for an easing of harassment, churches must accept Beijing's power to appoint clergy; monitor religious membership, funding, and activities; and regulate the publication and distribution of religious books and other materials. Students at state-approved seminaries must pass exams on political knowledge. Official Catholic churches cannot maintain loyalty to the Vatican.

While many unregistered Protestant churches and openly pro-Vatican Catholic groups are able to function, scores have been raided, closed, or demolished. Officials have detained hundreds of bishops, priests, and ordinary Protestant and Catholic worshippers for months and, in some cases, years. Authorities particularly target churches with unorthodox styles of worship. In Xinjiang, authorities have used the pretext of quelling ethnic separatism to place sharp restrictions on construction of mosques and Islamic religious publishing and education, and have shut down dozens of mosques and Koranic schools. Only five religions are officially recognized in China, with all others being *prima facie* illegal.

China's harsh family planning policy limits urban couples to one child, while in rural areas parents of a girl can petition authorities for permission to have a son. Couples adhering to the policy receive preferential education, food, and medical benefits, while those failing to comply face a loss of jobs and benefits, fines, or even forced abortion and sterilization. Failure to pay the fines sometimes results in seizure of livestock and other goods and destruction of homes. Dissidents in Xinjiang say authorities often force Muslim women to have abortions or to undergo sterilization after their first child.

Women face social and economic discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and tend to be far likelier to be laid off in state enterprise restructurings. In

rural areas there are high incidences of women being abducted or otherwise sold into prostitution or marriage, and high female suicide rates.

All unions must belong to the CCP-controlled All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and independent trade unions are illegal. Private factory workers are often paid subminimum wages, are forced to work overtime, have no contracts, and are subject to arbitrary dismissal. Most prisoners are required to work, receiving little if any compensation. Authorities occasionally permit workers to hold strikes against dangerous conditions and low wages, generally in foreign-owned factories.

China's privatization process has been rife with allegations that many companies have been sold cheaply to insiders. In other cases, managers reportedly threatened workers to buy shares or risk losing their jobs. An estimated 25 percent of the economy is now in private hands, which has helped to create a new urban middle class with increasing freedom to work, travel, enter into relationships, and buy homes as they choose. The successes of both the Special Economic Zones in the south and the small-scale township and village enterprises in the countryside have also helped remove tens of millions of rural Chinese from dependence on the *danwei*, or state work unit. However, for many urban dwellers the *danwei* controls everything from the right to change residence to permission to have a child. The government has also loosened the system of *hakou*, or residence permit, to give workers more flexibility in filling jobs in areas of fast economic growth. The massive Three Gorges Dam, which is being built on the Yangtze River, will displace some 1.3 million people by its completion in 2008. The resettlement process has reportedly been plagued by resistance from local residents, poor farming conditions in the resettlement areas, and corruption.

Colombia

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy (insurgencies)

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 38,600,000

PPP: \$6,810

Life Expectancy: 69

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (58 percent), white (20 percent), mulatto (14 percent), Black (4 percent), mixed black-Indian (3 percent), Indian (1 percent)

Capital: Bogota

Ratings Change: Colombia's political rights rating changed from 3 to 4 due to the increasing amount of national territory now under the control of undemocratic forces and criminal elements.

Political Rights: 4*

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Efforts by Colombian president Andres Pastrana to make peace with the country's largest guerrilla group—the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—moved forward fitfully throughout 1999, the object of waning faith from a war-weary public. As

the government moved very slowly to reign in spiraling right-wing paramilitary violence, the negotiating guerrillas offered frequent tests of will, including armed offensives, that jeopardized the talks. Meanwhile other, leftist rebel groups spurned the parley and kept fighting. (According to the Colombian army, the FARC and smaller National Liberation Army raided 67 towns and villages in the first 11 months of 1999, compared to just 27 attacks during the same period last year.) Meanwhile, improvements in military intelligence gathering and ground troop coordination have bolstered army morale. In October a major blow was struck against regrouping remnants of the Medellin and Cali drug cartels, although its practical effects on illegal narcotics trafficking was uncertain. According to the Gen. Barry McCaffrey, U.S. drug czar, coca leaf production has doubled in the past three years.

Following independence from Spain in 1819, and after a long period of federal government with what are now Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama, the Republic of Colombia was established in 1886. Politics have since been dominated by the Liberal and Conservative parties, whose leadership has largely been drawn from the traditional elite. Under President Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994) of the Liberal Party, a new constitution was approved that limits presidents to a single four-year term and provides for an elected bicameral congress, with a 102-member senate and a 161 -member chamber of representatives.

Modern Colombia has been marked by the corrupt machine politics of the Liberals and Conservatives, left-wing guerrilla insurgencies, right-wing paramilitary violence, the emergence of vicious drug cartels, and gross human rights violations committed by all sides.

In the 1994 legislative elections, the Liberals retained a majority in both houses of congress. Ernesto Samper, a former economic development minister, won the Liberal presidential nomination. The Conservative candidate was Pastrana, a former mayor of Bogota and the son of a former Colombian president. Both candidates pledged to continue Gaviria's free-market reforms.

Samper won in a June 1994 runoff election, with 50.4 percent, besting Pastrana by 1.8 percent. With strong U.S. encouragement, Samper presided over the dismantling of the Cali drug cartel, most of whose leaders were captured in 1995. The arrests, however, netted persuasive evidence that the cartel gave \$6 million to the president's campaign, with Samper's approval. In February 1996 the country's prosecutor-general formally charged Samper with illegal enrichment, fraud, falsifying documents, and cover-up of his campaign financing. In June the house, dominated by Samper's Liberals, voted 111 to 43 to clear Samper on grounds of insufficient evidence.

The murder of journalists and human rights workers, repeated humiliation of the military by leftist insurgents, a continued upswing in paramilitary violence linked to the military, and army claims of the subversive intent of unarmed groups dominated much of the news from Colombia in 1997. In the June 21, 1998, election, Pastrana won the presidency of Latin America's third most populous country in an impressive victory over the Liberal Party candidate, Interior Minister Horacio Serpa. In an effort to consolidate the peace process, in November Pastrana oversaw the regrouping by FARC guerrillas in, and the withdrawal by a dispirited military from, a so-called demilitarized zone of five southern districts. The move, strongly resisted by the military, gave the guerrillas de facto control over a territory the size of Switzerland.

In 1999, talks with the FARC sputtered along, burdened by the sweeping political,

social, and economic reforms being demanded by the rebels and by the government's inability to reign in the paramilitaries, as well as by military reluctance to grant the FARC concessions beyond the de facto partitioning of the country. (Guerrilla groups now control some 40 percent of the national territory.) In September a right-wing death squad murdered Jesus Bajarano, a former government peace advisor. The governments of neighboring Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil also expressed concern about the deadly violence spilling over into their countries. Colombia resumed extradition of its nationals after a nine-year hiatus, handing over two top drug suspects to U.S. authorities. In August, Moody's Investor's Service stripped Colombia of its prized investment-grade credit rating, severely affecting the country's economic reputation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through elections. The 1991 constitution provides for broader participation in the system, including two reserved seats in the congress for the country's small Indian minority. Political violence, and a generalized belief that corruption renders elections meaningless, has helped to limit voter participation, although an impressive 60 percent voted in the 1998 presidential contest. In 1998, Pastrana proposed a broad reform of the political system designed to combat corruption and promote greater public participation in decision making. He also offered the guerrillas a presidential pardon and guarantees for their post peace participation in legal political activities.

The justice system remains slow and compromised by corruption and extortion. Strong evidence suggests that the Cali drug cartel, through its lawyers, virtually dictated the 1993 penal code reform to congress. It allows traffickers who turn themselves in as much as a two-thirds sentence reduction and the dismissal of any pending charges in which they do not plead. In the past eight years, 290 judges have been assassinated. The civilian-led Ministry of Defense is responsible for internal security and oversees both the armed forces and the National Police; civilian management of the armed forces, however, is limited. The country's national police, once a focal point of official corruption, have been reorganized and are now Colombia's most respected security institution. Colombia's 165 prisons, which were built for 32,000 people but hold more than 47,000, are frequent sites of murders and riots.

Constitutional rights regarding free expression and the freedom to organize political parties, civic groups, and labor unions are severely restricted by political and drug-related violence and the government's inability to guarantee the security of its citizens. Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world, and in 1999 alone had more than 2,200 kidnappings and 25,000 murders unrelated to the rebel insurgency. Political violence in Colombia continues to take more lives than in any other country in the hemisphere, and civilians are prime victims. In the past decade an estimated 35,000 have died and about 1.5 million have been displaced from their homes, 308,000 in 1998 alone. More than 90 percent of violent crimes go unsolved.

Human rights violations have soared to unprecedented highs, with atrocities being committed by all sides in the conflict. Human rights workers in Colombia are frequently murdered by an underfunded military frequently lacking in personal and tactical discipline, and by rightist paramilitary forces. The growth of the paramilitary groups, in the pay of narcotics traffickers and large landowners and protected by the military, is out of control. Although since taking office Pastrana has sacked four generals accused of

paramilitary ties, government efforts to sever ties to the right-wing militia remain tepid, and these groups operate freely at the local level. In May 1999, police shut down a huge paramilitary drug laboratory. Left-wing guerrillas, some of whom also protect narcotics production facilities and drug traffickers, also systematically violate human rights, with victims including Sunday churchgoers and airline passengers. The FARC guerrillas also regularly extort payments from hundreds of businessmen throughout the country. All sides operate with a high degree of impunity.

Journalists are frequently the victims of political and revenge violence. More than 120 journalists have been murdered in the past decade, and many were killed for reporting on drug trafficking and corruption. Another category of killings is known as "social cleansing"—the elimination of drug addicts, street children, and other marginal citizens by vigilante groups often linked to police.

There are approximately 80 distinct ethnic groups among Colombia's 800,000-plus indigenous inhabitants. These Native Americans are frequently the targets of violence despite their seeking to remain neutral in the armed conflict. In 1998, some 700 indigenous people were murdered. In 1999, FARC guerrillas kidnapped three U.S. Native American rights activists and killed them. Indian claims to land and resources are under challenge from government ministries and multinational corporations.

Murders of trade union activists continued, as Colombia remained the most dangerous country in the world for organized labor. More than 2,500 trade union activists and leaders have been killed in the last 12 years. Labor leaders are targets of attacks by paramilitary groups, guerrillas, narcotics traffickers, and other union rivals. According to the United Nations, some 948,000 Colombian children under the age of 14 work in "unacceptable" conditions.

Comoros

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 6*

Economy: Capitalist **Civil Liberties:** 4

Population: 600,000 **Status:** Partly Free

PPP: \$1,530

Life Expectancy: 59

Ethnic Groups: Antalote, Cafre, Makoa, Oimatsaha, Sakalava

Capital: Moroni

Ratings Change: Comoros' political rights rating changed from 5 to 6 due to a military takeover in April and the suspension of democratic institutions.



Overview:

A peace agreement in April 1999 sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) between separatists and the interim government of President Tadjidine Ben Said Massonde was to give greater autonomy to the islands of Anjouan and Moheli, and provide for a rotating presidency. But the deal sparked violent demonstrations targeting people originally from Anjouan living on Grande Comore. On April 30, the army chief of staff, Colonel Azali Assoumani, seized power, suspending the constitution and dissolving all political institutions, including the government and parliament. Anger had been grow-

ing in the tiny Indian Ocean islands nation over Massonde's delay in organizing new elections following the sudden death in November 1998 of President Mohamed Taki Abdoukarim amidst the continuing secession struggle of Anjouan and Moheli.

One group of separatists on Anjouan refuses to accept the April peace deal and favors full independence. Another faction prefers limited autonomy. Both groups cite neglect and discrimination by the central government on Grande Comore. The OAU in December threatened sanctions against Anjouan unless it accepted the peace accord, but hardliners rejected the ultimatum. Anjouan voted for self-determination in a 1997 referendum, repulsed an attempted invasion by the government, and then dissolved into violence as rival separatist groups took up arms against each other. The failure of hardliners to accept the April 1999 peace deal has led to victimization of Anjouanese residents on Grande Comore, which helped spark the April 30 coup. Fighting erupted again on Anjouan in September when hardliners forced their moderate rivals off the island.

Separatists on Mohdli have also declared independence, but appear more willing to compromise. Mayotte Island, the fourth island of the Comorian archipelago, voted to remain a French overseas territory in a 1974 referendum and today enjoys a far higher, French-subsidized standard of living.

Two mercenary invasions and 18 other coups and attempted coups have shaken the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros since independence in 1975. Ahmed Abdallah Abderrahman, the first president of the Comoros, was overthrown by an army coup shortly after independence. The French mercenary Bob Denard aided Abdallah's successful countercoup in 1978. With Denard's backing as head of the army and presidential guard, Abdallah was returned unopposed in 1978 and 1984 one-party show elections. In 1989, he was allegedly assassinated by his own troops on Denard's orders. Subsequent unrest drew French military intervention, and Denard fled the country.

In 1990, in the country's first contested elections, Supreme Court Justice Said Mohamed Djohara won a six-year term as president. A September 1995 attempted coup by elements of the Comoros security forces, which were aided by foreign mercenaries and again led by Bob Denard, was reversed by French soldiers. President Djohar was flown into exile and not allowed to resume office. An interim government ruled for five months until President Taki was elected in 1996 in internationally monitored elections that were considered free and fair. France reestablished its military presence in 1996 at Taki's invitation. Divisive personal, clan, and inter-island rivalries persist.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Comorians exercised their constitutional right to change their government democratically in open elections for the first time in the 1996 parliamentary and presidential elections. Taki won the presidency in a runoff election with more than 60 percent of the vote. A new constitution, adopted in an October 1996 referendum, increased the role of Islamic law and reduced local autonomy, which had helped to spark the Anjouan rebellion. The conservative Islamic main opposition party also held several seats in the national assembly. The new military government dissolved the national assembly and suspended the constitution. In November 1999, however, Assoumani appointed a prime minister and invited the spectrum of political parties to join him in forming a government. Anjouan held its own legislative elections in August 1999. Secessionists won all the seats in voting that was marked by some intimidation and a low turnout.

The Comorian legal system is based on Islamic law and remnants of the French legal code. Islam is the official state religion. Non-Muslims are permitted to practice, but not proselytize. The largely independent judiciary is headed by a supreme court. Most minor disputes are settled by village elders or a civilian court of first instance. Harsh prison conditions are marked by severe overcrowding and the lack of sanitation, medical attention, and proper diet. The Comoros Human Rights Association operates in a restrained manner reportedly because its civil-servant members fear that strong criticism of the government could cost them their jobs.

Freedoms of expression and association are not constitutionally guaranteed. The semi-official weekly *Al-Watwan* and several private newspapers sharply critical of the government are published in the capital. All, however, are believed to exercise extensive self-censorship. A few private television and radio stations operate without overt governmental interference. Transmissions from French-controlled Mayotte are easily received, and some people have access to satellite and other international broadcasting. Foreign publications are readily available.

A group of young journalists opposed to the independence movement began broadcasting from Radio Ushababi in June 1999 on Anjouan. They have suffered persistent harassment from administrative authorities and security forces, including summonings and interrogations. They have also been physically threatened on a number of occasions by separatist militiamen. On August 9 the station was forced to suspend broadcasting because of security threats. In 1997 the same group of journalists was forced to cease publishing the newspaper *Ushababi* because of similar pressure.

Women possess constitutional protections despite the influence of Islamic law. In practice, however, they enjoy little political or economic power and have far fewer opportunities for education or salaried employment. Economic hardship has forced more and more young girls, known as *mpambe*, into domestic servitude. They receive room and board but little or no pay.

Trade unions and strikes are permitted, but collective bargaining is rare in the country's small formal sector. Comorians are among the world's poorest people, and the ongoing secessionist crisis has further damaged an already tenuous, agriculture-based economy. Remittances from the large overseas Comorian community sustain many families. The country relies heavily on foreign aid.

Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)

Polity: Military-backed dictatorship

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 2,700,000

PPP: \$1,620

Life Expectancy: 47

Ethnic Groups: Kongo (48 percent), Sangha (20 percent), Teke (17 percent), M'Bochi, others

Capital: Brazzaville

Ratings Change: Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville's) political rights rating changed from 7 to 6 due to the reestablishment of contact between the government and some of the country's political leaders in exile, and the signing of a preliminary peace accord.

Political Rights: 6*

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free



Overview:

The military ruler Denis Sassou-Nguesso and a number of senior rebel figures signed a preliminary peace accord in December 1999 after the government made substantial gains on the battlefield. The agreement, which was brokered by Gabonese President Omar Bongo, calls for a halt to fighting, an amnesty for combatants who voluntarily disarm, reorganization of the military, and an eventual return to democratic rule. An earlier agreement was signed in November. Ousted Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas criticized that accord as a sham, saying it did not represent his movement, although he is considered marginally more flexible than overthrown President Pascal Lissouba, who still considers himself Congo's leader. Both have lived in exile since Sassou-Nguesso overthrew their government in October 1997 and have indicated a willingness to negotiate. They were not signatories to the November and December agreements.

While government forces have won control of the capital, and other main towns, fighting continues in the forest interior. Up to 250,000 people, or about half of Brazzaville's population, fled fighting early in the year that pitted Sassou-Nguesso's troops and Cobra militia against the Cocoye and Ninja militias siding with Lissouba and Kolelas.

Reports of atrocities against civilians are widespread, including arbitrary detentions, executions, and rapes by both government forces and rebel militias. A United Nations report in November 1999 said anarchy exists in rural areas of the south, sending farmers fleeing fertile land. According to the report, tens of thousands of women have been raped, more than 500,000 people have been made homeless in the fighting, and a whole generation of youth has resorted to a life of plunder and extortion.

Civil wars in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo and nearby Angola have made large numbers of weapons and fighters available to fuel the conflict. Sassou-Nguesso has been backed by Angolan air, armor, and infantry units and by political support from France. He also reportedly received financial aid from the French Elf Aquitaine oil company, whose monopoly over Congo oil exports was threatened by Lissouba's policy of diversifying Congo's trade partners.

A decade after its independence from France, a 1970 coup established a Marxist state in Congo. In 1979, General Sassou-Nguesso seized power and maintained one-

party rule as head of the Congolese Workers' Party. Domestic and international pressure forced his acceptance of a national conference leading to open, multiparty elections in 1992. Lissouba, of the Pan-African Union for Social Democracy, won a clear victory over Kolelas, of the Congolese Party for Genuine Democracy and Development, in a second-round presidential runoff that excluded Sassou-Nguesso, who had run third in the first round. Legislative elections produced no clear majority. After an anti-Lissouba coalition formed, the president dissolved the assembly and called for fresh polls. Legislative polls in 1993 produced a presidential majority, but were marred by numerous irregularities. Several parties boycotted the second round.

The disputed elections led to armed conflict. In late 1993, Brazzaville suffered what proved to be only a foretaste of the far greater violence that was to occur among ethnic-based militias in 1997. Sassou-Nguesso went on to build a private army in his native northern Congo and forcibly retook in 1997 the presidency that he had lost in a free election in 1992.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sassou-Nguesso, who received only 17 percent of the vote in the 1992 presidential elections, has promised to conduct open, multiparty elections in 2001. But sharp ethnic divisions among the country's nearly three million people can be expected to produce electoral results similar to those in 1992, when voting along ethnic lines gave him little support outside his minority ethnic base in the north.

A new constitution has been drafted and is expected to be completed sometime in the year 2000. A 75-member transitional assembly was appointed by Sassou-Nguesso, but exercises no real power. The Congolese exercised their constitutional right to elect their president and national assembly deputies to five-year terms of office through competitive multiparty elections for the first time in 1992 and 1993, respectively. President Lissouba's 1992 victory at the polls was widely considered to be free and fair, but 1993 legislative election results were disputed by the opposition. Presidential polls set for July 1997 were preempted by the civil war that returned Sassou-Nguesso to power.

Freedom of assembly and association is constitutionally guaranteed, but interior ministry permission for public gatherings is occasionally denied, and there is a real threat of violence by government security forces or other armed factions. Human rights groups such as Congolese Human Rights Watch continue to operate, but often with great difficulty. Religious freedom is respected in law and practice.

There are numerous and persistent reports of atrocities against civilians committed by both sides in the conflict. Victims describe persecution by soldiers and their militia allies at army roadblocks and recount being used as human shields by rebel militia forces. In November the army said any of its soldiers found guilty of committing abuses against civilians would be punished. Most of the president's soldiers are from northern ethnic groups, which exacerbates tensions between northerners and southerners. Aid agencies warn of a humanitarian crisis with up to 500,000 displaced people suffering from malnutrition and oppression. Tens of thousands of refugees have poured into neighboring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon.

Scarce resources and understaffing create a backlog of court cases and long periods of pretrial detention in extremely harsh prison conditions. The three-tier formal court system of local courts, courts of appeal, and the supreme court was generally considered to be politically independent until the civil war. In rural areas, traditional

courts retain broad jurisdiction, especially in civil matters. In September 1999 authorities set up two military tribunals to try soldiers accused of committing atrocities.

Freedom of expression is limited. The government monopoly over electronic media is complete except for a radio station operated by political allies of Sassou-Nguesso. However, broadcasts from neighboring countries are widely heard. A July 1996 law imposed registration requirements and severe penalties for slander and defamation. A 1995 law also provides stronger penalties for defamation of senior officials, requires media to "show loyalty to the government," and permits seizure of private printing works during emergencies. There is extensive self-censorship.

Women suffer extensive legal and societal discrimination despite constitutional protections. Access to education and employment opportunities, especially in the countryside, are limited, and civil codes regarding family and marriage formalize women's inferior status. Adultery is legal for men, but not for women. Polygyny is legal, while polyandry is not. Violence against women reportedly is widespread and increased substantially during the war. Discrimination against Pygmy groups is also reported. Many Pygmies are effectively held in lifetime servitude through customary ties to Bantu "patrons."

Workers' rights to join trade unions and to strike are legally protected. Six labor confederations operate with various linkages to the government and political parties. Unions are legally required to accept nonbinding arbitration before striking, but many strikes have proceeded without adherence to this process by soldiers at army roadblocks.

Congo, Democratic Republic of (Kinshasa)

Polity: Military-backed dictatorship
Economy: Capitalist- statist
Population: 49,000,000
PPP: \$355
Life Expectancy: 49
Ethnic Groups: More than 200 ethnicities, mostly Bantu
Capital: Kinshasa

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The government of President Laurent Kabila, rebel groups, and neighboring countries signed a peace accord in August to end the civil war that erupted a year earlier. But by the end of 1999, the ceasefire had broken down in several areas, rebels controlled at least one-third of the vast country, and lawlessness prevailed. The three main rebel groups seeking to oust Kabila—the Movement for the Liberation of Congo and two factions of the Congolese Rally for Democracy—met in December 1999 to coordinate their political strategy ahead of a planned national conference on the country's future as provided for in the peace accord. Splits in the rebel ranks and disagreements between their backers, Uganda and Rwanda, have hindered both peace efforts and their military endeavor.

A small United Nations technical observer team has begun work, but insecurity

has prevented the deployment of an initial group of 500 peacekeepers. The peace accord, which was brokered by the UN, Organization of African Unity (OAU), and Southern African Development Community (SADC), provided for a Joint Military Commission to oversee implementation of the agreement and carry out initial peacekeeping duties. It is also to gather information on troop locations and the release of prisoners of war.

Serious human rights abuses against civilians continue to be perpetrated by both government and rebel forces, including arbitrary detentions, killings, and rapes. Opposition supporters, journalists, and human rights workers are routinely arrested and harassed, and public demonstrations are forbidden.

The war has drawn forces from at least eight countries into the fighting, including Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan on the side of Kabila, and Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi on the part of the rebels. (Neither Sudan nor Burundi have admitted their involvement.) Former Rwandan militia, former Rwandan armed forces members, and Mai-Mai guerrillas have also joined in repelling the rebel attack.

A longtime guerrilla fighter, Laurent Kabila came to power in May 1997 after a seven-month advance backed by Rwanda and Uganda across what was then Zaire. He easily tapped into popular hatred for the country's dictator of 32 years, Mobutu Sese Seko, who fled to Morocco and died of cancer shortly after Kabila's takeover. Many of Mobutu's former supporters are now allied with the rebels. Kabila today holds all executive and legislative power. The Rwandan and Zairian Tutsi who helped him to seize power were largely dismissed from their posts by mid-year 1998, which helped spark the new rebellion. Kabila now mainly relies on a narrow base of backers who share his Katangan ethnicity.

The Belgian Congo, the vast area of central Africa that is today the Democratic Republic of Congo, was exploited with a brutality that was notable even by colonial standards. The country was a center for Cold War rivalries from Belgium's withdrawal in 1960 until well after Colonel Joseph Désiré Mobutu seized power in 1964. The pro-Western Mobutu was forgiven for severe repression and financial excesses that made him one of the world's richest men and his countrymen among the world's poorest people. Domestic agitation for democratization forced Mobutu to open the political process in 1990. In 1992, his Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR), the sole legal party after 1965, and the Sacred Union of the Radical Opposition and Allied Civil Society, a coalition of 200 groups, joined scores of others in a national conference to establish a High Council of the Republic to oversee a democratic transition. Mobutu manipulated and delayed the transition, but civil society grew stronger and the press became freer. Kabila has begun to reverse these advances.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo have never been permitted to choose or change their government through democratic and peaceful means. The transitional parliament has been dissolved, and President Kabila rules by decree. There are no elected representatives in the entire country, despite Kabila's promise to hold polls by April 1999. He replaced his own Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) with Popular People's Committees (CPPs). In theory, they are elected by local residents and mandated to exercise local government powers throughout the country, but opponents say they are a ruse for Kabila to legitimize his rule. Mobutu's successive unopposed presidential victories and legislative polls were little more than po-

litical theater. Infrastructure and institutions to support a free and fair election are almost entirely absent.

At least 400 political parties registered after their 1990 legalization, but they were later banned under Kabila when he took power. Although he eased restrictions with a new law in January, political leaders say the criteria are exceedingly complicated for official recognition. The law also gives broad powers to the ministry of interior to suspend or disband parties "in the event of violation of the law and emergency or the risk of serious public disorder." Unlike the government, rebels tolerated no level of nonviolent political opposition, using intimidation, arrest, and travel restrictions.

Congo's judiciary is not independent. The president may dismiss magistrates at will. Courts are grossly ineffective in protecting constitutional rights, and security forces and government officials generally act with impunity. Long periods of pretrial detention are common in prisons in which poor diet and medical care can be life threatening. A Court of Military Order increasingly delivered harsh sentences to civilians on questionable security and political convictions. It was originally established to improve discipline within the army and has ordered the execution of 250 people in its two years of existence. At least 30 mid- to local-level opposition supporters were detained and some jailed after brief and reportedly unfair trials in 1999, especially those linked to the popular Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) of Etienne Tshisekedi. Some were subjected to daily whippings. Kabila in December ordered the release of about 150 political prisoners, including a UDPS spokesman. For the first time, the Kabila government has authorized the departure of Tshisekedi, who has widespread popular support in the capital. He reportedly plans to travel to South Africa for medical treatment.

Serious human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, torture, beatings, and arbitrary detention, continue. Ethnic killings by both government and rebel forces have been reported. Ethnic tension is rife, particularly in the North and South Kivu areas in the east. Ethnic Tutsis there are said to face a growing threat by former Rwandan militia and Mai-Mai guerrillas. Numerous nongovernmental organizations, including human rights groups, operate despite sporadic harassment and intimidation, but a number of rights activists have fled the country since Kabila came to power. In May 1999, Kinshasa police arrested Laurent Kantu Lumpungu, chairman of the independent Association of Prison Officials, which had been critical of poor prison conditions. In one positive step, the government invited a UN special rapporteur on human rights to return to the country in February and August 1999 after having banned him in March 1997.

Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are sharply limited by decree. A number of independent newspapers are published in Kinshasa, but they are not widely circulated beyond the city. Church radio networks are growing, but the state-controlled broadcasting network reaches the largest numbers of citizens. In July the government banned the broadcasts of foreign radio and television programs in the country, including Radio France Internationale, the Voice of America, and the British Broadcasting Corp.

Independent journalists are frequently threatened, arrested, or attacked, which prompts self-censorship. Twenty journalists were detained for long periods in 1999, and 30 others spent less than 48 hours in detention for real or alleged press offenses. Eight journalists were victims of brutal or inhumane treatment in the course of their work. Eight others suffered threats or harassment. Common accusations included "re-

laying intelligence to the enemy," "discouraging the population of soldiers," and "divulging state secrets or defense secrets." When a targeted journalist cannot be found, editors, other journalists, visitors to the newspaper offices, or family members can be taken hostage. An army general imprisoned journalists at his residence for ten days.

In June, Kiangwe Buleya, editor of the weekly *Mukuba* and president of the Congolese National Freedom of Expression and Human Rights Defense Fund, was arrested on criminal libel charges. In August, the editor of the newspaper *Le Potentiel*, Modeste Mutinga Mutuishayi, was arrested by security agents at the newspaper's offices. Thierry Kalumba, editor of the newspaper *Vision*, was arrested in January for a story on weapon supplies to the rebels and was sentenced to four years in prison by the Court of Military Order for "divulging state secrets."

Freedom of religion is respected in practice, although religious groups must register with the government to be recognized. Despite constitutional protections, women face de facto discrimination, especially in rural areas. They also enjoy fewer employment and educational opportunities and often do not receive equal pay for equal work. Married women must receive their husband's permission to enter into many financial transactions. Violence against women has climbed with the proliferation of armed groups.

More than 100 new independent unions have registered since one-party rule ended in 1990. Previously, all unions had to affiliate with a confederation that was part of the ruling party.

Under Mobutu, the country's formal economy nearly ground to a halt. It has been further damaged by the ongoing war and competition for resources. Most of the country's approximately 48 million people live marginal lives as subsistence farmers despite vast resources of timber, diamonds, copper, and other minerals. The inflation rate has climbed considerably under Kabila, and he has been forced to rely on the dilapidated state-run diamond mine in Mbuji-Mayi for revenue. Rebels control other diamond areas. Reflecting its desperation for hard currency to help fund the war, the government at the end of 1999 prohibited the possession of foreign currency, requiring that it be deposited in Congolese banks. But few people have confidence in the country's banking system, and the move ended up having the opposite effect of further restricting the economy because it has become so difficult to import or export goods. Anyone found in possession of foreign currency could face a charge of treason, which carries the penalty of death.

↓ Costa Rica

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 3,600,000

PPP: \$6,650

Life Expectancy: 77

Ethnic Groups: White and mestizo (96 percent), Black (2 percent), Indian (1 percent), Chinese (1 percent)

Capital: San Jose

Trend Arrow: Costa Rica receives a downward trend arrow due to problems stemming from growing narcotics trafficking and use.

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

As a result of growing public malaise, after just one year in office, President Miguel Angel Rodriguez was forced in 1999 to forego the 155 percent pay increase, to \$250,000, he received at the end of the previous year. The growing use of Costa Rica as a transit country for cocaine shipments from South America continued to be a problem as one of San Jose's most senior judicial officials was charged with involvement in the narcotics trade, although he was later acquitted.

The Republic of Costa Rica achieved independence from Spain in 1821 and became a republic in 1848. Democratic government was instituted in 1899 and briefly interrupted in 1917 and again in 1948, when the country was torn by a brief but brutal civil war. The 1949 constitution, which bans the formation of a national army, has proved to be the most durable in Latin America.

The social democratic National Liberation Party (PLN), was the dominant party for nearly three decades. In the 1994 elections, Jose Maria Figueres narrowly defeated Rodriguez, a conservative congressman and respected economist, of the Social Christian Party (PUSC), the country's other principal political organization.

Figueres, son of the legendary former president Jose "Pepe" Figueres, campaigned against the neoliberal economic policies of the outgoing president Rafael A. Calderon, Jr., of the PUSC. Rodriguez proposed to deepen structural reforms.

The country's economic woes result in part from a vast reduction in levels of foreign aid and international lending from governments that had been eager to keep Communists at bay. Despite his earlier campaign pledges, Figueres' last two years in office were characterized by some of the free market policies championed by his opponent in the presidential elections.

In the February 1, 1998, presidential contest, Rodriguez returned as the PSUC's standard-bearer and bested, with 47 percent of the vote, the anticorruption maverick crusader Jose Miguel Corrales of the PLN, a former congressman and soccer star. The PSUC, however, failed to win a working majority in the unicameral national assembly and was forced to make an alliance with smaller parties to sustain its legislative program.

Just one year after Rodriguez took office, public opinion surveys said that some 70 percent of Costa Ricans were dissatisfied with his government, despite a booming

economy. Public safety remains a primary concern of the residents of the capital, San Jose. A much-touted reform of the Costa Rican legislature ended up creating more controversy than real change.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Costa Ricans can change their government democratically. The 1998 victory of presidential candidate Rodriguez reflected the fact that the PLN and PSUC dominate the political landscape, although numerous other parties exist. Allegations about drug-tainted campaign contributions continue to dog both major parties. New campaign laws have been instituted to make party financing more transparent.

The constitution provides for three independent branches of government. The president and the 57-member legislative assembly are elected for four years and are prohibited from seeking a second term. The assembly has power equal to that of the president, including the ability to override presidential vetoes.

The judicial branch is independent, its members elected by the legislature. A supreme court with power to rule on the constitutionality of laws is in operation, as are four courts of appeal and a network of district courts. An independent national election commission is elected by the supreme court. Delays in the justice system, in part due to budget cuts, have created volatile situations in overcrowded, violence-prone prisons.

A rise in violent crime and clashes in rural areas between squatters and landowners are blamed on a large immigrant population. An estimated 420,000 Nicaraguans—15 percent of Costa Rica's total population—live in the country, more than half illegally. In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, Costa Rica declared a temporary amnesty for these and other Central American illegal immigrants, and some 160,000 Nicaraguans took advantage of the opportunity to legalize their situation.

In 1999, the legislative assembly passed legislation allowing for U.S. anti-drug patrols to operate in Costa Rican waters. The measure was approved a year after Costa Rica instituted a tough anti-money-laundering law.

Numerous charges of human rights violations by the heavily armed police are still made. Independent Costa Rican human rights monitors report increases in allegations of arbitrary arrest and brutality. There are some 5,300 prisoners in Costa Rica jammed into facilities designed to hold less than half that number.

An official ombudsman provides recourse for citizens or foreigners with human rights complaints. The ombudsman has the authority to issue recommendations for rectification, including sanctions against government bodies, for failure to respect rights.

The press, radio, and television are generally free. A number of independent dailies serve a society that is 90 percent literate. Television and radio stations are both public and commercial, with at least six private television stations providing an influential forum for public debate. However, restrictive libel laws continue to dampen full exercise of press freedoms.

Constitutional guarantees regarding freedom of religion and the right to organize political parties and civic organizations are respected. In recent years, however, a reluctance to address restrictions on labor rights has been noticeable.

Solidarity, an employer-employee organization that private business uses as an instrument to prevent independent unions from organizing, remains strong and has generally been tolerated by successive governments. Solidarity remains entrenched in Costa

Rica's free-trade zones, where labor abuses by multinational corporations are rife. Minimum wage and social security laws are often ignored, and fines for noncompliance are minuscule. In 1999, the Costa Rican affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions brought a complaint before the International Labor Organization concerning an attack and death threats against a banana workers' leader. Women workers are often sexually harassed, made to work overtime without pay, and fired when they become pregnant.

Costa Rica's Indian population, numbering 64,000, or two percent of the national total, have demanded the right to self-government and ownership of their traditional lands. In 1999, Rodriguez admitted his government had failed to adequately meet their demands.

In 1999, the legislative assembly passed a law criminalizing sex with minors, in an attempt to crack down on the country's growing sex tourism industry.

Côte D'Ivoire

Polity: Military
(transitional)

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 15,800,000

PPP: \$1,840

Life Expectancy: 47

Ethnic Groups: Baoule (23 percent), Bete (18 percent), Senoufou (15 percent), Malinke (11 percent), Agni, foreign Africans, non-Africans

Capital: Yamoussoukro (official); Abidjan (de facto)

Status Change: Cote d'Ivoire's status changed from Not Free to Partly Free due to the opening of political dialogue represented by the return to the country of a major exiled political leader, and the military's urging of political parties to nominate members of a transitional cabinet.

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free*



Overview:

Tension leading up to presidential elections in October 2000 came to a head on Christmas Eve when General Robert Guei seized power from the country's increasingly authoritarian leader, President Henri Konan Bédié. The coup, which sent Bédié fleeing abroad, followed three days of rioting and looting in the commercial capital Abidjan by soldiers who had been complaining of salary arrears. Guei set up a National Committee of Public Salvation (CNSP), dissolved the supreme court, the constitutional court, the national assembly, and the cabinet, and promised a return to democratic rule. He set no date for new elections but held consultations with political party leaders and invited them to nominate members for a new cabinet. Guei said there would be total press freedom, but warned against journalistic "garbage."

The United States and Canada suspended aid to the country following the coup, but many Ivorians responded with cheers. Opposition Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who had been living in exile in France, returned to Côte d'Ivoire less than a week after the

military takeover, which he called a "revolution" that would allow the restoration of democracy. The Bédié government had attempted to bar Ouattara from contesting the October 2000 presidential election based on strict nationality laws that have aggravated ethnic tensions in the country.

A court in November 1999 sentenced 11 Ouattara supporters to two years in jail. They included four members of parliament as well as the secretary-general of the Republican Rally party backing Ouattara. They, along with a number of other prisoners, were freed in the military revolt. Guei denied that he was setting the stage for a Ouattara presidency.

Côte d'Ivoire gained independence from France in 1960, and President Felix Houphouët-Boigny ruled until his death in 1993. During that period the country became an African model for economic growth and political stability. Efforts to break state control of the economy, however, have been undermined by government control of the country's political life. Increasing political and social unrest, as well as continued reports of corruption, are a threat to further investment. In June the European Union alleged that millions of dollars in aid money had been misused and initially suspended further disbursement of funds. Also hurting the economy has been a 40 percent plunge in the world price of cocoa, Côte d'Ivoire's chief export, over the past two years.

The country had retained strong political, economic, and military backing from France, which maintained a military garrison near Abidjan, and French military advisors served with many units of Côte d'Ivoire's 14,000-strong armed forces. It is unclear how the coup will immediately affect relations with France, where Bédié fled.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The last presidential poll in 1995 was boycotted by all of the major opposition parties and was neither free nor fair. The ruling Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast (PDCI) made profligate use of state resources, and Bédié was declared president with 95 percent of the vote. Demonstrations were banned, and the media were intimidated. At least 23 people were killed in communal clashes during protests against electoral misconduct. Opponents of Ouattara, a former prime minister and International Monetary Fund official, contended he was ineligible to participate in the 2000 polls because his parents allegedly were not Ivorian citizens.

The credibility of the November 1995 legislative elections was devalued by questionable voters' lists, bans on opposition demonstrations, and harassment of opposition supporters. The national assembly was overwhelmingly dominated by the ruling party, which holds 149 of the 175 seats. There is no genuinely independent election commission. President Bédié in 1998 initiated constitutional changes to expand presidential powers, reduce judicial independence, and dilute representative government by creating an upper house of parliament, with one-third of its members appointed by the president.

Several human rights organizations, including the Ivorian Human Rights League and the Ivorian Women's Movement, are active. Muslims complain of bias in both governmental and private spheres, although there is no evidence of systematic or official discrimination.

Côte d'Ivoire's economy has long attracted workers from neighboring countries. Immigrants constitute up to 40 percent of the total population, and resentment towards them was growing under Bédié. Some communities forced thousands of farmers home

to Ghana, Mali, and Burkina Faso in 1999. The identity issue threatened to exacerbate political tension over Ouattara's presidential aspirations. The Republican Rally party accused the Bédié government of denying many potential opposition supporters voting rights under new citizenship laws.

Côte d'Ivoire's press largely applauded the military takeover. State-owned newspapers and a state-run broadcasting system under Bédié were usually unreservedly pro-government. Several private radio stations and a cable television service operate, but only the state broadcasting reaches a national audience. The private print media remained under threat of governmental repression when Bédié was in power. In September 1999, Abdoulaye Bakayoko, owner of the daily *Liberal*, was assassinated in Abidjan. That same month Lama Fofana, publisher of *Liberation* newspaper, which is associated with the opposition Republican Rally, was shot at while driving to the newspaper's offices. In October, unknown persons looted *Liberation's* technical offices and stoned the watchman to death. An Abidjan court in October indicted the publisher and an editor of *Le Populaire* newspaper on charges of distributing false news and sentenced them to six months in prison. They had incorrectly reported that police had killed a student demonstrator but had run a correction the next day. The publisher was later released.

Côte d'Ivoire does not have an independent judiciary, and the 1998 constitutional changes gave the president increased powers of judicial appointment. Judges are political appointees without tenure and are highly susceptible to external interference. Legal provisions regarding search warrants, rules of evidence, and pretrial detention are often ignored. In many rural areas, traditional courts still prevail, especially in the handling of minor matters and family law. Very harsh prison conditions are reportedly ameliorated only for prisoners wealthy enough to pay for special treatment. Many deaths from diseases aggravated by poor diet and inadequate or nonexistent medical attention have been reported. A large portion of inmates are pretrial detainees who sometimes wait for years for a court date. Parliament in 1999 introduced capital punishment for the first time, sentencing six men to death for armed robbery in an effort to curb rising crime. There is still no provision in the law for carrying the punishment out.

Prison conditions for women are especially hazardous and mirror prevailing societal discrimination, despite official encouragement for respect for constitutional rights. Equal pay for equal work is offered in the small formal sector, but women have few chances to obtain or advance in wage employment. In rural areas that rely on subsistence agriculture, education and job opportunities for women are even scarcer. Female genital mutilation is still widespread although a law that made it a crime was adopted in 1998. Violence against women is reportedly common.

The Bédié government had sometimes taken harsh action against strikers, although union formation and membership are legally protected. For three decades, the General Union of Workers of Côte d'Ivoire was closely aligned to the sole legal party. The Federation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Côte d'Ivoire represents several independent unions formed since 1991. Notification and conciliation requirements must be met before legal strikes can be conducted. Collective bargaining agreements are often reached with the participation of government negotiators who influence wage settlements. In June 1999 public workers went on strike to press for the payment of salary arrears reportedly owed to them since the early 1980s.

Croatia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 4,600,000
PPP: \$4,895
Life Expectancy: 72
Ethnic Groups: Croat (78 percent), Serb (12 percent), Muslim (1 percent), Hungarian (0.5 percent), Slovenian (0.5 percent), other (8 percent)
Capital: Zagreb

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

The death of President Franjo Tudjman on December 11, 1999 marked the end of years of heavy-handed nationalist rule and the beginning of new opportunities for a popular opposition coalition to win January elections, mend Croatia's ailing economy and launch new efforts for domestic democratization and international integration. Tudjman, who died after a long bout with cancer, is seen by many as the leader who unified Croatia in 1991 and led the country to victory in the Balkan wars. By the end of the decade, however, many Croatians had grown weary with Tudjman's virulent nationalism, the rampant corruption under his regime, and his mismanagement of the economy.

Hungary ruled most of what is now Croatia from the 1100s until World War I. In 1918, Croatia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929. However, in 1941, Croatia was proclaimed an independent state by the pro-Fascist Ustasa movement. In 1945 Croatia joined the People's Republic of Yugoslavia under Communist leader Josip Broz (Tito).

After Croatia and Slovenia declared independence in 1991, the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army, backed by Serbian militia, seized parts of Croatia and ultimately controlled one-third of the territory. Beginning in 1993, Croatia supported Bosnian Croat separatist forces, which had opened a separate front in the war in Bosnia. In 1994, President Tudjman endorsed a U.S. peace accord that ended the conflict and created a federated state in loose confederation with Croatia. In 1995, Croatian forces recaptured Western Slavonia and Krajina from Serbian control. Later that year, Croatia became a signatory to the Dayton Accords, which ended the Bosnian war.

In the 1995 elections to the 127-member house of representatives, Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won 75 seats. In the 1997 presidential elections, Tudjman easily defeated Zdravko Tomac of the Social Democrats (SDP) with 61 percent of the vote.

Throughout 1998, opposition parties and the media focused on potential wrongdoing regarding Tudjman's family's vast financial holdings. Opposition parties also objected to the creation of an HDZ-dominated media council to oversee the state-owned Croatian Radio and Television Enterprise (HRT). Defense Minister Andrija Hebrang resigned in October, claiming he had lost the president's support to pursue corruption within the defense ministry. His resignation followed allegations of wiretapping and

surveillance by two senior HDZ members. In January, United Nations administrators returned Eastern Slavonia to Croatian control. Approximately 5,000 ethnic Serbs left Eastern Slavonia and other nearby regions in February.

In June 1999, the government, faced with sagging popularity and elections looming in January, ignored International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic prescriptions and avoided budget cuts and salary caps for state workers. In July, Tudjman moved to quell turmoil at the intelligence service by appointing his son, Miroslav, as the agency's head. Parliamentary Speaker Vlatko Pavletic was given temporary presidential powers in October and November, as Tudjman became increasingly incapacitated.

Tudjman did not designate a successor and his death has left the HDZ split between two factions. The more moderate wing of the HDZ supports Foreign Minister Mate Granic, while more conservative HDZ members support Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Vladimic Seks. The opposition coalition, led by the SDP and the Social Liberals (HSLs), is likely to win the presidential and parliamentary elections by a 2 to 1 margin, according to December polls. Ivica Racan of the SDP and Drazen Budisa of the HSLs are likely opposition presidential candidates. The economy will be a central issue as the country's GDP fell by two percent in 1999, and many analysts were worried about Croatia's high current accounts deficit and its overall inability to attract anticipated levels of foreign investment.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties: Although citizens can change their government democratically, Croatia's strong presidency and the entrenchment of the HDZ as the country's dominant party contribute to an authoritarian political climate. Opposition candidates have made reform of the presidential system a key election issue. HDZ candidate Granic favors keeping the system as it is.

Parliamentary and presidential elections in 1995 and 1997 were deemed "free" but not fair by international observers, and were marked by irregularities. In October 1999, negotiations about laws for the upcoming parliamentary elections between the government and the opposition stalled. Leaders of the HSLs, the SDP, the Liberal Party (LS), Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), Croatian People's Party (HDNS), and Istrian Party (IDS) objected to HDZ members also serving as television editors. The opposition claimed that coverage would be biased and demanded the resignation of the editors as a precondition to continuation of talks on election legislation.

The constitution guarantees freedom of thought and expression and freedom of the press and other media. Despite these provisions, the media were controlled and journalists were harassed by the government throughout 1999. In January, Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) and the World Association of Newspapers documented and objected to the government's interference with the funding and distribution of the weekly magazine *Feral Tribune*. In May, the government indicted a journalist from the daily *Jutari List* along with four bank employees for publishing details about President Tudjman's wife's finances, which contradicted her public disclosures. The journalist was formally charged in July and faced a five-year prison sentence. In June, the editor in chief and a journalist from the weekly paper *National* had their offices and homes searched by government security agents. *National* had recently published stories showing government complicity in intimidating soccer officials to fix matches. In October, the OSCE and Croatian journalists publicly complained about Croatian TV (HVT) be-

ing largely in the hands of pro-HDZ editors and called on the government to restrict their influence on parliamentary election coverage and allow all parties equal media access.

Freedom of religion is nominally assured. The return of Serb refugees to Croatia proceeded slowly in 1999 and ethnic Serbs who wish to return to Croatia face harassment and enormous bureaucratic obstacles. In May, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) officials said there was a lack of political will on the part of the Croatian government to help the Serbs return. Croatian officials reported that 58,000 of the 200,000 Serbs who fled in 1995 had returned.

Croatia continued to cooperate reluctantly with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The government extradited two alleged Croatian war criminals to The Hague. The government, however, gave up the second defendant, Mladin Natelilic, only after threat of sanctions by the United States and the United Nations.

In September, President Tudjman and Hungarian President Arpad Goncz met and reaffirmed each country's commitment to the protection and preservation of their respective ethnic minority populations. Historically, ethnic Italians in Istria and Roma (Gypsies) have faced legal and social discrimination.

Freedom of assembly is generally respected, although demonstrations must be approved by authorities. In May, right-wing counterprotesters attacked peaceful antifascist protesters at a rally in Zagreb.

All workers, except the armed forces, the police, government administrators, and public service employees, are guaranteed the right to strike. Croatia's labor movement includes five major labor confederations and several large unaffiliated unions. In May and June, railway and hotel employees struck for wage increases. Farmers protested in June against shrinking subsidies and imported crops by blocking roads and highways for three days.

The high judicial council appoints judges and public prosecutors. Members are nominated and approved by parliament for eight-year terms. Through parliamentary nomination and election, the HDZ wields influence over the high judicial council and, thus, over the selection of judges. In recent years, the government has purged judges and attorneys who were either non-Croats or whose political views were at odds with those of the government or the HDZ.

Property rights are guaranteed under the constitution. In 1997, the courts revised discriminatory sections of property laws, but Serbs still encounter difficulty in regaining property that has fallen under the administration of Croatian authorities. In October 1999, Croatia made progress in resolving property rights and national ownership issues with Slovenia.

Women are guaranteed equal rights under the law and are involved in politics, government, and business.

Cuba

Polity: Communist
one-party

Economy: Statist

Population: 11,200,000

PPP: \$3,100

Life Expectancy: 75

Ethnic Groups: Mulatto (51 percent), white (37 percent),
black (11 percent), Chinese (1 percent)

Capital: Havana

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free



Overview:

In 1999 repression appeared on the upswing again in Fidel Castro's Cuba, as a draconian new "anti-subversive" law was promulgated, the small independent press targeted for harassment and harsh prison terms, and more than 40 dissidents detained on the eve of a November summit of Ibero-American leaders in Havana. The world's longest-ruling tyrant hosted a number of U.S. groups, including the Baltimore Orioles baseball team, and delegations of prominent American businessmen, the latter seeking an end to the U.S. economic embargo of the island in place since 1960. At year-end the fate of a 6-year-old Cuban refugee named Elian Gonzalez created a new and uncertain dynamic in the legal and political relationship between Havana and Washington, D.C.

Cuba achieved independence from Spain in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War. The Republic of Cuba was established in 1902, but was under U.S. tutelage under the Platt Amendment until 1934. In 1959 Castro's July 26th Movement—named after an earlier, failed insurrection—overthrew the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, who had ruled for 18 of the previous 25 years.

Since then, Fidel Castro has dominated the Cuban political system, transforming it into a one-party state. Communist structures were institutionalized by the 1976 constitution installed at the first congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC). The constitution provides for a national assembly which, in theory, designates a Council of State which in turn appoints a Council of Ministers in consultation with its president, who serves as head of state and chief of government.

In reality, Castro is responsible for every appointment. As president of the Council of Ministers, chairman of the Council of State, commander in chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and first secretary of the PCC, Castro controls every lever of power in Cuba. The PCC is the only authorized political party, and it controls all governmental entities from the national to the municipal level.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which subsidized the Cuban economy, Castro has sought Western foreign investment. Most investment has come from Europe and Latin America, but those funds have not made up for the \$5 billion in annual Soviet subsidies. The government claims the economy has rebounded in the past three years, but the "special period" austerity program, involving drastic cutbacks in energy consumption and tight rationing of food and consumer items, remains in place.

The legalization of the U.S. dollar since 1993 has heightened social tensions, as the minority with access to dollars from abroad or through the tourist industry has emerged

as a new moneyed class and the desperation of the majority without has increased. State salaries have shrunk to \$4 or less a month.

The cycles of repression Castro has unleashed with increasing frequency against opponents, meant to keep at bay social forces set into motion by his economic reforms, continued throughout 1997. Stepped-up actions against peaceful dissidents preceded the Fifth Congress of the PCC held in October 1997, as well as elections the same month to the National Assembly of Popular Power. Two small bomb explosions at hotels in Havana on July 13, 1997, also provided a pretext for action against peaceful opposition groups, which Cuban authorities tried to link to terrorist activities.

Neither the Fifth Congress, where one-party rule was reaffirmed, nor the one-party national elections provided any surprises. Castro proudly pointed to a reported 95 percent turnout at the polls; critics noted that non-participation could be construed as dissent—and many people were afraid of the consequences of being so identified.

The year 1997 also saw the remains of the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara—eulogized by Castro as an enduring symbol of the socialist "New Man"—repatriated from Bolivia. At the Communist Party congress, Castro alluded to his own mortality and went on to bequeath to the nation his own handpicked successor—his brother, Vice President Raul Castro.

In the aftermath of the visit of Pope John Paul II, January 21-25, 1998, the number of dissidents confirmed to be imprisoned dropped from 1,320 in 1996, to 381 in mid-June, 1998. Part of the decline was due to the release of 140 of 300 prisoners held for political activities or common crimes whose freedom was sought by the pontiff.

In 1999, the brief thaw turned chilly. In February, the government introduced tough legislation against sedition, with a maximum prison sentence of 20 years. It included penalties against unauthorized contacts with the United States and the import or supply of "subversive" materials—including texts on democracy—by news agencies and journalists. In March a court used the new law in sentencing four well-known dissidents to prison terms of up to five years. Castro used the occasion of the Ibero-American summit, which was boycotted by several Latin American leaders, to lash out at Cuba's small band of vocal dissidents and members of the independent press.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cubans cannot change their government through democratic means. On January 11, 1998, members of the national assembly were elected in a process in which a reported 98.35 percent of 7.8 million registered voters turned out. There were only 601 candidates for an equal number of seats; opposition or dissident groups were forbidden to present their own candidates. Although the national assembly is vested with the right of legislative power, when it is not in session this faculty is delegated to the 31-member Council of State, elected by the assembly and chaired by Castro.

In Cuba, all political and civic organization outside the PCC is illegal. Political dissent, spoken or written, is a punishable offense, and those so punished frequently receive years of imprisonment for seemingly minor infractions. A person can even go to jail for possession of a fax machine or a photocopier. Although there has been a slight relaxation of strictures on cultural life, the educational system, the judicial system, labor unions, professional organizations, and all media remain state controlled. A small group of human rights activists and dissident journalists, together with a still-shackled Roman Catholic Church, provide the only glimmer of an independent civil society.

In Cuba the executive branch controls the judiciary. The 1976 constitution is remarkable for its concentration of power in the hands of one individual—Fidel Castro, president of the Council of State. In practice, the council serves as a de facto judiciary and controls both the courts and the judicial process as a whole.

There is continued evidence of torture and killings in prison and in psychiatric institutions, where a number of dissidents arrested in recent years are held. Since 1990 the International Committee of the Red Cross has been denied access to prisoners. Local human rights activists say that more than 100 prisons and prison camps hold between 60,000 and 100,000 prisoners of all categories. In 1993 vandalism was decreed to be a form of sabotage, punishable by eight years in prison. In 1999, the Cuban government showed some willingness to enhance antinarcotics cooperation between the island republic and the United States.

Cuba under Castro has one of the highest per capita rates of imprisonment for political offenses of any country in the world. There are approximately 400 political prisoners, most held in cells with common criminals and many convicted on vague charges such as "disseminating enemy propaganda" or "dangerousness." Since 1991, the United Nations has voted annually to assign a special investigator on human rights to Cuba, but the Cuban government has refused to cooperate.

Groups that exist apart from the state are labeled "counterrevolutionary criminals" and are subject to systematic repression, including arrests, beatings while in custody, confiscations, and intimidation by uniformed or plainclothes state security.

The press in Cuba is the object of a targeted campaign of intimidation by the government. A handful of independent journalists, particularly those associated with five small news agencies they established, have been subjected to continued repression, including jail terms at hard labor and assaults while in prison by state security agents. Foreign news agencies must hire local reporters only through government offices, which limits employment opportunities for independent journalists. In 1999, in the run-up to the November summit of Ibero-American leaders, Castro singled out 17 independent journalists by name and said they were "counterrevolutionary" conspirators paid by the United States.

Freedom of movement and the right to choose one's residence, education, or job are severely restricted. Attempting to leave the island without permission is a punishable offense. Cuban authorities have failed to carry out an adequate investigation into the July 1994 sinking of a tugboat carrying at least 66 people, of whom only 31 survived, as it sought to flee Cuba. Several survivors alleged that the craft sank as it was being pursued and assaulted by three other Cuban vessels acting under official orders, and that the fleeing boat was not allowed to surrender. The government denied any responsibility, claiming the tragedy was an accident caused by irresponsible actions of those on board. Citing what it calls compelling evidence, including eyewitness testimony, Amnesty International called the deaths an "extrajudicial execution." Those in Cuba commemorating the dead, or who have peacefully protested the sinking, have faced harassment and intimidation.

In 1991 Roman Catholics and other believers were granted permission to join the Communist Party, and the constitutional reference to official atheism was dropped the following year. Religious freedom has made small gains. Afro-Cuban religious groups are now carefully courted by Cuban officials. In preparation for the papal visit in 1998, Catholic pastoral work and religious education activities were allowed to take place at

previously unheard-of levels, and Christmas was celebrated for the first time in 28 years. In 1999, it was revealed that a year earlier Castro had agreed to a secret deal to allow 400 Jews, part of a small religious community numbering around 1,500 people, to emigrate to Israel.

In the post-Soviet era, the rights of Cubans to own private property and to participate in joint ventures with foreigners have been recognized. Non-Cuban businesses have also been allowed. In practice, there are few rights for those who do not belong to the Cuban Communist Party. Party membership is still required for good jobs, serviceable housing, and real access to social services, including medical care and educational opportunities.

Many Blacks have benefited from access to basic education and medical care since the revolution, and much of the police force and army enlisted personnel is black. However, credible reports say the forced evictions of squatters and residents lacking official permission to reside in Havana is primarily targeted against individuals and families from the eastern provinces, which are traditionally areas of black or mixed-race populations.

About 40 percent of all women work and they are well represented in the professions.

Cyprus (Greek)

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 900,000

PPP: \$14,201

Life Expectancy: 77

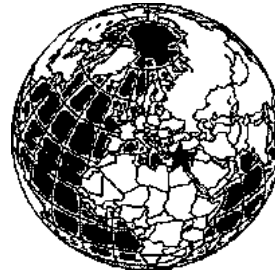
Ethnic Groups: Greek (78 percent), Turkish (18 percent), other (4 percent)

Capital: Nicosia

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Reunification of the divided island remained at the center of Cypriot political life in 1999. United Nations-sponsored negotiations took place at the end of the year in New York with both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders in attendance, marking the first talks on the future of the island since 1997. At the same time as the negotiations, the European Union decided to continue accession talks with Cyprus, a move objected to by the Turkish portion of the island. In 1997, the Council of Europe had recommended that the EU offer membership to Cyprus in order to produce "significant economic and political advantages for the two communities" and a "major factor of stability."

Throughout 1998, President Glafcos Clerides's center-right coalition government devoted inordinate efforts to defend its decision to deploy Russian-made anti-aircraft air defense missiles on Greek Cypriot territory. By year's end the missiles remained undeployed because of major opposition by the United States and EU member countries. However, in March President Clerides declared an end to a freeze on new weap-

ons purchases, citing Turkey's failure to reduce tensions on the island. In August, the Cypriot defense minister, Yiannakis Chrysostomis, resigned amid widespread allegations of negligent leadership. It was revealed he was unaware that the Cypriot army was running out of ammunition and that the army's tanks had been using the wrong fuel for several years.

Efforts by the UN and the United States to settle the decades-old dispute over Cyprus have repeatedly stalled in the face of violence, land disputes, and unwillingness on the part of either side to agree on terms for formal talks. UN officials attempted to break the impasse during 1999 with rounds of talks held in New York with both Cypriot leaders in attendance, although not in face-to-face meetings. Warming relations between Greece and Turkey in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in Turkey did not translate into tangible gains at the negotiating table. Near-term reunification of Cyprus appeared doubtful following a new demand by the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş for the recognition of his breakaway state and an August arson attack on a Muslim shrine in Larnaca, carried out by a previously unknown group called the Patriotic Organisation of Cypriot Fighters.

Annexed to Britain in 1914, Cyprus gained independence in 1960 after a ten-year guerrilla campaign to demand union with Greece. In July 1974, Greek Cypriot national guard members, backed by the military junta in power in Greece, staged an unsuccessful coup aimed at unification. Five days later, Turkey invaded, seized control of 37 percent of the island, and expelled 200,000 Greeks from the north. Currently, the entire Turkish Cypriot community resides in the north, and property claims arising from the division and population exchange remain unsettled.

A buffer zone called the "Green Line" has divided Cyprus since 1974. The capital, Nicosia, is the world's last divided city. The division of Cyprus has been a major point of contention in the long-standing rivalry between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean. Tensions and intermittent violence between the two populations have plagued the island since independence.

UN resolutions stipulate that Cyprus is a single country of which the northern third is illegally occupied. In 1982, Turkish-controlled Cyprus made a unilateral declaration of independence that was condemned by the UN and that remains unrecognized by every country except Turkey. [See Turkish Cyprus under Related Territories.]

Peace in Cyprus remains fragile. Propaganda in schools and in the media has sustained hostility among Cypriot youth. Blatant economic disparity exists between the prosperous south and the stagnating north. Cyprus ranks among the most heavily militarized countries in the world.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Greek Cypriots can change their government democratically. Suffrage is universal and compulsory, and elections are free and fair. The 1960 constitution established an ethnically representative system designed to protect the interests of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The independent judiciary operates according to the British tradition, upholding the presumption of innocence and the right to due process. Trial before a judge is standard, although requests for trial by jury are regularly granted.

Freedom of speech is respected, and a vibrant independent press frequently criticizes authorities. Several private television and radio stations in the Greek Cypriot community compete effectively with government-controlled stations. In addition, the

government also publishes a Cyprus Internet home page, which features information regarding efforts to resolve the island's protracted dispute as well as regarding current developments and policy statements by Cypriot leaders.

Cypriot media reports in October alleged rife corruption among the island's police forces. An immigration scandal was revealed, in which police reportedly provided visas for foreign women to remain in the country in return for money and sex. In October, the chief immigration officer appeared in court on charges connected to the visa scandal. Police involvement in Cyprus's lucrative illegal prostitution racket was also alleged.

Underground violence continued during the year, culminating in a car bombing in Larnaca in October that left one person dead. The use of powerful weapons in several attacks led to speculation over police collusion in the violence. Most gang violence in Cyprus is linked to the illegal drug trade.

Freedom of assembly and association as well as the right to strike is respected.

Czech Republic

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 10,300,000

PPP: 10,510

Life Expectancy: 74

Ethnic Groups: Czech (94 percent), Slovak (3 percent), Polish (1 percent), German (0.5 percent), Gypsy (0.5 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Prague

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Despite the Czech Republic's accession to NATO and its halting but inevitable march towards membership in the European Union (EU), the country's continued recession preoccupied citizens and politicians throughout 1999.

The Czech Republic emerged in 1993 after the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, which had been created in 1918 after the Austro-Hungarian Empire's collapse. Czechoslovak president Vaclav Havel, a leading anti-Communist dissident and playwright, was elected Czech president. At that time, Premier Vaclav Klaus and his pro-market Civic Democratic Union (ODS) led a four-party coalition that had won control of the Czech parliament in 1992. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, the ODS and coalition partners from the Christian Democratic Union and the Civic Democratic Alliance won only 99 of 200 seats, with the opposition Social Democrats (CSSD), led by Milos Zeman, winning 61 seats, or four times its 1992 returns. The unreconstructed Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia won 22 seats, and the ultranationalist Republican Party won 18. There is 1 independent.

In 1997, a sluggish economy and allegations of corruption led to a sharp drop in Prime Minister Klaus's popularity. In November, Klaus resigned and the government

collapsed after the Christian Democrats and the Civic Democratic Alliance left the ruling coalition amid the ODS's admission that it had received a substantial donation from a businessman involved with a steel firm privatized by the Klaus government. President Havel asked central bank governor Josef Tosovsky to form a caretaker government. In January 1998, the government announced that new elections would be held in June.

The June 1998 elections were a close contest between the CSSD and the ODS and in July the two parties reached a surprise deal to allow Zeman to form a minority left-wing government. In exchange, the ODS won the posts of speaker in both houses of parliament and the chairmanships of several key committees. Prime Minister Zeman was formally appointed by President Havel on July 17.

In February 1999, the Czech Republic joined NATO. Parliament also ratified the EU social charter in July. Some analysts forecasted 2005 as the Czech Republic's EU admission date, as the lagging Czech economy raised parliamentary debate about increased opt-out options as a requirement for EU accession. A new government in Slovakia prompted the Czech government to begin talks in July aimed at normalizing relations between the two countries. The Czech economy continued to be hampered by stagnation and high exchange rates that hurt export growth. Unemployment climbed to 8.4 percent in July, and at the end of the month the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued reports expressing strong concern about the economy's poor performance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Czech citizens can change their government democratically under a multiparty system. The 1998 elections were free and fair.

Freedoms of expression and media are respected. Defamation of the president and slander of government officials and departments are prohibited by law. Print media are diverse and independent. In July, a controversial press law was passed by parliament and sent to committee for modification. Czech and international press freedom advocates claim the law will put unnecessary financial and disclosure restrictions on Czech publications and journalists. There are 60 private radio stations in addition to Czech public radio.

Freedom of religion is respected. Issues regarding restitution of church property seized by the Communists remain unresolved. In June 1999, the deadline for property transfers expired and an estimated 150 million to 300 million crowns worth of property remained under the control of individuals and groups affiliated with the former Communist Party. Freedoms of assembly and demonstration are respected, although permits are generally required for rallies.

More than 50 political parties have emerged since 1989, but most are small and have no national structures. In the 1998 election, 13 parties fielded candidates, but only five passed the five percent threshold required to gain seats in parliament. In 1999, political commentators expressed concern that Czech politics was becoming a limited, entrenched two-party system dominated by the ODS and CSSD.

Most unionized workers belong to the Czech-Moravian Chamber of Trade Unions, which was established in 1990 and includes approximately 35 unions. Approximately two-thirds of all workers are members of a union.

The judiciary is independent in law and practice, but court delays and a lack of experienced judges remain problems. There are few reports of abuses by security forces and police, although Roma (Gypsies) have complained of police and judicial indifference to bias and hate crimes. In June 1999, advocates for the country's Roma popula-

tion filed discrimination suits against the state. In July, the government passed EU-based legislation to promote better relations among the country's ethnic groups. In August and October, the EU issued criticisms of federal and local policies towards the Roma, who number between 200,000 and 300,000 and suffer disproportionately high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment.

Czech citizens have the freedom to travel and the right to choose their residence and employment. In July the parliament passed legislation that restored citizenship to all those, including Roma groups, who had had lost their citizenship between 1948 and 1990. Property rights are guaranteed under the constitution and by law. In April 1999, the government acknowledged the failure of voucher schemes in the early 1990s, which led to an inefficient and occasionally corrupt privatization process. In May, the government began to prepare large, money-losing state banks for privatization. In July, 50.8 percent of the state telecom company was offered to international investors in the country's biggest share flotation.

Despite structural economic problems, the country's market system allows for equality of opportunity. Women are guaranteed equal rights and face no overt discrimination in employment, government service, or education.

Denmark

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 5,300,000

PPP: \$23,860

Life Expectancy: 76

Ethnic Groups: Mostly Danish, some German and Eskimo

Capital: Copenhagen

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Since March 1998, the prime Minister and leader of the Social Democrats, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, has been heading his fourth government, a minority coalition comprising the Social Democrats and the Social-Liberal Party.

Speculation surrounding the date of the crucial vote as to whether Denmark is to join the European Monetary Union intensified after the polls indicated that more than 50 percent of the electorate would vote yes to the euro if the referendum were held in 1999. The government had initially pledged that the issue would not be on the agenda before the next general election in 2002, but the change in public attitude has allowed some politicians to propose spring of 2001 as the date for a promised referendum.

Denmark is the oldest monarchy in Europe. Queen Margrethe II, whose reign began in 1972, performs mostly ceremonial functions, such as appointing the premier and cabinet ministers after they have been chosen by parliamentary leaders. Denmark's first constitution was adopted 150 years ago and had been amended several times. The 1953 constitution established a unicameral parliament (*Folketing*), in which 135 of the 179 members are elected in 17 mainland districts. Two representatives from each of

the autonomous regions of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland are also elected. The remaining seats are allocated on a proportional basis to parties receiving more than two percent of the vote. An extensive system of local representation includes both regional and local councils.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Danes can change their government democratically. Representatives are elected to the Folketing at least once every four years in a modified system of proportional representation. On February 16, 1999 Greenland held its general elections to the 31-seat Home Rule parliament. Greenland's prime minister, Jonathan Motzfeldt, and his Social Democrat Siumut Party, which has dominated politics on the island for the past 20 years, retained its control of Greenland's parliament despite losing 3 of the 14 seats it had previously held.

The Danish monarchy, whose role is largely ceremonial, still enjoys vast support among Danes. The left-of-center Socialist People's Party shocked the public this year by abandoning its 40-year-long campaign for the dissolution of the monarchy.

Danish media reflect a wide variety of political opinions and are frequently critical of the government. The state finances radio and television broadcasting, but state-owned television companies have independent editorial boards. Independent radio stations are permitted by the state but are tightly regulated.

The rights of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities are widely respected. The issue of discrimination against women wearing the *hijab*, a traditional Muslim headscarf, has been at the center of a growing legal controversy since the summer of 1999, when Denmark's two largest supermarkets were criticized for refusing to employ women with headscarves. In August, the right-wing Danish People's Party, which has frequently been accused of racism, ordered the expulsion of 19 activists who were found to have links with neo-Nazi organizations.

Denmark is among the nations most tolerant of gay people. Ten years ago Denmark was the first country in the world to adopt legislation allowing homosexual partners the same legal rights as those afforded to married heterosexuals. A new proposal from the parliamentary committee on legal affairs would allow gay people to adopt their partner's children.

While freedom of worship is guaranteed to all, more than 90 percent of the population belongs to the state-supported Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. In 1997, the church became the first to approve a religious ceremony for same-sex marriages.

Danes enjoy freedom of association and assembly, and workers are free to organize and strike. The vast majority of wage earners belong to trade unions and their umbrella organization, the Danish Federation of Trade Unions affiliated with the Social Democratic Party.

The independent judiciary includes approximately 100 local courts, two high courts, and a 15-member supreme court with judges appointed by the queen, on recommendation from the government.

Women constitute approximately 45 percent of labor force and generally hold 20 to 30 percent of national legislative seats.

Djibouti

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 4*
Economy: Capitalist **Civil Liberties:** 6
Population: 600,000 **Status:** Partly Free
PPP: \$1,266

Life Expectancy: 48

Ethnic Groups: Somali (60 percent), Afar (35 percent),
 other (5 percent)

Capital: Djibouti

Ratings Change: Djibouti's political rights rating changed from 5 to 4 due to the holding of the country's first free presidential election and the release of political prisoners.



Overview:

Djibouti's ailing octogenarian ruler, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, stepped down in April 1999 after 22 years in power, opening the way for the country's first free presidential election since independence. The ruling Popular Rally for Progress (RPP) party candidate, Ismael Omar Guelleh, defeated opposition leader Moussa Ahmed Idriss, who reportedly had backing from former rebels of the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD). Guelleh, who is Aptidon's nephew and a former head of state security, had long been considered the de facto head of government and president's heir apparent. The poll was marked by low turnout among the fewer than 200,000 eligible voters. International observers dismissed allegations of electoral fraud made by opposition supporters, and the vote was considered relatively free and fair. Guelleh, however, had the support of state resources.

Idriss complained of police harassment after the vote, saying security forces had surrounded his home to prevent his supporters from staging a protest march. Clashes broke out in September after he was detained over a series of articles that appeared in a newspaper he publishes. A court in October sentenced him and 19 of his supporters to four months in jail, accusing them of violence and interfering with the authority of the state. It was not immediately clear whether the group would actually spend time in jail.

Djibouti's people are deeply divided along ethnic and clan lines, and a simmering Afar insurgency continues in the north. The main schism is between the majority Issa (Somali) and minority Afar peoples. Legislative elections in 1997 returned the ruling party to power, thereby reinforcing the long dominance of the Mamassan clan of the majority Issa ethnic group. Djibouti was known as the French Territory of the Afar and Issa before receiving independence from France in 1977. Afar rebels of FRUD launched a three-year guerrilla war against Issa "tribal dictatorship" in 1991 with demands for an installation of a democratic, multiparty system. Ethnic violence has receded since the largest FRUD faction agreed in 1994 to end its insurgency in exchange for inclusion in the government and electoral reforms, but sporadic attacks continue by a radical wing of the group.

Aptidon controlled a one-party system until 1992, when a new constitution adopted by referendum authorized four political parties. In 1993, he was declared winner of a fourth six-year term in Djibouti's first contested presidential elections. Both the oppo-

sition and international observers considered the poll fraudulent. The election was boycotted by the ethnic Afar-dominated FRUD, and nearly all of the candidates were of the Issa ethnic group.

Djibouti risks becoming embroiled in the Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict after initially attempting to mediate. It has borders with both countries and in November cut diplomatic relations with Eritrea after it was accused of backing Ethiopia. Djibouti accused Eritrea of supporting Djiboutian rebels and said the two countries were "almost in a state of war." Djibouti's Red Sea port is a vital lifeline for landlocked Ethiopia, with which it has close relations. Djibouti has also attempted to mediate an end to fighting in Somalia.

Approximately 3,500 French troops are among 10,000 French residents of Djibouti. French advisors and technicians effectively run much of the country, and France is highly influential in Djiboutian affairs, although Paris has announced a reduction in its military presence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The trappings of representative government and formal administration have had little relevance to the real distribution and exercise of power in Djibouti. The 1997 legislative elections were marginally more credible than the plainly fraudulent 1992 polls, but easily reinstalled the ruling RPP, which, in coalition with the legalized arm of FRUD, won all 65 national assembly seats. Aptidon had sought the appearance of ethnic balance in government by appointing Afars as prime ministers. FRUD leaders joined the cabinet as part of the 1994 peace pact. Guelleh won the April 1999 presidential election with 75 percent of the vote, compared to 25 percent for Moussa Ahmed Idriss. Although international observers declared the poll fair, the ruling party had the advantage of state resources to conduct its campaign.

Constraints on political activities have eased, and in May 1999 President Guelleh ordered the release of about 40 political prisoners. Freedom of assembly and association is nominally protected under the constitution, but the government has little tolerance for political protest. The judiciary is not independent owing to routine government interference.

Security forces commonly arrest dissidents without proper authority, despite constitutional requirements that arrests may not occur without a decree presented by a judicial magistrate. Prison conditions are reportedly harsh, although Red Cross delegates have been allowed access.

Islam is the official state religion, but freedom of worship is respected. Despite constitutional protection, freedom of speech is not guaranteed. The government closely controls all electronic media. Independent newspapers and other publications are generally allowed to circulate freely, but journalists exercise self-censorship. Authorities in August detained a former army chief of staff and a newspaper editor, accusing them of violating press laws after an article appeared that authorities said threatened the morale of the armed forces because it referred to them as "cannon fodder." The article, which appeared in a newspaper published by opposition leader Idriss, followed the downing of a helicopter allegedly carried out by the radical faction of FRUD. In October two French television journalists were expelled.

Despite equality under civil law, women suffer serious discrimination under customary practices in inheritance and other property matters, divorce, and the right to

travel. Women have few opportunities for education or in the formal economic sector. Female genital mutilation is almost universal among Djibouti's women, and legislation forbidding this mutilation of young girls is not enforced.

The formal sector in the largely rural agricultural and nomadic subsistence economy is small. Workers may join unions and strike, but the government routinely obstructs the free operation of unions. Wages are extremely low. The country's economy is heavily dependent on French aid. Efforts to curb rampant corruption have met with little success.

Dominica

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 100,000

PPP: \$4,320

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Mostly black and mulatto, Carib Indian

Capital: Roseau

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In his last year of a five-year term in office, Prime Minister Edison James, leader of the United Workers' Party (UWP), pledged to move forward with progress made towards transforming Dominica from an agricultural-based, banana-reliant economy to an international financial center and eco-tourism destination. His government expressed satisfaction with an economic growth rate which in 1998 was estimated to be 3.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). However, in November 1999, Hurricane Lenny caused an estimated \$75 million in damages, mostly to roads, houses, fisheries, and agriculture.

Dominica has been an independent republic within the Commonwealth since 1978. Internally self-governing since 1967, Dominica is a parliamentary democracy headed by a prime minister and a house of assembly with 21 members elected to five-year terms. Nine senators are appointed—five by the prime minister and four by the opposition leader. The president is elected by the house for a five-year term.

In 1993 Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) announced her intention to retire in 1995 after 15 years in power. External Affairs Minister Brian Alleyne defeated three other candidates in a vote of DFP delegates to become the new party leader.

In June 1995, the UWP won a narrow majority, 11 of 21 seats, in parliamentary elections. James, former head of the Banana Grower's Association, became prime minister. The UWP victory marked a significant power shift from the traditional establishment to a new and younger business class.

The DFP and the Dominica Labor Party (DLP) won five seats each. The DFP's Alleyne and the DLP's Douglas reached an agreement to share the official opposition post by alternating each year. Alleyne assumed the post first. A high court, however,

ruled that one of the winning DFP candidates was not qualified to sit in parliament since he still held a public service position. The ruling reduced the DFP's representation in parliament to four seats. Special elections, held in 1996, resulted in an additional seat for the UWP, raising its share to 12 of 21 seats. Douglas became the opposition leader. In early 1996 Alleyne resigned as head of the DFP and was replaced by former diplomat Charles Savarin.

Dominica's offshore business sector includes some 4,600 international companies, five offshore banks and five internet gaming companies. Offshore banking interests, in particular, have raised concerns about penetration by international organized crime, particularly Russian organizations. Dominica boasts of an "absence of tax treaties or exchange agreements with any other country." U.S. officials say that by offering strict bank secrecy and by selling Dominican citizenship with the right to have a new name placed on a new passport, Dominica is providing international criminals with a one-stop-shopping haven. In March 1999, the U.S. State Department noted the rapid expansion of offshore businesses and expressed concern that "between 200 and 300 Russians have reportedly purchased citizenship."

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens are able to change their government through free and fair elections. There are no restrictions on political, civic, or labor organizations. Several civic groups have emerged in recent years calling for more accountability and transparency in government.

There is an independent judiciary, and the rule of law is enhanced by the court's subordination to the inter-island Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. But the judicial system is understaffed, which has led to a large backlog of cases. The only prison on Dominica is marked by overcrowding and sanitation problems.

The Dominican Defense Force was disbanded in 1981 after being implicated in attempts by supporters of former prime minister Patrick John to overthrow the government. John was convicted in 1986 for his involvement and given a 12-year prison sentence. He was released by executive order in 1990, became active in the trade union movement, and lost as a DLP candidate in the 1995 election. The Dominica police, which in 1997 were the object of a commission of inquiry into corruption, were the only security force. Occasional instances of excessive use of force by police are one of the few human rights complaints heard.

The press is free, varied, and critical. Television and radio, both public and private, are open to a variety of views. Since 1990 television has been used as an effective campaign tool by all parties. The government respects academic freedom and labor rights.

Freedom of religion is recognized. However, the small Rastafarian community has charged that its religious rights are violated by a policy of cutting off the dreadlocks of those who are imprisoned, and that Rastafarian women are harassed by immigration officials who single them out for drug searches.

Since 1990, the 3,000 indigenous Carib Indians, many of whom live on a 3,700-acre reserve on the northeast coast, have been represented in the house of assembly by an elected Carib parliamentarian. In 1994 Hilary Frederick was elected chief of the Carib people for a five-year term, defeating Irvince Auguiste, the incumbent. A policeman was charged with the murder of a young man during the ensuing celebration.

Inheritance laws do not fully recognize women's rights. When a husband dies without a will, the wife cannot inherit the property, though she may continue to inhabit the

home. There are no laws mandating equal pay for equal work for private sector workers. In the June 1995 elections, two women won parliamentary seats. Government welfare officials have expressed concern over the growing number of cases of child abuse.

Workers have the right to organize, strike, and bargain collectively. Though unions are independent of the government and laws prohibit anti-union discrimination by employers, less than 10 percent of the workforce are union members.

↓ Dominican Republic

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 8,300,000

PPP: \$4,820

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo and Creole (73 percent), white (16 percent), black (11 percent)

Capital: Santo Domingo

Trend Arrow: The Dominican Republic receives a downward trend arrow due to an increased government campaign against Haitian immigrants, including the refusal to grant legal residency to children born in the Dominican Republic of Haitian parents.

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

The year before the 2000 presidential elections in the Dominican Republic was dominated by intramural jockeying for position by political party leaders even as the country was shaken by a series of strikes and riots. *Primus inter pares* among the presidential contenders is the 92-year-old, partially blind, six-time president, Joaquin Balaguer, who seeks to replace the man his own machinations placed in office three years before. Meanwhile, the country's booming tourist industry fueled a 6 percent economic growth rate for the third straight year.

After achieving independence from Spain in 1821 and from Haiti in 1844, the Dominican Republic endured recurrent domestic conflict. The assassination of General Rafael Trujillo in 1961 ended 30 years of dictatorship, but a 1963 military coup led to civil war and U.S. intervention. In 1966, under a new constitution, civilian rule was restored with the election of the conservative Joaquin Balaguer.

The constitution provides for a president and a congress elected for four years. The congress consists of a 30-member senate and, as a result of a recent census, a house that in 1998 went from 120 members to 149. Balaguer was reelected in 1970 and 1974, but was defeated in 1978 by Silvestre Antonio Guzman of the social-democratic Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). The PRD was triumphant again in 1982 with the election of Salvador Jorge Blanco, but Balaguer, heading the right-wing Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC), returned to power in 1986 and was reelected in 1990 in a vote marred by fraud.

In the May 1994 election, the main contenders were Balaguer, fellow-octogenarian Juan Bosch of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), and the PRD's Jose Francisco Pena Gomez. The Balaguer machine attacked front-runner Pena Gomez, who was black, as a Haitian who secretly planned to unite the neighboring countries.

Balaguer was declared the winner by a few thousand votes in an election rife with fraud. Amid street protests and international pressure, Balaguer agreed to hold new presidential elections in 18 months. The legislative results stood. The PRD and its allies took 57 seats in the house and 15 in the senate; the PRSC, 50 and 14; and the PLD, 13 and 1.

When congress convened, the PLD backed the PRSC's plan to lengthen Balaguer's shortened term from 18 months to two years, with elections in May 1996. In exchange, Balaguer made a PLD legislator president of the house. The PRD protested, but tacitly conceded by announcing that Pena Gomez would again be its standard-bearer in 1996. Although Vice President Jacinto Peynado won the PRSC primary in 1995. The PLD's lavish spending campaign tended to confirm the view that the money was coming from Balaguer, who wanted to stop Pena Gomez, and thus avoid any future corruption investigation. In promoting its candidate, Leonel Fernandez, a U.S.-trained lawyer, the PLD took a page from the race-baiting book of the PRSC.

In May 1996, Pena Gomez won 45.9 percent of the vote; Fernandez, 38.9 percent; and Peynado, 15 percent. Fernandez won 51.3 percent, and the presidency, in a May 16, 1996, runoff.

The May 1998 legislative and municipal elections were held for the first time since Balaguer was forced to cut short his term. The campaign was violent—more than a dozen people were killed, mostly in clashes between PRD and PRSC groups. Pena Gomez died of natural causes on election eve. Because of the resulting sympathy vote, the PRD made a clean sweep of the legislative contest, although the ruling PLD actually increased its parliamentary strength and maintained enough votes to uphold presidential vetoes.

In January 1999, army troops surrounded congress during an inter-party battle for control of the Dominican Municipal League, which doles out subsidies of more than \$100 million to local councils, which are largely in PRD hands. Four people were killed during violent strikes and protests in March. In October police rounded up as many as 1,000 union leaders and political and community activists to prevent demonstrations and possible violence during a nationwide strike called to protest higher gasoline prices. In November army troops rounded up 240 Haitians and deported them in a move Haitian officials said was a reprisal for international criticism of Dominican treatment of Haitian immigrants. Tensions arising over the incident required the Dominican government to issue a formal denial that it had plans to invade the sister republic.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of the Dominican Republic can change their government through elections. Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize political parties and civic groups are generally respected. However, the violent political campaigns, the frequent government-labor clashes, and repressive measures taken by police and the military mean that free expression is somewhat circumscribed. Legislative and municipal elections, marred by a record 48 percent abstention rate as well as by violence, were held independently from the presidential contest for the first time in 1998. The election results effectively ended any hopes Fernandez had of garnering

the congressional support needed to overturn a constitutional ban on successive presidential terms.

The judiciary, headed by a supreme court, is politicized and riddled with corruption. The courts offer little recourse to those without money or influence. Prisons, in which nine out of ten inmates have not been convicted of a crime, are grossly overcrowded, with poor health and sanitary conditions, and violence is routine. Torture and arbitrary arrest lead the complaints against the security forces, which, like the rest of the judiciary, is militarized. In 1999, Fernandez chose an army general to head the national police force.

In September 1997 Fernandez moved to clean up the country's antinarcotics forces and to restructure the supreme court in an effort to root out corruption and to reduce growing complaints of human rights abuses by the police. He led the effort in his role as chairman of the National Judicial Council (CNM), which oversees judicial appointments. In the past, responsibility for appointing judges was held by the senate, which tended to increase politicization and de-emphasize professional criteria. The supreme court will take over this role.

The media are mostly private. Newspapers are independent and diverse but subject to government pressure through denial of advertising revenues and taxes on imported newsprint. Dozens of radio stations and at least six commercial television stations broadcast. In 1997 the National Commission on Public Events and Radio Broadcasting shut down dozens of programs with religious-magic content.

Labor unions are well organized. Although legally permitted to strike, they are often subject to government crackdowns. Peasant unions are occasionally targeted by armed groups working for large landowners.

Haitians, including children, work in appalling conditions on state-run sugar plantations. A 1992 labor code recognizes sugar workers' right to organize, but abuses continue. Dominican officials say as many as 400,000 Haitians work as illegal aliens, primarily on the plantations and in agriculture, out of a total of between 1 and 1.5 million living in the Dominican Republic. The children of Haitian immigrants born in the Dominican Republic are refused legal residency by authorities applying what the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States called a "restrictive interpretation" of the Dominican constitution. The denial of residency affects more than 250,000 children.

East Timor

Polity: International protectorate
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 780,000
PPP: na
Life Expectancy: na
Ethnic Groups: Timorese, Javanese, others
Capital: Dili

Political Rights: 6*
Civil Liberties: 4*
Status: Partly Free



Ratings change: East Timor's political rights rating changed from 7 to 6, its civil liberties rating from 6 to 4, and its status changed from Not Free to Partly Free, after the UN began administering East Timor pending full independence, and as the UN administration generally respected personal freedoms despite continuing threats from armed militia groups.

Overview:

In late 1999, East Timor began a fragile transition toward sovereignty following a tumultuous year that included the Indonesian army and state-backed militia's use of atrocities to deter and punish supporters of independence, a popular vote for independence, and the establishment of a United Nations interim administration.

The Portuguese arrived on Timor around 1520, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took formal control of the island's eastern half. In 1974, Lisbon agreed to hold a referendum on self-determination in East Timor. In November 1975 the leftist Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) declared an independent republic. Indonesia invaded in December and in 1976 formally annexed East Timor as its 27th province. By 1979, civil conflict and famine had killed up to 200,000 Timorese. For the next two decades, the poorly equipped armed resistance waged a low-grade insurgency from the rugged interior.

In November 1991, Indonesian soldiers killed dozens of civilians holding a peaceful pro-independence march in the territorial capital of Dili. In 1992, Indonesian soldiers captured the resistance leader Jose "Xanana" Gusmao. In 1993, a court sentenced Gusmao to life imprisonment, subsequently reduced to 20 years, in a sham trial.

The 1996 award of the Nobel Peace Prize to East Timor Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos Horta, the leading East Timorese exile activist, brought renewed international attention to Indonesian abuses in the territory. During and after the May 1997 Indonesian parliamentary election period, East Timorese National Liberation Army (Falintil) guerrillas killed at least nine suspected civilian collaborators and 33 soldiers and police. The army responded by arbitrarily detaining and often torturing hundreds of civilians and committing some killings and "disappearances."

In January 1999, Indonesian President B. J. Habibie unexpectedly announced that he favored granting East Timorese their independence if they rejected autonomy in a referendum. Armed by the Indonesian military, pro-integration militia began systematically attacking pro-independence activists and suspected supporters. On May 5, Indonesia and Portugal, which the UN still recognized as the administering power in East Timor, agreed to a UN-run referendum on self-determination in the territory.

Soldiers and militia forced some 40,000 to 60,000 people outside Dili to flee their homes and continued to commit rights violations with impunity in the weeks leading up to the August 30 referendum, which nonetheless took place under a 98.5 percent turnout. On September 4, the UN announced that 78.5 percent of participating voters had chosen independence over autonomy. That day, militia and soldiers began systematically driving several hundred thousand people into the mountainous interior and more than 200,000 people into West Timor and other parts of Indonesia, killing hundreds of civilians and looting and destroying property. On September 20, a 16-nation, Australian-led force entered East Timor under UN auspices and began restoring order. On October 20, the Indonesian parliament formally relinquished Jakarta's claim to East Timor after 24 years of rule. On October 22, resistance leader Gusmao, whom Indonesian authorities had moved from jail to house arrest in February, returned to the territory. Six days later, the UN Security Council approved a 9,150-strong peacekeeping operation and a 1,640-strong international police force to relieve the interim multilateral force in early 2000.

Militia took control of most refugee camps in West Timor, pressured refugees to remain in Indonesia, and largely prevented humanitarian workers from delivering food, medical assistance, and other supplies. In early December, the UN estimated that 113,000 refugees had returned to East Timor, but said pro-Jakarta militias continued to deny aid groups full access to the camps.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: East Timor began 1999 under Indonesian control and ended the year as a non-self-governing territory under a UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, headed by a senior UN official, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Formal independence is unlikely before 2001 at the earliest. The UN had never recognized Indonesia's 1976 annexation of East Timor, after which a Jakarta-appointed governor ran the territory. The country-in-waiting faces the challenge of holding free elections, drafting a constitution, building virtually all institutions from scratch, and bringing to justice soldiers and militia accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The World Bank estimated that militia and soldiers destroyed or rendered inoperable almost 70 percent of East Timor's physical infrastructure during their September rampage.

Under Suharto, the former Indonesian president, the army, police, and militia groups committed arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, disappearances, extrajudicial killings, rape, and other abuses against pro-independence activists and alleged supporters with near impunity. The militias included military-trained civil defense groups; military-armed groups that conducted operations with regular armed forces against Falintil; and several nominally independent groups armed by the military.

In December 1998, numerous new, nominally independent, military-armed militia began emerging. Following Indonesia's January decision to hold a referendum on self-determination in East Timor, the militia began a systematic campaign of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, rape, arbitrary detention, torture, destruction of homes, and other abuses against members of the National Council for Timorese Resistance—the political wing of the East Timorese resistance—and other pro-independence activists and alleged supporters, as well as human rights monitors, journalists, humanitarian workers, and later, UN staff. Amnesty International (AI) noted in a series of reports that the Indonesian armed forces, and to a lesser extent the police, in some cases either actively participated in killings and other attacks or refrained from intervening. After the at-

tacks intensified in April and May, the Australian government accused the Indonesian military of being "actively involved in encouraging and supporting pro-integrationist militia in East Timor, including through the supply of arms." Prior to the August referendum, militia, the army, and local officials systematically harassed, intimidated, and at times attacked registered voters and UN staff. The violence and intimidation left thousands of internally displaced persons unable to participate in the referendum.

Beginning on September 4, when the UN announced the referendum results, militia and soldiers began targeting independence activists and effectively forced journalists, human rights workers, and UN workers to leave East Timor. The militia and soldiers soon began a systematic campaign of extrajudicial executions, rape, disappearances, and other attacks against civilians that forced hundreds of thousands of people into the mountains or into West Timor and other parts of Indonesia. Militia subsequently seized control of most camps in West Timor and effectively denied many refugees the right to choose freely whether or not to return to East Timor by subjecting them to intimidation, harassment, and in some cases extrajudicial killings, abductions, rape, and forcible recruitment. The militia also frequently harassed and attacked international human rights workers attempting to visit displaced persons. Pro-independence groups charged that Jakarta-backed militias also murdered and raped numerous civilians in the East Timor enclave of Oecussi on the western half of the island.

AI also noted several times during the year that it had received some reports of intimidation by pro-independence groups and allegations of abuses by Falintil, but stressed that pro-integration militia carried out the majority of rights violations. In previous years, Falintil had reportedly carried out some extrajudicial executions and other abuses against suspected civilian collaborators and informants.

The UN is restructuring a judiciary that served as a tool of the state during the Suharto years, when courts regularly jailed dissidents for peaceful pro-independence activities. Following some liberalization in 1998, the militia and the army effectively curtailed many basic freedoms for much of 1999. The multinational force restored basic rights and liberties.

Prior to the May agreement to hold a referendum, the only media in East Timor were the private *Voice of East Timor* newspaper (STT), Indonesian media, and Radio Timor Kmanek (RTK), which the Roman Catholic church established in 1998. Beginning in January 1999, militia threatened, intimidated, and physically attacked hundreds of domestic and foreign journalists, including many working for alternative print and broadcasting outlets that began operating after the May agreement. In April, a pro-integration militia ransacked the STT's office, two weeks after it reported on a massacre on the grounds of a church in the town of Liquica in which militia killed at least 25 people. In September, observers implicated soldiers in the murder of a Dutch journalist for the London-based *Financial Times*, and militia or soldiers killed a journalist and eight other people traveling in a van in the town of Com. Militia also burned down a student-run radio station and the STT's offices. According to the Paris-based *Reporters sans Frontières*, as of November 1999, East Timor had no functioning newspapers and only three stations had resumed broadcasting—RTK and stations run by Fretilin and the UN.

During the Suharto era, authorities tolerated few elements of civil society. In 1999, the army and militia intimidated and at times attacked nongovernmental organization activists and offices, as well as church workers and property in this predominantly Roman Catholic society. The Indonesian government's controversial transmigration program brought thousands of Indonesians to the territory in recent years despite charges that

this reduced economic activity for East Timorese. The new authorities face the challenge of ensuring the safety of these migrants, as well as of East Timorese who favored autonomy. In March, the Associated Press reported that pro-independence groups and student activists had harassed and in some cases attacked many of the roughly 3,000 Indonesian teachers working in East Timor.

↓ Ecuador

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 3

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Status: Free

Population: 12,400,000

PPP: \$4,940

Life Expectancy: 69

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (55 percent), Indian (25 percent), European (10 percent), Black (10 percent)

Capital: Quito

Trend Arrow: Ecuador receives a downward trend arrow because of a marked sense of ungovernability and credible allegations of corruption at the highest levels of government.



Overview:

The newly elected government of President Jamil Mahuad appeared to be in a free fall throughout most of 1999, as economic chaos and street protests portended a growing ungovernability almost unthinkable a year before. Throughout the year, worries that the Colombian civil war was spilling over into Ecuador dominated the headlines, particularly following the murder in February of an Ecuadoran congressman by Colombian death squads and the incorporation into the paramilitary forces of Ecuadoran nationals. In May the last marker was placed on the disputed Peru-Ecuador border, formalizing the peace process that was set into place in 1998. At year's end, Mahuad himself was under investigation by Ecuador's politicized judiciary for allegedly stealing funds from his own 1998 campaign.

Established in 1830 after achieving independence from Spain in 1822, the Republic of Ecuador has endured many interrupted presidencies and military governments. The last military regime gave way to civilian rule when a new constitution was approved by referendum in 1978.

The constitution provides for a president elected for four years, with a runoff between two front-runners if no candidate wins a majority in the first round. The 77-member unicameral National Chamber of Deputies is composed of 65 members elected on a provincial basis every two years and 12 elected nationally every four years.

The 1992 national elections were won by Sixto Durán Ballén, who won 57 percent of the vote, but whose Republican Union Party garnered only 13 of 77 legislative seats. Durán Ballén's term was marked by general strikes against his economic austerity measures, allegations of corruption, indigenous protests against business-backed land reform, and the impeachment of cabinet ministers by an opposition-controlled congress.

In 1996 elections, Abdala Bucarám Ortiz, a former flamboyant mayor of Guayaquil known as "El Loco," won 54 percent of the vote in runoff elections, carrying 20 of Ecuador's 21 provinces. Once in office, Bucarám, who had previously fled the country twice under threat of prosecution for corruption, applied a stringent market-oriented austerity program. The authoritarian flavor and frenetic corruption of his government sparked mass protests.

In February 1997, a 48-hour general strike led by Indians and students prompted congress to depose Bucarám on grounds of "mental incapacity." Parliamentary Speaker Fabian Alarcón was selected as his replacement after the military high command jettisoned its support for Bucarám's vice president and constitutionally mandated successor, Rosalia Arteaga.

In July 1997 Alarcón, himself accused of employing more than 1,000 no-show employees while speaker, dismissed the supreme court, ostensibly to carry out the "depoliticization" of the justice system mandated by the referendum, but in effect removing the chief judge, who was pressing to have the interim president investigated. Despite Alarcón's efforts to be allowed to finish out Bucarám's four-year term, he was met by strong political and civic opposition.

In May 1998, Mahuad, the mayor of Quito, posted a first-place finish in presidential elections in which the runner-up was Alvaro Noboa, who, despite being the candidate of Bucarám's Partido Roldosista Ecuatoriano (PRE), promised that neither the party nor the former president would play any part in his campaign. Mahuad, a Harvard-educated lawyer, bested Noboa, a banana tycoon, 51 to 49 percent in the July 12 runoff election.

In 1999, the economic challenges facing Mahuad appeared daunting, as the country faced its worst crisis in decades. The government was rent with savage infighting and fallout from regional tensions, and often faced violent protests from students, transport workers, and rural Indians. After partially defaulting on its foreign debt in September, the government sought to restructure its external and internal debt through talks with creditors. In November the army high command denounced what it called irresponsible conduct by "certain leaders" which, it said, was threatening the existence of the country's democratic institutions. Citing jurisdictional issues, Mahuad refused to testify on charges he and various aides kept \$3.1 million in campaign contributions for themselves.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through elections, and the 1998 campaign seemed to mark a reversal of what appeared to be a national retreat from electoral means as a way of resolving political differences. Mahuad's victory came after Noboa ran what is believed to be the most expensive national campaign in Ecuadoran history. In 1998, the national constituent assembly decided to retain Ecuador's presidential system. It also mandated that in the year 2002, a presidential candidate will need to win 40 percent of valid votes in first-round balloting and exceed by 10 percent those received by the nearest rival in order to avoid a runoff.

Constitutional guarantees regarding freedom of expression, religion, and the right to organize political parties are generally respected. However, for several years Ecuador appeared to be virtually ungovernable as a result of near-constant gridlock among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, particularly through the use, by congress, of easy and sometimes frivolous votes of censure and impeachment in order to block executive initiatives.

The judiciary, generally undermined by the corruption afflicting the entire political system, is headed by a supreme court that, until 1997, was appointed by the legislature and thus subject to political influence. In reforms approved by referendum in May 1997, power to appoint judges was given over to the supreme court, with congress given a final chance to choose that 31-member body based on recommendations made by a special selection commission.

Evidence suggests that drug traffickers have penetrated the political system through campaign financing, and sectors of the police and military through bribery. Ecuador is a transshipment point for cocaine passing from neighboring Colombia to the United States and a money-laundering haven. In 1999, incursions from both Colombian guerrilla groups and their paramilitary enemies into Ecuadoran territory added to regional concern about the extent to which the neighboring country's civil war would affect public safety and the survival of democratic institutions. The murder of Jaime Hurtado Gonzalez, a congressman and former presidential candidate, in broad daylight in downtown Quito sent shock waves throughout Ecuador's political establishment.

Violent crime has undermined public faith in the police to maintain order. In 1999 a sharp increase was reported in the number of handgun licenses issued by the military. Ecuador has numerous human rights organizations, and despite occasional acts of intimidation, they report on arbitrary arrests and instances of police brutality. The military is responsible for a significant percentage of abuses, particularly when deployed in states of emergency. Abuses, including torture, are committed with relative impunity because police and military personnel are tried in military rather than civilian courts. Indians are frequent victims of the military working with large landowners during land disputes. A corollary has emerged to the continuing lack of access of Native Americans to effective systems of justice: In 1998, Ecuadoran Indians held several U.S. oil company employees against their will, in support of a demand that the firm pay royalties and contribute to health care, education, and housing. In 1999, rural Indians bumed a 15-year-old boy to death after he was accused by the community of robbing houses and mistreating his mother—it was one of 15 such vigilante acts recorded during the year. Gays are also often the victims of police brutality and harassment.

The media are mostly private and outspoken. The government controls radio frequencies.

Labor unions are well organized and have the right to strike, although the labor code limits public sector strikes. Workers in the country's booming flower industry are routinely exposed to harmful pesticides.

Egypt

Polity: Dominant party (military-influenced) **Political Rights:** 6
Civil Liberties: 5*

Economy: Mixed statist **Status:** Not Free

Population: 66,900,000

PPP: \$3,050

Life Expectancy: 65

Ethnic Groups: Eastern Hamitic stock [Egyptian, Bedouin, Berber] (99 percent), other, including Greek, Armenian (1 percent)

Capital: Cairo

Ratings Change: Egypt's civil liberties rating changed from 6 to 5 due to improvements in judicial independence, the release of political detainees, and a reduction in terrorist activity.



Overview:

President Hosni Mubarak won a fourth six-year term in a referendum on September 26, 1999. Official figures put the turnout at 79 percent, with 94 percent voting in favor of the sole candidate. In a speech to parliament after his swearing in, Mubarak identified economic and social stability as his primary goals but gave no indication that he would work to reform Egypt's highly centralized and repressive political system.

Egypt gained formal independence from Great Britain in 1922, though the latter continued to exercise gradually dwindling control until its surrender of the Suez Canal Zone in 1956. Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser became head of state in 1954 after leading a coup that overthrew the monarchy, and ruled until his death in 1970. A constitution adopted in 1971 under Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, grants full executive powers to the president, who is nominated by the 454-member People's Assembly and elected to a six-year term in a national referendum. Sadat was assassinated by Islamic militants in 1981 for making peace with Israel. Under Mubarak, the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) continues to dominate a tightly-controlled political system.

In the spring of 1992, the radical Gamaat Islamiya (Islamic Group) tapped into popular discontent over official corruption, high unemployment, and widespread poverty. It escalated its attacks on the police, Coptic Christians, and tourists in a campaign to establish an Islamic republic by force. The government's response has been the brutal repression of all forms of political dissent. Thousands of suspected militants have been tried and jailed without due process safeguards, and more than 70 political prisoners have been executed under special military courts set up to handle terrorist offenses. The nonviolent Muslim Brotherhood, a fundamentalist movement dating from the 1920s that is officially outlawed but generally tolerated, has been a particular target because of its popularity.

Years of repression appear to have neutralized the threat of Islamic extremism, and ideological rifts and policy disputes within the Gama'at Islamiya and the Muslim Brotherhood have left both groups divided and largely ineffective. Popular support for militants has eroded as a result of their greater emphasis on violence than on alternative policies. In addition, Egypt's rapidly growing economy has mitigated some of the discontent that fueled the spread of militant Islam. In March 1999, the Gama'at an-

nounced the end of its armed campaign against the government, which responded by releasing more than 1,000 of its members from prison.

Despite a dramatic decline in Islamist violence since the massacre of 62 people at Luxor in 1997, the threat of unrest still exists. Unemployment is estimated to be between 10 and 30 percent, and some 23 percent of Egyptians officially live below the poverty line. There is growing frustration with rampant corruption and the government's lack of respect for political and civil rights. A restrictive law on NGOs in May drew angry criticism from domestic and international human rights groups and prompted three activists to begin a hunger strike. Just prior to the presidential referendum in September, opposition parties circulated a petition calling for an end to emergency law, constitutional reform, the release of political prisoners, free elections, and the right to set up political parties. Meanwhile, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and summary justice against political opponents continue, and the more radical Islamist al-Jihad (holy war) vows to continue its war against the government.

Mubarak's new government reflects his commitment to economic reform. In October, he appointed former public enterprise minister Atef Obeid to the post of prime minister and publicly demanded that the government uphold higher standards of honesty, openness, and concern for the poor. Obeid, who spearheaded Egypt's semi-successful privatization program, announced plans to decentralize decision making by giving ministers greater policy-shaping roles and by moving oversight of 16 state agencies out of the prime minister's office. Although Cairo's stock market reacted to the new government with optimism, political opponents see little hope for greater political openness. The 32-member cabinet retains the previous government's ministers of defense, foreign affairs, economy, interior, and information.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Egyptians cannot change their government democratically. The constitution does not allow for a presidential election.

Instead, the elected People's Assembly nominates one candidate to be confirmed in a national referendum. Parliamentary elections in 1995 were characterized by widespread fraud and irregularity. The assembly has limited influence in economic, security, and foreign policy. Almost all legislation is initiated by the executive. The 264-member Shura Council, or upper house of parliament, has no legislative authority; its role is restricted to issuing opinions and reports on topics of its choosing. The NDP dominates the People's Assembly, the Shura Council, and local governments.

The Egyptian political opposition remains weak and ineffective. Requests to form political parties are routinely denied by the NDP-controlled Political Parties Committee (PPC), usually because their platforms are "unoriginal." The PPC has not allowed the establishment of a single party in at least 20 years. There are 14 legal political parties, but the NDP uses the political parties law and other restrictions to impede opposition activities and access to media. Security agents have reportedly infiltrated opposition parties to encourage infighting. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood may not compete in elections because of a ban on religion-based parties. They may run individually as independents, but they are often rounded up and arrested prior to elections.

The Emergency Law has been in effect since Sadat's assassination in 1981 and is up for renewal every three years. Its provisions allow for the arrest without charge of suspected opponents of the regime as well as their families and acquaintances. Am-

nesty International contends that thousands of suspects are currently in custody without charge. Torture, poor prison conditions, and lack of adequate food and medical care are pervasive. According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), five people died in police stations between February and July 1999 as a result of torture by police. Another was reportedly tortured to death in October. Police are rarely held accountable for such cases. In May, charges were dropped against four police officers implicated in the arrest and torture of nearly 1,200 Christians in the fall of 1998.

The Egyptian judiciary operates with limited independence. The president appoints both the general prosecutor and the head of the court of cassation, Egypt's highest court. Law 47/1972 allows the justice minister to interfere with judicial rulings at will. Under Law 25/1996, the president may refer civilian cases to military courts. Since 1992, suspected Gamaat Islamiya and Muslim Brotherhood activists have been tried in military courts, where due process rights are severely curtailed. There is no appellate process for verdicts by military courts; instead, verdicts are subject to review by other military judges and confirmed by the president. While Gamaat convicts are frequently executed, Muslim Brothers have never been sentenced to death. In April, a military court sentenced nine members of al-Jihad to death in absentia for belonging to the militant group. In one positive development, two Muslim Brothers detained in the 1950s were awarded \$9,000 each by a Cairo court for physical and mental torture suffered in prison. In another, a higher administrative court in August annulled a presidential order to send 77 suspected Islamist militants to a military trial, calling the case a civil one.

The Press Law, the Publications Law, the Penal Code, and libel laws all restrict press freedom. Criticism of the president, the government, and foreign heads of state may result in heavy fines or imprisonment. The government owns stock in the three major daily newspapers, and the president appoints their editors in chief. The government also monopolizes the printing and distribution of newspapers. Opposition parties publish newspapers with government subsidies. The information ministry owns and operates all broadcast media. At least 12 journalists were charged in 1999 with such offenses as libeling government officials and spreading "false information harmful to public interests." In August, three journalists with the opposition newspaper *Al-Shaab* were fined and sentenced to two years in prison for libeling the deputy prime minister. In June, the managing editor of *Al-Arabi* was sacked under pressure from the prime minister for opposing government policies.

The interior ministry may withhold approval for public demonstrations under emergency law. The ministry of social affairs has broad powers to merge and dissolve NGOs. Those powers were expanded in May with the passage of a new law on associations, which prohibits NGOs from engaging in "political activity," requires NGOs to receive government approval for all forms of funding, and gives the government the power to approve candidates to NGO boards and to dissolve NGOs for not accomplishing their purposes. In August, the government banned the activities of the Sudanese Organization for Human Rights after it published a report alleging an active slave trade in Sudan. In July, the ministry of social affairs prohibited the establishment of the Egyptian Women's Union on the grounds that a group associated with the ministry is already working to establish such a union.

Women face discrimination in many legal and social matters. Foreign-born husbands and children of Egyptian women are denied Egyptian citizenship, and a woman must have permission from a male relative to travel abroad. A ban on female genital

mutilation took effect in 1997, though it is not widely enforced. In April 1999, the government repealed a law allowing a rapist to avoid punishment by marrying his victim. In a society that links family honor to the chastity of its women, a rape victim may agree to marry her attacker in order to avoid disgracing her family. "Honor killings" occur in both Muslim and Christian communities.

The government portrays itself as a staunch supporter of Islam, the state religion, as it cracks down on fundamentalist influences in academia, mosques, and other institutions. The government had announced its intention to bring all 70,000 of Egypt's mosques under government control by 2000, but nearly half of them remain unlicensed and operate outside government authority. The imams (spiritual leaders) of licensed mosques are chosen and paid by the government, which also monitors sermons. Most Egyptians are Sunni Muslim. Orthodox Copts comprise about ten percent of the population. The Jewish community numbers about 200, and there is a small number of Shia Muslims and Bahais.

Muslims have murdered, kidnapped, raped, or forcibly converted scores of Copts in recent years, and burned or vandalized Copt houses, shops, and churches. The government has seized Coptic church-owned land, has closed churches, and frequently uses an Ottoman Empire-era law to deny permission to build or repair churches. No official has been held accountable for the arrest and reported torture of some 1,200 Copts in late 1998. Authorities claimed that the arrests were meant to preempt sectarian violence resulting from the murder of two Copts in August.

The 1976 law on labor unions sets numerous restrictions on the formation and operation of unions and the conduct of elections. The government-backed Egyptian Trade Union Federation is the only legal labor federation. Article 124 of the Penal Code prohibits labor strikes. In June, Hussein al-Mataani was convicted of fraud, impersonating a journalist, and establishing a union without government permission, and was sentenced to three and a half years in prison. Members of the government-approved Journalists' Syndicate had filed complaints against al-Mataani, accusing him of trying to create discord within the field of journalism.

In a positive development, a Cairo court of appeals overturned a 1996 decision that restricted the activities of the Egyptian Lawyers Union. The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated syndicate leadership was disbanded after charges of corruption and infighting by anti-Islamist members.

Child labor is a serious problem. By law, children under 14 are not allowed to work, except in agriculture, where they may take seasonal jobs at age 12 as long as they do not miss school. The law is routinely ignored, however. An Egyptian study finds that 64 percent of children work before age 14. With poverty and unemployment pervasive in Egypt, many children forego school to help earn money for their families. They find informal-sector jobs, in agriculture or manufacturing, which do not guarantee standard working hours, safety regulations, or stable wages.

El Salvador

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 5,900,000
PPP: \$2,880
Life Expectancy: 69
Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (94 percent), Indian and white (6 percent)
Capital: San Salvador

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free



Overview:

Francisco Flores, the presidential candidate of the long-ruling, rightist *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA), swept to victory in the March 1999 elections, in the aftermath of which the major opposition party, the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN), dominated by former guerrillas, fell back into crisis. Crime and public safety remain grave challenges in one of the most violent countries in the Americas.

Independence from the Captaincy General of Guatemala was declared in 1841, and the Republic of El Salvador was established in 1859. More than a century of civil strife and military rule followed.

Elected civilian rule was established in 1984. The 1983 constitution, and subsequent reforms, provide for a president elected for a five-year term and an 84-member, unicameral national assembly elected for three years. More than a decade of civil war (which left more than 70,000 dead) ended with the United Nations-mediated peace accords signed in 1992 by the FMLN and the conservative government of President Alfredo Cristiani.

The FMLN participated in the 1994 elections, backing its former ally Ruben Zamora of the Democratic Convergence (CD) for president and running a slate of legislative candidates. The incumbent party, ARENA, nominated San Salvador mayor Armando Calderon Sol. The Christian Democrats (PDC) nominated Fidel Chavez Mena. The PDC had previously held power under President Jose Napoleon Duarte (1984-89).

The well-oiled ARENA political machine sounded populist themes and attacked the FMLN as Communists and terrorists. The FMLN-CD coalition offered a progressive but moderate platform and called for compliance with the peace accords. In the March 1994 vote Calderon Sol won just under 50 percent, setting up a runoff against Zamora, who had come in second with 25 percent. In the runoff, Calderon Sol defeated Zamora, 68 percent to 32 percent.

In the March 16, 1997, elections ARENA won 28 congressional seats, 11 fewer than in 1994, to the FMLN's 27, with other parties splitting the difference. The FMLN also dramatically improved its municipal presence, winning 2 of the 3 largest cities (in coalition with other parties), 6 of 14 departmental capitals, and 10 of the 19 municipalities in San Salvador department. At the same time, ARENA suffered significant reversals, reflected in its having won 35 percent of the vote, as compared with 45 percent in previous polls.

In 1998, the FMLN's electoral chances in the following year's elections appeared

to dim, as the party split into hardline Marxist and reformist camps. Although social democratic leader Facundo Guardado, himself a former guerrilla leader and a leading reformist, emerged as the party's presidential nominee, business and social sectors worried that the FMLN was still committed to social revolution.

In 1999, ARENA nominee Flores, a 39-year-old philosopher and the former president of the legislature, beat Guardado in the first round of voting, 51.4 to 28.9 percent, in contrast to the near-tie voting two years earlier. After his inauguration, Flores promised that public security would be a priority issue, in a small country where on average 17 murders are committed each day. Within days, the new president was faced with strikes by public sector workers seeking wage hikes and job security, and the demands of some 50,000 former paramilitaries, who claimed entitlement to bonuses and pensions promised by previous rightist governments. By August a public opinion survey showed that only 16 percent had much faith in Flores.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government democratically. The 1999 elections were free and fair, although there were charges that hurricane relief funds were used by ARENA to elect Flores. Abstentions reached a new high.

The constitution guarantees free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize political parties, civic groups and labor unions. Random killings, kidnappings, and other crimes—particularly in rural areas—have reinforced the country's reputation as one of the most violent countries in Latin America. Although the 1992 peace accords have led to a significant reduction in human rights violations, political expression and civil liberties are still circumscribed by sporadic political violence, repressive police measures, a mounting crime wave, and right-wing death squads, including "social cleansing" vigilante groups. The crime wave has also been fed by the deportation of hundreds of Salvadorans with criminal records from the United States. In 1999, the national assembly approved a law that allows civilians to possess war weapons, such as AK-47s and M-16s, for their own defense.

The judicial system remains ineffectual and corrupt, and a climate of impunity is pervasive. A first step toward judicial reform came in 1994 with the naming by the new legislature of a more politically representative 15-member supreme court, which controls the entire Salvadoran judiciary. Poor training and a lack of sustained disciplinary action for judges, as well as continued corruption, a lack of professionalism, and a painfully slow system of processing cases, greatly undermine public confidence in the justice system.

Although El Salvador is one of the few Latin American countries to restrict military involvement in internal security, in June the army joined police in patrolling San Salvador and some rural districts in a crackdown on gang violence. The National Civilian Police (PNC), which incorporated some former FMLN guerrillas, has yet to prove up to the task of curbing the country's rampant crime while protecting human rights. There are widespread complaints of police brutality and corruption; scores of policemen have been imprisoned on rights charges. Some 348 PNC officers have been killed in the six years since the force was created. Prisons are overcrowded, conditions are wretched, and up to three-quarters of the prisoners are waiting to be charged and tried. Dozens of inmates have been killed during prison riots.

The media are privately owned. Election campaigns feature televised interviews

and debates among candidates from across the political spectrum. Left-wing journalists and publications are occasionally targets of intimidation.

Although the country is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, evangelical Protestantism has made substantial inroads, leading to friction.

Labor, peasant, and university organizations are well organized. The archaic labor code was reformed in 1994, but the new code that was enacted lacks the approval of most unions because it significantly limits the right to organize, in some areas, including the export-processing zones known as *maquiladoras*. Unions that strike are subject to intimidation and violent police crackdowns. According to UNICEF, the number of working children between the ages of 10 and 17 increased from 130,000 in 1995 to 311,000 in 1997.

Equatorial Guinea

Polity: Dominant party (military-dominated)
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 400,000
PPP: \$1,817
Life Expectancy: 48
Ethnic Groups: Fang (83 percent), Bubi (10 percent)
Capital: Malabo

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free



Overview:

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and his backers, almost all from his Esangui clan, have done little to improve the repressive political atmosphere and poor human rights record that have characterized their rule for three decades. The ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea dominated parliamentary elections in March, winning 75 of 80 seats. The polls were neither free nor fair. Led by the Convergence for Social Democracy and the Popular Union, seven opposition parties claimed massive fraud, demanding an annulment, and those that won parliamentary seats refused to take them up. By the end of the month dozens of opposition leaders and their supporters had been arrested. Three opposition party activists arrested in June 1999 remained in prison in November without charge or trial. Amnesty International said at least 90 opposition party activists had been detained for short periods since the beginning of the year.

Equatorial Guinea achieved independence in 1968 following 190 years of Spanish rule. It has since been one of the world's most tightly closed and repressive societies. President Obiang seized power in 1979 by deposing and murdering his uncle, Francisco Macias Nguema. Pressure from donor countries demanding democratic reforms prompted Obiang to proclaim a new "era of pluralism" in January 1992. Political parties were legalized and multiparty elections announced, but in practice Obiang and his clique wield all power.

New oil wealth could help raise living standards in the desperately poor land, but there is no sign that the new revenues are being treated as much more than a personal windfall for the country's leaders.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Equatorial Guinea's citizens are unable to change their government through peaceful, democratic means. The March 1999 parliamentary elections were marred by intimidation and fraud. Many opposition candidates were arrested or confined to their villages prior to the polls. The November 1998 legislative elections for the 85-member House of People's Representatives were also manipulated by the regime. The February 1996 presidential election, too, was neither free nor fair, marred by official intimidation, a near-total boycott by the political opposition, and very low voter turnout. Opposition parties were widely believed to have won overwhelmingly in September 1995 municipal elections. The regime's official results, released 11 days after balloting, reported an unconvincing but unsurprising landslide victory by the ruling party.

Opposition parties are continually harassed and intimidated, especially outside the capital, Malabo. One opposition leader, Plácido Mikó, was detained for one week in September, and security forces reportedly tried to implicate him in a coup plot. Unlawful arrests, beatings, and torture remain commonplace. There are persistent reports of torture by soldiers and police to extract confessions. Prisons conditions are extremely harsh, and Black Beach prison in Malabo is described by survivors as particularly bad. The judiciary is not independent, and laws on search and seizure as well as detention are routinely ignored by security forces, who act with impunity.

President Obiang wields broad decree-making powers and effectively bars public participation in the policymaking process. The November 1991 constitution prohibits the impeachment of the head of state. Opposition parties, while legal, may not be organized on an ethnic, regional, or provincial basis. The opposition activists arrested in June were from the illegal Republican Democratic Force. Mariano Oyono Ndong, Carmelo Biko Ngua, and Antonio Engonga Bibang were detained in Mongomo, the president's hometown. The Progress Party, whose exiled leader was sentenced to more than 100 years imprisonment in absentia for an alleged coup conspiracy, was banned in 1997. Dozens of members of the Convergence for Social Democracy party and the Republican Democratic Force party and other parties, who were arrested in mid-1997, were reportedly tortured.

With partial exception for members of legalized political parties, freedom of association and assembly is not allowed. Opposition demonstrations without prior authorization were banned in 1993. Any gathering of ten or more people for purposes the government deems political is illegal. Freedom of movement is also restricted as citizens and residents must obtain permission for travel both within the country and abroad.

There are continued concerns for 80 members of the Bubi ethnic group who have been held in overcrowded cells in Malabo since they were sentenced by a military court in June 1998, after an unfair trial of 117 people. Many are considered to be prisoners of conscience, arrested because of their ethnic origin. Eleven prisoners, whose death sentences were commuted, continue to be held incommunicado. They had been charged in connection with an attack on barracks on the petroleum-rich island of Bioko, which was blamed on the Bioko Island Self-Determination Movement, which is based among the Bubi people native to the island. They have long been excluded from national power by the country's Fang majority and are now excluded from any real share of the new oil wealth from their home area.

Nearly all media are state run and tightly controlled. A few small independent newspapers publish occasionally but exercise self-censorship, and all journalists must be

registered. Criticism of the president is not tolerated. Some underground pamphlets appear irregularly.

Constitutional and legal protections of equality for women are largely ignored. Traditional practices discriminate against women, and few gain educational opportunities or participate in the formal economy of government. Violence against women is reportedly widespread. About 80 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, and freedom of individual religious practice is generally respected, although President Obiang has warned the clergy against interfering in political affairs.

Unions are permitted by the constitution, but no law enabling their formation has been enacted. Strikes are barred. Thanks to oil, Equatorial Guinea boasts one of the highest figures for per capita gross domestic product in Africa, but few of the benefits have yet to be felt by the average population. The start of offshore oil production in 1995 helped replace subsistence farming and timber as the economic linchpins; U.S. companies dominate the oil sector.

Eritrea

Polity: One-party

Political Rights: 7*

Economy: Mixed statist

Civil Liberties: 5*

Population: 4,000,000

Status: Not Free

PPP: \$820

Life Expectancy: 55

Ethnic Groups: Tigrinya (50 percent), Tigre and Kunama (40 percent), Afar (4 percent), Saho (3 percent)

Capital: Asmara

Ratings Change: Eritrea's political rights rating changed from 6 to 7, its civil liberties ratings from 4 to 5, and its status from Partly Free to Not Free, due the government's hostile attitude towards the development of civil society and multiparty politics which were exacerbated by the war with Ethiopia.



Overview:

Eritrea's continuing, inconclusive war with Ethiopia dominated the country's political and economic agenda in 1999.

The war, which began in 1998, is, on the surface, about territory claimed by both countries. In reality it reflects deeper issues of nationalism and political mobilization by governments that have long used the presence of real or perceived enemies to generate popular support and unity. In 1999 various international actors, including the Organization of African Unity, attempted unsuccessfully to negotiate an end to the hostilities. Thousands of Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were expelled from Ethiopia.

War costs are having a serious impact on Eritrea's economy, as is the loss of access to Ethiopian markets. The war has also impeded Eritrea's progress in developing a de facto and de jure pluralist political system. Externally based opposition groups, some of which are backed by Eritrea's foes in Ethiopia and Sudan, have begun to function.

In 1950, after years of Italian occupation, Eritrea was incorporated into Ethiopia. Eritrea's independence struggle began in 1962 as a nationalist and Marxist guerrilla

war against the Ethiopian government of Emperor Haile Selassie. The seizure of power by a Marxist junta in Ethiopia in 1974 removed the ideological basis of the conflict, and by the time Eritrea finally defeated Ethiopia's northern armies in 1991, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) had discarded Marxism. Internationally recognized independence was achieved in May 1993 after a referendum supervised by the United Nations produced a landslide vote for statehood.

Since 1993, Eritrea has engaged in hostilities with Sudan, Yemen, and in 1998 with Ethiopia. It has also had strained relations with Djibouti. A constitution was adopted in May 1997, but many of its provisions have yet to be implemented. For example, national elections have yet to take place. The expectations raised by President Isaias Afwerki's membership in a group of "new African leaders" who have promised more open governance and a break with Africa's recent tradition of autocratic rule have been largely disappointed by Eritrea's proclivity to settle disputes by the force of arms and continued tight government control over the country's political life.

After a lull of several months in the fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, hostilities resumed in early February, 1990. Estimates of the number of soldiers involved range from 120,000 to 400,000. Early in the year Ethiopian forces succeeded in making territorial gains, pushing the Eritreans out of Badme, one of the disputed localities. The conflict reverted to a form of low-intensity, long-drawn-out warfare. Complex and seemingly interminable negotiations failed to produce a peace settlement, and fighting continued sporadically throughout the year.

Eritrea has now demanded compensation for those deported from Ethiopia and for people displaced by the conflict. In October Ethiopia responded by suing Eritrea for damages due to the war.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Created in February 1994 as a successor to the wartime Eritrean Popular Liberation Front, the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) maintains a dominance over the country's political and economic life that is unlikely to change in the near to medium-term future. The PFDJ appears to continue to have broad public support, although 1999 has been marked by the emergence of opposition parties based outside the country.

In 1994 a 50-member constitutional commission was established. In 1997 a new constitution was adopted, with provisions for a multiparty system. The constitution provides for the election of the president from among the members of the national assembly by a vote of the majority of its members. The term of office is five years, for a maximum of two terms. The national assembly, currently appointed but to be elected by direct and secret ballot by all citizens who are qualified to vote, is the country's highest legislative body.

In reality, Eritrea has yet to institutionalize a democratic political system. No timetable has ever been drafted and adopted concerning implementing legislation and statutes regarding political parties and elections. Independent political parties authorized by the constitution are not yet registered. In 1999 the war with Ethiopia provided a useful rationale for the government to continue to keep this issue unresolved.

The rights of citizens to select their leadership and to associate are, in practice, seriously limited. Many inside and outside the government argue that in the current context, emphasis must be placed on maintaining domestic unity and consensus. Parties based on ethnicity or religion are to be barred.

Eritrea's political culture places priority on group interests over those of the individual. This view has been forged in part by years of struggle against outside occupiers and austere attachment to Marxist principles. Eritrea's aggressive foreign policy has contributed significantly to regional instability and to a sense of victimization among Eritreans, which in turn affords a rationale for continued strong central government control.

The new constitution's guarantees of civil and political liberties are unrealized as pluralistic media and rights to political organization continue to be absent. A judiciary was formed by decree in 1993 and has yet to adopt positions that are significantly at variance with government perspectives. A low level of training and resources limits the courts' efficiency. Constitutional guarantees are often ignored in cases relating to state security. While free discussion in public forum may be tolerated, the dissemination of dissenting views is not. Government control over all broadcasting and pressures against the small independent print media have constrained public debate. A 1997 press law allows only qualified freedom of expression, subject to the official interpretation of "the objective reality of Eritrea."

The government has maintained a hostile attitude towards civil society and has refused international assistance designed to support the development of pluralism in society. Reflecting its roots as a "national liberation" movement, the government controls most elements of civil life, either directly or through affiliated organizations. Often these are characterized as being "mass" based. The absence of independent media and nongovernmental human rights organizations in turn has a dissuasive effect upon the potential development of other civil society groups. Until now, there have been relatively few open expressions of popular sentiment in favor of greater political liberties by the Eritrean people, who are accustomed through years of guerilla struggle, and now the war with Ethiopia, to act collectively and in support of their rulers.

Official government policy is supportive of free enterprise, and citizens generally have the freedom to choose their employment, establish private businesses, and function relatively free of government harassment. Until recently, at least, government officials have enjoyed a reputation for relative probity.

Women played important roles in the guerilla movement, and the government has worked in favor of improving the status of women. Equal educational opportunity, equal pay for equal work, and penalties for domestic violence have been codified, yet traditional societal discrimination persists against women in the largely rural and agricultural country.

Estonia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 1,400,000
PPP: \$5,240

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Estonian (64 percent), Russian (29 percent), Ukrainian (3 percent), other (4 percent)

Capital: Tallinn



Overview:

Despite its first-place finish in March parliamentary elections, the leftist Center Party was consigned to the opposition following the formation of a majority coalition government by the center-right grouping of the Reform Party, Pro Patria, and the Moderates. Pro Patria's Mart Laar, who had served as prime minister between 1992 and 1994, was renamed to the post later that month.

Dominated by Sweden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and annexed by Russia in 1704, Estonia became independent in 1918. Soviet troops occupied the country during World War II, following a secret protocol in the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact which forcibly incorporated Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the U.S.S.R. Under Soviet rule, approximately one-tenth of Estonia's population was deported, executed, or forced to escape to the West. Subsequent Russian immigration substantially altered the country's ethnic composition, with ethnic Estonians constituting 88 percent before World War II and just over 61 percent in 1989. Estonia regained its independence with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Estonia's second post-independence parliamentary elections in March 1995 saw a shift to the center-left Coalition Party/Rural Union (KMU) over the right-of-center Pro Patria/Estonian National Independence Party coalition. The results reflected popular dissatisfaction among the elderly and rural electorate, who were hardest hit by the previous government's market reforms. The KMU subsequently formed a majority coalition government with the leftist Center Party, which held until October 1995, when the Center Party left the coalition and was replaced by the right-of-center Reform Party. In February 1997, Prime Minister Tiit Vahi resigned following allegations of corruption and Mart Siiman of the Coalition Party was named as the new prime minister.

In parliamentary elections held on March 7, 1999, the Center Party won the largest percentage of votes, with 23.4 percent, capturing 28 seats. However, the Reform Party, Pro Patria, and the Moderates, who together took 53 seats, subsequently formed a center-right majority coalition government. The Center Party and its leader Edgar Savisaar, with whom various political forces expressed reluctance to cooperate, was effectively forced into the opposition. The other three parties which secured enough votes to enter parliament were the centrist Coalition Party and the left-of-center Country People's Party, each of which took seven seats, and the United People's Party, representing some of the country's large ethnic Russian population, which captured six seats.

Local elections held in October saw the lowest voter turnout, at 49.4 percent, of any municipal or parliamentary election since independence. Apathy among the electorate following the hard-fought national campaign in March was among the reasons cited by analysts for the poor showing. While the Center Party took the lead in the capital of Tallinn and the industrial northeast where many ethnic Russians reside, the three members of the national governing coalition enjoyed victories in several other cities.

In February, parliament adopted amendments to the language law requiring those working in the service sector, including business people, public servants, and local government workers, to possess fluency in Estonian for their work. The law, which went into effect in July, was criticized by political parties representing Russian speakers and by representatives of some international organizations. The amendments had followed the adoption of legislation in December 1998 requiring candidates for public office to demonstrate sufficient proficiency in Estonian to participate in debates and understand legal acts.

The ongoing effects of the Russian economic crisis of August 1998 led to negative growth in Estonia's economy during the first half of 1999. Unrealistic growth expectations built into Estonia's 1999 budget by the outgoing parliament forced the legislature to adopt a 1 billion *kroon* (\$67.2 million) cut in the state budget in June after weeks of intense debate. By law, the state budget must be balanced each year. Privatization of the last major infrastructure projects, including railroads and energy, was slated to be completed by the end of 1999. However, the process stalled because of procedural problems and bureaucratic postponements. In November, Estonia became the 135th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Estonians can change their government democratically. However, the country's citizenship law has been criticized for disenfranchising many Russian speakers who arrived in Estonia during the Soviet era and are regarded as immigrants who must apply for citizenship. Although noncitizens may not participate in national elections, they can vote, but not serve as candidates, in local elections. The 1992 constitution established a 101-member unicameral legislature elected for four-year terms, with a prime minister serving as head of government and a president as head of state. After the first president was chosen by popular vote in 1992, subsequent presidential elections reverted to parliamentary ballot. According to international observers, the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections were free and fair.

The government respects freedom of speech and the press. There are three national and five local or regional private television stations which broadcast both Estonian- and Russian-language programs. Close to 40 radio stations operate throughout the country, of which five are state-owned. Dozens of privately run national and regional newspapers offer diverse viewpoints. Religious freedom is respected in law and practice in this predominantly Lutheran country.

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, and the government respects this provision in practice. Political parties are allowed to organize freely, although only citizens may be members. Workers have the right to organize freely, to strike, and to bargain collectively. One-third of the country's labor force belongs to one of the three main trade union organizations, which are independent of the state.

The judiciary is independent and judges may not hold any other elected or appointed office. There have been credible reports that some police officers use excessive force and verbal abuse during the arrest and questioning of suspects. Despite recent improvements in the country's prison system, overcrowding and a lack of financial resources and adequately trained staff remain a problem.

Of Estonia's population of just under 1.5 million, more than 1 million are Estonian citizens, of which approximately 110,000 have been naturalized since 1992. On December 8, 1998, parliament amended the Citizenship Law to allow stateless children born in Estonia after February 26, 1992, to legally resident stateless parents to acquire Estonian citizenship at the request of their parents and without having to pass a language test. In 1999, only 4,533 people became new Estonian citizens, down by half from the previous year. Of the total number, 2,444 were children of noncitizens who were granted automatic citizenship under the new Citizenship Law amendments.

Women enjoy the same legal rights as men, although they are underrepresented in senior-level positions and the government.

Ethiopia

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 5*

Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 5*

Population: 57,700,000 **Status:** Partly Free

PPP: \$510

Life Expectancy: 42

Ethnic Groups: Oromo (40 percent), Amhara and Tigrean (32 percent), Sidamo (9 percent), Shakella (6 percent), Somali (6 percent), Afar (4 percent), Gurage (2 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Addis Ababa

Ratings Change: Ethiopia's political rights and civil liberties ratings changed from 4 to 5 due to limitations on opposition political parties and civic organizations to undertake activities and disseminate information.



Overview:

Ethiopia's political life in 1999 was overshadowed by its ongoing border war with Eritrea. Intermittant fighting continued throughout the year, interspersed with drawn-out and inconclusive negotiations. An Ethiopian offensive in February resulted in some territorial gains. Ethiopia was criticized for expelling, usually on short notice, Eritreans resident in Ethiopia, many of whom had lived there for generations. Human rights groups estimated the number at more than 50,000.

Although relatively few Ethiopians were directly affected by the conflict with Eritrea, it did have an impact on the political environment. The war proved an effective tool of political mobilization for the government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, since opposition to policies pursued by the government could be equated with a lack of patriotism, or even treason. The growth of nationalist sentiment resulted in fewer overt instances of jailings or other forms of political intimidation than in previous years, although this did not translate into productive dialogue among the country's polarized

political groupings. A deeply embedded, winner-take-all political culture suggests that major opposition parties may decide to boycott parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2000.

Ethiopia is the third most populous country in Africa, with a mixed ethnic makeup reflecting its imperial heritage. The Ethiopian Coptic Church is influential, particularly in the north. There is a large Muslim community in the south, made up mainly of Arabs, Somalis, and Oromos. Christians and Moslems account for approximately 40 percent each of the population, with the remainder largely animists.

Ethiopia's long tradition of imperial rule ended in 1974, when Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in a Marxist military coup. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam subsequently became the leader of a brutal dictatorship that lasted until it was overthrown by a coalition of guerilla groups in 1991. These groups were spearheaded by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), itself an alliance of five parties.

The EPRDF government instituted a transition period that resulted in the establishment of formal democratic institutions. There are currently more than 60 legally recognized political parties active in Ethiopia, although the political scene continues to be dominated by the EPRDF. Opposition parties claim that their ability to function is seriously impeded by government harassment, although other observers note that these parties are often reluctant to participate in the political process. There is a small but growing civil society, which has been subject to some restrictions by the government.

A constitution adopted in 1994 established a federal system of government, with power vested in a directly elected 548-member, the Council of People's Representatives. The first official multiparty elections to the council in 1995 gave 540 seats to the EPRDF and linked parties. A second chamber of parliament, the 117-member Federal Council, represents ethnic minorities and professional groups. Ethiopia is made up of nine federal regions.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

In principle, the 1995 constitution is an extremely progressive document. The government has devolved some power to regional and local governments and courts.

The constitution provides for a broad range of democratic institutions and political activity, including the right of secession. As with many elements of the Ethiopian political system, however, the reality differs. The EPRDF today controls all of the elected regional councils directly or with coalition partners. It is highly unlikely that any region would in fact be allowed to secede.

Executive power is vested in a prime minister, who is selected by the Council of People's Representatives. The May 1995 legislative elections were tarnished, however, by substantial government manipulation and inadequate protection of basic rights, including a crackdown on the independent media in the months before the vote. Most of the leading opposition groups boycotted the May 1995 parliamentary elections. It does not appear that the scheduled year 2000 elections will represent any improvement. The speaker of the Council of People's Representatives, has stated, for example, that independent foreign election observers would not be welcome during the elections. The Ethiopian government continues to selectively harass opposition parties, and impede their ability to participate in the political process.

Opposition parties also bear some responsibility for limiting in practice the right of

Ethiopian people to express their political preferences. Many parties have refused to participate openly in the nation's political life. Some have supported, either directly or indirectly, armed resistance to the government. A rebellion in the south by the banned Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, for example, continues at a low level. Oromos constitute 40 percent of Ethiopia's population of nearly 60 million. OLF supporters have been imprisoned or detained without trial.

Amnesty International reported that thousands of Eritreans living in Ethiopia have been rounded up and forcibly deported. The organization said 52,000 Eritreans have been deported from Ethiopia since the war began. The international human rights organization charged that the deportations in Ethiopia have developed into a "systematic, country-wide operation to arrest and deport anyone of full or part Eritrean descent." The Ethiopian government claims that even Eritreans with Ethiopian citizenship pose a threat to national security, given the fighting between the two countries. Amnesty International said it could find no evidence to support Ethiopia's charges that 40,000 of its citizens have been seriously ill-treated and forcibly deported from Eritrea since May, 1990.

A 1992 law guarantees freedom of the press. However, it also forbids publishing articles that are defamatory, threaten the safety of the state, agitate for war, or incite ethnic conflict. Journalists also can be jailed for publishing secret court records. Broadcast media remain under close scrutiny by the government. Harassment and intimidation of the independent print media have led to significant self-censorship.

Prior to the war with Eritrea, much of the independent press did criticize Ethiopia's friendly relations with its neighbor. Harassment of the independent press lessened considerably as the war with Eritrea heated up, and the government policy toward Eritrea shifted. At the end of March 1999, for example, the number of reporters in jail had dropped to 11 from a high of about two dozen at the end of 1998. According to the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists' Association, only one of the journalists who remains in jail was arrested after the border war began.

Women traditionally have few land or property rights and, especially in rural areas, have few opportunities for employment beyond agricultural labor. Violence against women and social discrimination are reportedly common despite legal protections. Trade union freedom to bargain and strike has not yet been fully tested. Religious freedom is generally respected. Privatization programs are proceeding, and the government has undertaken a major financial liberalization reform program to attract foreign investment. The judiciary is officially independent, although there are no significant examples of decisions at variance with government policy.

Fiji

Polity: Parliamentary democracy and traditional chieftains

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 800,000

PPP: \$3,990

Life Expectancy: 63

Ethnic Groups: Fijian [Melanesian-Polynesian] (49 percent), Indian (46 percent), other (5 percent)

Capital: Suva

Political Rights: 2*

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Ratings Change: Fiji's political rights rating changed from 4 to 2, and its status from Partly Free to Free, due to the holding of elections under new, fairer electoral laws.

Overview:

The opposition Indo-Fijian-based Labor Party won the first elections in March 1999 under a new constitution that ended the indigenous Fijians' decade-old, guaranteed monopoly on power.

Fiji's paramount chiefs ceded sovereignty over these South Pacific islands to the British in 1874 to end territorial conquests among rival kingdoms. In 1879 the British began bringing Indian laborers to work on plantations. At independence in 1970, the indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities were roughly equal in population.

Following 17 years of rule by the indigenous Fijian Alliance Party, the 1987 elections brought the first Indo-Fijian-led government to power. Backed by hard-line indigenous Fijians alarmed at the emerging political influence of the economically successful Indo-Fijian community, Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka took power in the Pacific's first coups in May and September 1987.

The 1990 constitution created separate indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian electoral constituencies, required the prime minister to be an indigenous Fijian, and guaranteed indigenous Fijians a perpetual parliamentary majority by reserving for them 37 of the 70 seats in the house of representatives. Elections in 1992 and 1994 led to coalition governments headed by Rabuka's Fijian Political Party (SVT).

In July 1997, parliament unanimously passed constitutional amendments ending the indigenous Fijians' guaranteed parliamentary majority and permitting an Indo-Fijian premier. The amendments created a 71-seat house with 25 seats open to all races, 23 for indigenous Fijians, 19 for Indo-Fijians, 3 for "general electors" (mainly whites and ethnic Chinese), and 1 for Rotuma Island. The amendments also required the largest party in parliament to invite parties crossing a certain threshold into government, with the objective of creating a multiracial government. The Great Council of Chiefs, a group of unelected, traditional rulers, still appoints the largely ceremonial president, and the senate is still appointed.

In the March 8-15, 1999 elections, Labor swept all 19 Indo-Fijian constituencies and took 18 of the 25 open constituencies for a total of 37 seats. The Fijian Association Party (FAP) won 10 seats (including 9 of the 23 indigenous Fijian constituencies); the SVT, 8; four smaller parties, 11; and independents, 5. Labor leader and Indo-Fijian Mahendra Chaudhry, 56, became prime minister as the head of a 52-seat, multiracial

coalition government that included the FAP and other parties. Rabuka quit his parliamentary seat and became chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The 1999 elections were the first under a new electoral system that continued to be weighted in favor of indigenous Fijians (despite a rough population parity between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians), but no longer guaranteed them a parliamentary majority.

In 1998, parliament approved the controversial Emergency Powers Act, which authorizes the president to declare a state of emergency that would empower parliament to impose broad press and communications censorship, seize private property, conduct searches without warrants, and ban public meetings. In March 1999, President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara appointed a three-member human rights commission in accordance with the 1997 constitution.

The judiciary is independent. Police abuse of detainees and prisoners is a persistent problem.

The private press includes two English-language dailies and several Fijian- and Hindi-language weeklies. Newspapers vigorously report on alleged official corruption and ethical violations. Both the SVT-led government and the new Labor-led government have criticized the print media over their reporting, generally without providing any factual grounds for the criticism. In February 1999, the Labor-led opposition criticized the government's purchase of a 44 percent stake in the *Daily Post*. In June, the new Labor-led government ordered government advertising to be placed only in the *Daily Post*, on the grounds that the government was the paper's largest shareholder. The move disadvantaged the *Fiji Times*, the larger of the two dailies, whose political coverage the government had recently criticized. On December 30, the government gave the editor-in-chief of the *Fiji Times*, who is originally from Scotland, 28 days to leave the country after rejecting an appeal against the Immigration Department's refusal to renew the editor's three-year work permit.

The seldom-used Public Order Act prohibits speech or actions likely to incite racial antagonism. The Parliamentary Privileges and Powers Act (PPPA) authorizes jail terms of up to two years for breaching parliamentary privilege. Under the SVT-led government, the privilege committees of the house and senate initiated several actions against the *Fiji Times* over its reporting of parliamentary proceedings, but no action was taken. In August, the editors of the two daily newspapers appeared before the house privileges committee; the papers had reported on a question by a member of parliament on the floor, regarding an ethical matter, that the speaker had ruled was out of order. Radio is a key source of information on the outer islands, and there are both publicly and privately held stations. The partially private Fiji One Television provides objective news coverage.

Rape and domestic violence are relatively serious problems. In some rape cases, the practice of *bulubulu* (traditional reconciliation) allows the offender to apologize to a victim's relatives to avoid a felony charge. Cultural norms relegate many women to traditional roles, although women have made inroads in the civil service and professions. Indo-Fijians occasionally face racially motivated harassment and are underrepresented in the senior civil service.

The incoming government pledged to resolve longstanding tensions over land rights. Indigenous Fijians hold 83 percent of the land, while Indo-Fijians are the primary cash

crop farmers and hold leases under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act. In 1997, leases under the act began expiring, and many indigenous Fijian landowners want to convert their land to development use.

Indo-Fijians hold leading posts in the vigorous, independent trade union movement. Working conditions, particularly in the garment and canning industries, are often poor, and enforcement of safety standards is weak.

Finland

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 5,200,000

PPP: \$20,150

Life Expectancy: 77

Ethnic Groups: Finn (93 percent), Swede (6 percent), other, including Lapp (Saami) and Gypsies (1 percent)

Capital: Helsinki



Overview:

In March, Finland's fragile coalition government, led by Paavo Lipponen of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), won reelection to another four-year term. Although the SDP lost 12 of the 63 seats it had held since the 1995 elections, the coalition (including the SDP, the National Coalition Party, the Left Alliance, the Greens, and the Swedish People's Party) won more than half the seats in Finland's 200-seat unicameral parliament, the Eduskunta.

During 1999, Finland joined the European Monetary Union and continued its integration into the European Union (but not, so far, into NATO). In July, Finland assumed the rotating EU presidency, the first time it has done so since joining the union in 1995.

The achievement of Finnish independence followed some eight centuries of foreign domination, first by Sweden (until 1809) and subsequently as a Grand Duchy within the prerevolutionary Russian empire.

Finland's current constitution, issued in July 1919, was amended in February 1999. The new constitution diminishes the power of the president (which was unusually broad under the former constitution) while increasing the power of the parliament. Parliament is thus established as the supreme political organ. The president of the republic, however, will retain competence in such fields as foreign policy and proposition of legislation and will retain the power to dissolve parliament and to appoint the most senior public officials. In addition, the president will remain the commander in chief of the armed forces of Finland. The new constitution goes into effect in March 2000.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Finns can change their government by democratic means. The Aland Islands, populated mainly by Swedes, have their own provincial parliament. The local Liberal Party won the elections that took place in mid-October, 1999. The result seems to have been something

of a blow to earlier demands for even greater autonomous powers in Åland, as the Liberals do not share the Free Conservative and Centre Party beliefs that the current system is inadequate.

Finland has a large variety of newspapers and magazines and the highest number of Internet users per capita in the world. Newspapers are privately owned, some by political parties or their affiliates; many others are controlled by or support a particular party.

The rights of ethnic and religious minorities are protected. The Saamis (or Lapps), who make up less than one percent of the population, are guaranteed cultural autonomy by the constitution. Both Finnish and Swedish are official languages of the country. In recent years, concern has risen about increasing instances of racist and xenophobic behavior. Finland receives on average 700 to 900 asylum seekers per year. To facilitate their absorption, the government has revised Finland's Aliens Law and adopted a new law promoting the integration of immigrants into Finnish society. Both laws took effect on May 1, 1999.

Finns enjoy freedom of religion, and both the predominant Lutheran Church and the smaller Orthodox Church are financed through a special tax from which citizens may exempt themselves. The archbishop and the bishops of the Lutheran Church are appointed by the president.

Finnish workers have the right to organize, bargain, and strike, and an overwhelming majority belong to trade unions. The 1.1 million-member Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions, which is linked to the SDP, dominates the labor movement.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, consisting of the supreme court, the supreme administrative court and the lower courts. The president appoints supreme court justices, who in turn appoint the lower court judges. In 1999, the number of people in Finland's 23 prisons did not exceed 3,000.

Gender-based equality is guaranteed by law. In 1906, Finland became the first country in Europe to give women full political entitlement, including the right to vote and hold office; women now constitute 37 percent of the parliament. Among the candidates for the year 2000 presidential elections, four are women.

France

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 59,100,000

PPP: \$22,030

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: French, regional minorities (Corsican, Alsatian, Basque, Breton), various Arab and African immigrant groups

Capital: Paris

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

A series of political scandals tainted the French political establishment in 1999. France's finance minister resigned in the

midst of a financial controversy, and President Jacques Chirac and the mayor of Paris, Jean Tiberi, were implicated in electoral fraud investigations. Separatists on the French island of Corsica carried out bombings on the island amid calls for greater autonomy. French relations with Britain worsened during the year over France's refusal to import British beef, resulting in legal action against France by the European Union (EU). In his third year in office, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, of the Socialist Party, continued to preside over a rebounding French economy. Unemployment rates, however, remained at more than 11 percent.

Jospin began a government of "cohabitation" with President Jacques Chirac, a conservative, after winning an upset election in 1997. Although the Socialists won an absolute majority in the national assembly (parliament), Jospin named some ministers from the Communist and other leftist parties. The Communists have vowed to increase pressure on Jospin to increase taxes and social reforms, halt the privatization of state-owned companies, and end efforts to obtain French membership in the European Monetary Union and accession to the EU's Amsterdam Treaty.

In recent years, the National Front, a far-right party led by the racist Jean-Marie Le Pen, has exerted strong influence in regional politics, but it suffered a series of setbacks in 1998, most notably the banning of Le Pen from politics for one year. In January the party split in two after Bruno Megret, leader of a rebel faction, claimed leadership of the National Front. The move touched off a series of legal proceedings to decide which faction had rights to the party name and symbol.

In September, French media reports disclosed that a judicial probe into 1995 Paris mayoral elections turned up evidence of fraud in two Paris districts, both traditional strongholds of Mayor Jean Tiberi, who had won the election. Hundreds of pro-Tiberi ballots had allegedly been turned in from voters not living in the districts. In October, President Chirac and Tiberi were named in the press in association with an electoral fraud scandal emanating from the 1989 Paris city elections, when Chirac was mayor and Tiberi his deputy. According to reports, Chirac's Rally for the Republic party (RPR) plotted to ensure victory by registering hundreds of fake voters.

In November, Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn, considered the architect of France's economic revival during the last two years, resigned amid implications of his role in a financial scandal. According to media reports, he allegedly forged documents to justify payments for work he never conducted while a lawyer in the mid-1990s. The allegations stem from a wider investigation into how France's student health insurance group, the MNEF (Mutuelle Nationale des Étudiants de France), run by officials close to the Socialist Party, may have funneled funds to the party. Strauss-Kahn allegedly took some of the money for himself.

After World War II, France established a parliamentary Fourth Republic, which was governed by coalitions and ultimately failed because of the Algerian war. The Fifth Republic began in 1958 under Prime Minister (and later President) Charles de Gaulle. Election of the president by popular suffrage began in 1965. In 1992, French citizens narrowly approved European political and economic union under the Maastricht Treaty.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: French citizens can change their government democratically by directly electing the president and national assembly. The constitution grants the president significant emergency powers, including rule by decree under certain circumstances. The president may call ref-

erenda and dissolve parliament, but may not veto its acts or routinely issue decrees. Decentralization has given mayors significant power over housing, transportation, schools, culture, welfare, and law enforcement. The judiciary is independent.

In March the parliament passed a legal reform bill setting maximum limits on detention of suspects during a criminal investigation. Also included in the bill was the formation of "detention judges" to rule on the justification of incarceration. Additionally, those being held for interrogation must have immediate access to an attorney. Supporters of the reform bill, concerned over possible abuses of power by judges, had contended that old laws allowed for excessive detention periods during inquiries, and had unfairly presumed guilt over innocence.

France has drawn criticism for its treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers. Despite legal provisions authorizing refugee seekers to cross the border without visas or identity papers, border guards have occasionally used excessive force to discourage crossings.

The status of foreigners in France is confused by a succession of sometimes contradictory immigration laws. The National Front and other far-right groups have gained popularity by blaming immigrants for high unemployment. In fact, the jobless rate of immigrants is three times higher than that of the native French.

Soon after taking office, Prime Minister Jospin eased the country's residency rules by giving illegal immigrants a one-year period to apply for legal residency. Approximately 150,000 of the country's estimated one million illegal residents applied for papers. Government officials stated that approximately two-thirds of the applicants would be allowed to remain in France. The government further eased residency requirements by allowing foreigners to remain in France legally if they are seriously ill, if they are joining family members who are legally present, or if they are single, financially self-sufficient, long-term residents.

The press in France is free, although the government's financial support of journalism and the registration of journalists have raised concerns about media independence. Publication of opinion polls results is prohibited in the week preceding any election.

Despite open suspicion toward Muslims and prohibitions against wearing religious garb or symbols in state schools, religious freedom is protected. In September the government upheld a decision to expel two Muslim girls from their junior high school for wearing Islamic scarves in class. In October, France's highest administrative court upheld the ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in public schools, on the grounds that schools have the right to insist that students dress in a way that ensures the proper functioning of a class.

In the fall, separatists carried out several bombings on the French island of Corsica. The attacks, mostly at night so as to avoid casualties, were carried out after Corsica prefect Bernard Bonnet was implicated the previous spring in an arson attack on a restaurant on the island. In September, separatists defied a government call to end violence by attacking the island's airport. Prime Minister Jospin warned that no negotiations over Corsican self-government would take place while separatists committed violent acts. In October the Corsican National Liberation Front-Historic Wing took responsibility for two more bombings, which targeted government offices.

Labor rights in France are respected in practice, and strikes are widely and effectively used to protest government economic policy. In October the French parliament

adopted a Socialist-sponsored law to shorten the workweek from 39 to 35 hours. French employers, claiming the law would reduce efficiency and raise costs, staged a protest rally in Paris following the law's passage. Also in October, tens of thousands of high school students staged nationwide protests against the government's failure to follow through on promises made in 1998 to refurbish schools, hire more teachers, and reduce the size of classes. The promises were made in the wake of similar protests in 1998.

Women enjoy equal rights. In October, the French parliament passed the Civil Solidarity Pact, granting legal rights for all couples living together, including same-sex partners.

Gabon

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Capitalist
 (highly corrupt)
Population: 1,200,000
PPP: \$7,550
Life Expectancy: 54
Ethnic Groups: Fang, Eshira, Bapounou, Bateke, other
 Bantu, other Africans, Europeans
Capital: Libreville

Political Rights: 5

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview: President Omar Bongo was sworn in for another seven-year term in January, maintaining his position as one of Africa's longest-serving heads of state. He has used patronage, manipulation, and intimidation to retain power behind a facade of democratic institutions. Bongo reduced the size of his cabinet by one-quarter in December 1999 to trim the state budget after pressure by trade unions stopped him from cutting the salaries of civil servants by 20 percent. The political opposition continued to be fragmented and posed little real challenge to the administration. Press freedom suffered a setback in October 1999 when authorities suspended four private radio and television stations after accusing them of illegal broadcasting. The government dominates the broadcast media, which reach a far wider audience than independent newspapers.

Despite a world drop in the price of oil, which drives Gabon's economy, the capital, Libreville, ranked fourth among the Economist Intelligence Unit's list of the most expensive cities in the world. Libreville is the only city in a developing country that was included. Little of the country's oil wealth trickles down to the average Gabonese, most of whom are subsistence farmers, while three decades of autocratic and corrupt rule have made Bongo among the world's richest men. State institutions are influenced or controlled by Bongo and a small elite, with strong backing by the army and France. The highly profitable French Elf Aquitaine oil company plays a dominant role in the country's economic and political life.

Straddling the equator on central Africa's west coast, Gabon gained independence from France in 1960. Bongo, whom France raised from soldier to president in 1967, completed his predecessor's consolidation of power by officially outlawing the oppo-

sition. France, which maintains 600 marines in Gabon, has intervened twice to preserve Bongo's regime. In 1990, protests prompted by economic duress forced Bongo to accept a conference that opposition leaders hoped would promote a peaceful democratic transition. But Bongo retained power in rigged 1993 elections that sparked violent protests, which were repressed by his presidential guards.

The 1994 Paris Accords claimed to institute true democratic reforms. Municipal elections in 1996 saw major opposition gains, including the election of Paul Mba Abbesole, the leader of the largest opposition party, as mayor of Libreville. Legislative polls delayed by decree until December 1996 were again beset by fraud as Bongo's Gabon Democratic Party won an overwhelming, but unconvincing, victory.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Gabon's citizens have never been able to exercise their constitutional right to change their government democratically, despite a gradual political opening since 1990. There are more than ten political parties. Bongo's 1998 electoral victory with 61 percent of the vote followed a campaign that made profligate use of state resources and state media. The polling, which was partially boycotted by the opposition, was marked by serious irregularities. The nominally independent National Election Commission, which was created under the new constitution approved by referendum in 1995, proved neither autonomous nor competent. Legislative elections have also been seriously flawed.

The judiciary suffers from political interference. Rights to legal counsel and public criminal trials are generally respected, but the law presumes guilt. Judges may deliver summary verdicts, and torture remains a standard route to producing confessions. Prison conditions are marked by beatings and insufficient food, water, and medical care. The government often detains refugees without charge, and there are reports of forced labor by detainees. The right of assembly and association is constitutionally guaranteed, but permits required for public gatherings are sometimes refused. Freedom to form and join political parties is generally respected, but civil servants may face harassment based on their associations. Nongovernmental organizations operate openly, although the Gabonese League of Human Rights has reported threats and harassment. Tanks and armored vehicles were deployed briefly in the capital in July 1999 to curb a rise in violent crime. Three immigrant taxi drivers were shot dead when they refused to be searched for illegal weapons. Taxi drivers and immigrants from Nigeria, Cameroon, and Benin were the main targets.

One government daily and approximately one dozen private weeklies, which are primarily controlled by opposition parties, are published. Only a few private broadcasters have been licensed, and their viability is tenuous. A 1998 crackdown on private media has raised serious concerns for free expression. Foreign newspapers, magazines, and broadcasts are usually widely available, but editions criticizing Bongo have been seized. In October 1999 communications officials suspended four private radio and television stations after accusing them of illegal broadcasting. It said the two radio stations, Notre Dame de Perpetuel Secours and Radio Liberte, and the two television stations, TV and Woleu Vision, failed to meet the requirements of audiovisual communication in the country despite several warnings. One of the broadcasters is based in the northern province of Woleu Ntem, which is a potential threat to government broadcasters because it also has listeners far from the capital.

Most workers are unionized, although unions must register with the government in

order to be officially recognized. Despite legal protections, the government has taken action against numerous strikers and unions and used force to suppress illegal demonstrations. While no legal restrictions on travel exist, harassment on political and ethnic bases has been reported. Religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed and respected. An official ban on the Jehovah's Witnesses is not enforced.

Legal protections for women include equal-access laws for education, business, and investment. In addition to owning property and businesses, women constitute more than 50 percent of the salaried workforce in the health and trade sectors. Women continue to face legal and cultural discrimination, particularly in rural areas, and are reportedly subjected to widespread domestic violence.

The Gambia

Polity: Dominant party (military-dominated)
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 1,300,000
PPP: \$1,470
Life Expectancy: 45
Ethnic Groups: Mandinka (42 percent), Fula (18 percent), Wolof (16 percent), Jola (10 percent), Serahuli (9 percent), other (5 percent)
Capital: Banjul

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The Gambia's military-dominated government continued its intolerance of dissent with crackdowns on political opponents and the press. President Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh took no steps to bring the country closer to democratic rule and instead lashed out at Western donors for linking aid to human rights and democracy. Aid has not been forthcoming since Jammeh seized power as an army lieutenant in 1994. Members of the opposition United Democratic Party were subject to arrests and harassment. A number of journalists were expelled and a newspaper close to the opposition was closed by authorities. A new draft bill further tightens restrictions on the media.

Jammeh was proclaimed president after a show election in September 1996. Legislative elections in January 1997 produced a sweeping victory for the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction party, but were deeply flawed. Abuses by the military and National Intelligence Agency (NIA) continued, and security forces acted with impunity. Among them is a paramilitary group known as the July 22nd Movement, so named for the day Jammeh seized power.

The Gambia functioned as an electoral democracy under President Sir Dawda K. Jawara and his People's Progressive Party for almost 30 years after independence from Britain in 1965. Senegal, which borders The Gambia on three sides, intervened to reverse a 1981 coup by leftist soldiers. The two countries formed the Confederation of Senegambia a year later, but The Gambia withdrew in 1989. Senegal declined to rescue the Jawara government again when Jammeh struck in 1994.

The leaders of the 1994 coup denounced the ousted government's alleged corrup-

tion, and promised transparency, accountability, and early elections. Instead, they quickly imposed draconian decrees curtailing civil and political rights and the free media. A reported November 1994 countercoup was apparently crushed, and several alleged plotters were summarily executed. Several other coup attempts have been reported.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Gambia's citizens are denied their right to choose or change their government democratically. The country's 1996 presidential and 1997 legislative elections were neither free nor fair. The 1996 presidential contest barred the most formidable opposition candidates and was marked by military intimidation of the opposition and heavy use of state resources and media to promote Jammeh's candidacy. A new constitution adopted by a closely controlled 1996 referendum allowed Jammeh to transform his military dictatorship to a nominally civilian administration.

The Jammeh regime has awarded itself extensive repressive powers. A 1995 decree allows the NIA to cite "state security" to "search, arrest, or detain any person, or seize, impound, or search any vessel, equipment, plant, or property without a warrant." The interior minister may arrest without warrant anyone "in the interest of the security, peace, and stability of The Gambia." In such cases, the right to seek a writ of habeas corpus is suspended. The Gambia's legal system exists in form, but with little substance. Arbitrary detention and the denial of due process are common. Extrajudicial killings and torture in jails and barracks have been reported. Except for religious observances, public assembly is severely limited. Human rights groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) still operate in several areas. Severe and life-threatening conditions prevail in Gambian prisons.

The independent press has been a constant target of Jammeh's repression. Possession and distribution of documents deemed to be "political literature" are barred by decree. License fees for private radio stations and newspapers have more than doubled. The Gambian Press Union is lobbying for changes to a new draft bill that would further regulate media activities. The National Communication and Information Policy draft would make annual registration compulsory for all media houses and journalists, and give extra powers to the minister of information, allowing him to revoke registration licenses.

State-run Radio Gambia broadcasts only tightly controlled news that is also relayed by private radio stations. A single government-run television station now operates. Since February 1998, Citizen FM, which had programs in English and indigenous languages, has been prevented from broadcasting. It was fined for allegedly operating without a license. Its programs were considered "destructive and inflammatory." There have been persistent threats against the largest-selling independent daily, the *Observer*, and two of its editors were deported. Authorities closed the offices of *The Independent* newspaper in July 1999, the same month it opened, saying it had failed to pay a business registration fee. This was shortly after the paper had published a statement by the opposition United Democratic Party that described the president as the "richest person in the region" and the "most corrupt head of state in Africa." Four of the paper's journalists were charged with libel in December after they published a story saying the president had married for a third time. In September, five West African journalists were expelled.

Women suffer de facto discrimination despite legal protections. Education and wage

employment opportunities for women are far fewer than those for men, especially in rural areas. Sharia (Islamic law) provisions regarding family law and inheritance restrict women's rights. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced.

All workers except civil servants and security forces may unionize under the 1990 Labor Act, which also provides the right to strike. The country's two labor federations, the Gambian Worker's Confederation and the Gambian Workers' Union, have not been banned, but their activities are limited by broader restrictions on political rights and civil liberties. The Gambia's economy is largely based on the production of groundnuts.

Georgia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist (transitional)

Population: 5,400,000

PPP: \$1,960

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Georgian (70 percent), Armenian (8 percent), Russian (6 percent), Azeri (6 percent), Ossetian (3 percent), Abkhaz (2 percent), other (5 percent)

Capital: Tbilisi

Political Rights: 3

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Georgia's relations with Russia continued to dominate the country's foreign and domestic policy. The year 1999 was marked by further deterioration of relations between Georgia and Russia, primarily as a result of Moscow's war against Chechnya. Russian generals repeatedly accused Georgia of being sympathetic to the Chechen rebels and allowing them to use supply routes inside Georgia's territory. In August and November, Russian military aircraft violated Georgia's air space and bombed areas inside Georgia close to the Chechen border. President Shevardnadze rejected requests from Moscow to seal its border with Chechnya or to permit Russian soldiers to attack Chechens from Georgian soil. Russia still maintains four military bases in Georgia, but during the Istanbul meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in November 1999, Moscow agreed to close two of its bases by mid-2001. Russia was angered by Shevardnadze's promise to apply for membership in NATO by the year 2005 and by the Georgian president's threat to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States security pact.

In May, Georgia's interior minister announced the detention of 12 people on suspicion of plotting to kill President Shevardnadze and overthrow the entire Georgian government. The group of plotters reportedly included parliamentary deputies and high-ranking army and security officers. Previous attempts to assassinate Shevardnadze were made in 1995 and 1998, and both were blamed on groups having links to Russia.

In June, Shevardnadze announced that he would run for another term in the presidential elections scheduled for 2000.

The parliamentary elections held in October 1999 were seen as an informal referendum on Shevardnadze's seven-year rule. Shevardnadze's ruling Citizens' Union (SMK) was pitted against the opposition Revival bloc led by his arch foe, the president of Adjara, Aslan Abashidze. Some 5,200 candidates representing 32 parties were competing for 235 seats in the Georgian parliament, although 12 of these seats from the breakaway province of Abkhazia were not contested. The campaign was dominated by mutual recriminations, with Shevardnadze accusing his opponent of being financed from abroad (in a clear reference to Russia) and Abashidze accusing his opponent of vote rigging and ordering his assassination. The OSCE, which sent 150 observers to Georgia, stated that despite some irregularities, the Georgian voters were generally able to express their will. As was expected, the SMK won the majority of seats in the new parliament.

Absorbed by Russia in the early nineteenth century, Georgia gained independence in 1918 but was overrun by the Red Army three years later and became a union republic within the USSR in 1936. Georgia proclaimed its independence from the crumbling Soviet Union in 1991. The nationalist leader and former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected president, but his authoritarian and erratic behavior led to his violent ousting by opposition forces. In 1992, Shevardnadze came to power and suppressed the insurrection by Gamsakhurdia loyalists. In subsequent years, Georgia faced secessionist movements and demands for greater autonomy in Abkhazia, Tskhinvali (formerly South Ossetia), and Adjara. In 1993, after a violent war, the province of Abkhazia fell to secessionist forces. More than 200,000 Georgian refugees fled from the province.

In 1999, Georgia became a member of the Council of Europe and was admitted to the World Trade Organization. In April, an oil pipeline linking Azerbaijan with the Black Sea port of Supsa was officially opened, creating the possibility of substantial economic benefits to cash-strapped Georgia. Despite a financial crisis, the government was able to introduce spending cuts to secure a loan from the International Monetary Fund. In 1999, Georgia opened its first stock exchange.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Georgians can change their government democratically. Georgia is defined as a democratic republic under the country's constitution, adopted on August 24, 1995. The president is directly elected for a five-year term. No president may serve more than two terms. If the president is unable to perform his duties and resigns, his powers are transferred to the speaker of the parliament until a new vote is held. The president has the power to appoint ministers with parliament's consent, but may dismiss ministers without parliament's approval. Parliament may impeach the president with a two-thirds majority if the supreme court rules that the president has committed treason or another high crime. The 235-member parliament is elected every four years. A total of 150 deputies are elected by a proportional party-list system and 85 from single-mandate constituencies.

The constitution and the 1991 press law provide for freedom of the press; however, although the independent press is increasingly active, the government constrains some press freedoms. The Civil Code and other legislation make it a crime to insult the honor and dignity of an individual and place the burden of proof on the accused. There is no law providing public access to information and government officials are sometimes unwilling to answer press inquiries. Journalists lack effective legal protection.

Nevertheless, dozens of independent newspapers operate freely, frequently criticizing high-ranking officials. Self-censorship is common, however, especially in state-run media. No independent newspaper as yet has a large national audience, although several have emerged as serious and reputable sources of information. During the last two years, the government monopoly on radio and television programs was broken and the Internet became a vital source of information for an increasing number of Georgians.

Freedom of religion is generally respected in this predominantly Christian Orthodox country. There are, however, restrictions aimed at foreign missionaries concerning the activities of "nontraditional" religions. The Armenian Orthodox and Catholic Churches have sought restitution of churches closed by the Communists, which are now held by the Georgian Orthodox Church. In November, about 10,000 people attended a mass held by Pope John Paul II during his two-day visit to Georgia. Despite isolated anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents, the Islamic and Jewish communities report that they encounter few societal problems. The occasional instances of religious intolerance are attributed to general instability and disorder.

The constitution provides for the right to peaceful assembly without prior permission from the authorities; in practice, however, national and local governments often restrict this right. The police often break up or restrict demonstrations by supporters of the late President Gamsakhurdia.

Ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, as well as an influx of refugees from neighboring Chechnya, created a severe refugee problem. Since the start of the Russian offensive in Chechnya, some 5,000 Chechen refugees have fled across the border into Georgia. The constitution, the 1993 Law on Migration, and other legislation generally provide for the right of movement within the country, as well as for immigration and repatriation. However, there is no effective law concerning the settlement of refugees or the granting of political asylum.

The constitution and the Law on Trade Unions allow workers to organize and bargain collectively, and this right is generally respected. The law prohibits anti-union discrimination by employers.

The judiciary is not fully independent. Courts are frequently influenced by the executive branch. A nine-member constitutional court represents one of the three main branches of government and arbitrates constitutional questions, treaties, referenda, elections, and jurisdictional disputes. Prison conditions remain abysmal, and domestic and foreign human rights groups say abuse of detainees is widespread. In May and July, the parliament voted to repeal reforms in the criminal procedure code that had been slated to go into effect in mid-May. The amendment replaced nearly half of the new code, which would have ensured detainees access to the courts before trial to redress abuses by the law enforcement authorities and security forces during criminal investigations. In May, President Shevardnadze ordered the release from prison of the leader of the now-disbanded national guard, Tengiz Kitovani, along with about 100 other sick and elderly inmates.

Corruption is endemic and reaches all levels of government. Senior officials have been accused of such crimes as embezzlement, smuggling, insider trading, and conflict of interest. Customs and tax evasion is rampant. Shevardnadze suggested stripping parliamentary deputies of their immunity and creating a special anticorruption committee under his personal leadership.

Women are generally respected in this traditionally male-dominated society. The

constitution recognizes the equality of all citizens without regard to gender. However, in practice, women are mostly found in traditional, low-paying occupations and are underrepresented in parliament and other government organs.

Germany

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 82,000,000
PPP: \$21,260
Life Expectancy: 77
Ethnic Groups: German (92 percent), Turkish (2 percent), other (6 percent)
Capital: Berlin

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, a year after Gerhard Schröder took power as chancellor in Germany, his Social Democratic Party suffered local electoral defeats while he faced increasing criticism from both within and outside his party over his economic policies. Schröder was accused of abandoning traditional German social welfare and state-interventionist policies and embracing pro-business, free-market principles.

Schröder's Social Democratic Party (SPD) defeated Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in September 1998, ending Kohl's 16-year rule. The SPD formed a coalition with the Green Party, which was given the foreign ministry and two other ministerial-level positions in the new government. The German government, in conjunction with several German businesses, established a multibillion-dollar compensation fund for wartime slave labor survivors. Germany passed a new nationality law, providing sweeping new rights for immigrants. In October, Germany moved its capital back to Berlin, inaugurating a new Reichstag (parliament).

Amid widespread criticism for the government's economic policies, the SPD suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the CDU in state elections in September. The SPD captured only 10 percent of the vote in Saxony, registering its worst defeat there since World War II. The SPD also lost power in Saarland, Brandenburg, and Thuringia, all prior strongholds. In October, the Party of Democratic Socialism, a Communist organization, won 18 percent of the vote in Berlin city elections, capturing 40 percent of the vote in the formerly Communist eastern half of the city. Despite the political setbacks, Germany's lower house of parliament approved an austerity budget in November. Included in the budget are cuts in the country's social welfare system. Schröder's aim is to balance the budget by 2006 and to slash the \$780 billion debt incurred as a result of German reunification.

After World War II, Germany was divided into Soviet, U.S., British, and French occupation zones. Four years later, the Allies helped to establish a democratic Federal Republic of Germany, while the Soviets oversaw the formation of the Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR). The division of Berlin was reinforced by the

1961 construction of the Berlin Wall. After the collapse of Erich Honecker's hardline GDR regime in 1989 and the destruction of the wall in 1990, citizens voted in the country's first free parliamentary election, in which parties supporting rapid reunification triumphed. In the spring, the German military participated in NATO air strikes in Kosovo, engaging in its first combat mission since World War II.

At the end of the year German prosecutors began planning a criminal investigation against former chancellor Helmut Kohl, who had admitted to keeping secret bank accounts while in office. While acknowledging receiving more than \$1 million in unreported political contributions, he refused to identify the donors, even rebuffing demands to do so by members of his own Christian Democratic Union party.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: German citizens can change their government democratically. The federal system provides for a considerable amount of self-government in the 16 states. Individuals are free to form political parties and to receive federal funding as long as the parties are democratic in nature. The country's judiciary is independent.

The Basic Law (constitution) gives ethnic Germans entering the country unrestricted citizenship and legal residence immediately upon application. In May parliament passed a new nationality law granting automatic citizenship to anyone born in Germany to foreign immigrants. German nationality had previously been linked to blood ties. The law also allows dual citizenship for the first time in German history, although only until age 23, when dual citizens must choose between their parents' or German nationality. Foreign adults can now receive citizenship after living in Germany for eight years. Passage of the nationality law was widely seen as heralding a new integrationist era in German society. The conservative right, however, opposed the bill on the grounds that it would foster divided loyalties.

Germany has no antidiscrimination law to protect immigrants, and even ethnic German immigrants increasingly face hostility from citizens who attribute the country's economic woes and high unemployment to immigration.

The German press and broadcast media are free and independent, offering pluralistic viewpoints. Nazi propaganda and statements endorsing Nazism are illegal. Germany has exceeded other countries' practices in its attempts to police the Internet by blocking access to obscene, violent, or "dangerous" material. The government has brought charges against service providers and individual users. In August the German publishing giant Bertelsmann stopped selling copies of Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on its online bookstore. The U.S. online book retailer Amazon.com suspended sales of the book to German addresses in November.

Nazi-related and racist incidents occurred during 1999, and xenophobic political policies and pronouncements continued to find support among voters. In October, neo-Nazis were suspected of daubing swastikas on tombstones in the Berlin Jewish Cemetery. In April 1998, the far-right German People's Union had won 12.9 percent of the vote—the best election result for a far-right party since World War II—in regional elections in Saxony-Anhalt. Less than a year later, in September, the far-right Deutsche Volksunion party captured 5.3 percent of the vote in regional elections in Brandenburg state, qualifying it for parliamentary representation. The country's internal security agency has registered a strong rise in racist and far-right radical tendencies.

In the face of lawsuits filed by Holocaust survivors against German companies,

Germany established a fund in February to compensate Nazi-era slave laborers who were forced to work for German manufacturing companies. The government set aside \$1.7 billion, while \$3.3 billion was offered by several companies, including Deutsche Bank, DaimlerChrysler, Siemens, and Volkswagen.

Amnesty International reported isolated incidents of ill treatment of detainees, especially asylum seekers, some of whom alleged they had been beaten at the hands of police.

Freedom of religion is established under the Basic Law. State governments subsidize church-affiliated schools and provide religious instruction in schools and universities for those of the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish faiths.

Scientologists, who claim 30,000 adherents in Germany, have been at the center of a heated debate over the group's legal status. Major political parties, which exclude Scientologists from membership, hold that the group does not constitute a religion, but is rather a for-profit organization based on antidemocratic principles. Officials have stated that the group financially exploits its followers and exerts extreme psychological pressure on those who attempt to leave the group. They have also stated that Germany's unique history necessitates their close scrutiny of extremist groups that could, like the Nazi Party, begin as a small organization and then undergo explosive growth.

Labor, business, and farming groups are free, highly organized, and influential. In recent years, however, trade union federation membership has dropped sharply as a result of the collapse of industry in the east and layoffs in the west of the country.

Ghana

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 19,700,000

PPP: \$1,640

Life Expectancy: 59

Ethnic Groups: Akan (44 percent), Moshi-Dagomba (16 percent), Ewe (13 percent), Ga (8 percent), other tribes (19 percent)

Capital: Accra

Political Rights: 3

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Amid fears among some members of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) that President Jerry Rawlings was seeking to cling to power beyond elections in the year 2000, the party suffered a split early in 1999. The dissenters, calling themselves the Reform Movement, said the NDC was becoming increasingly autocratic and corrupt after the NDC formed a consultative committee that made Rawlings "lifelong chairman." The NDC played down the Rawlings appointment, saying the chairmanship was strictly honorary. In a further widening of the rift, some believed that Rawlings' support for his vice president, John Evans Atta Mills, as his successor indicated that Rawlings intended to continue to be the real power behind the scene. The opposition New Patri-

otic Party (NPP) candidate, John Kufuor, could mount a serious challenge to Mills, although Mills would have the support of state patronage and resources. Neither candidate, however, has a particularly large following.

Rawlings has ruled for nearly two decades but was elected for the first time in 1992. Once a major slaving center and long known as the Gold Coast, the former British possession became black Africa's first colony to achieve independence. After the 1966 overthrow of its charismatic independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah, the country was wracked by a series of military coups for 15 years. Successive military and civilian governments vied with each other in both incompetence and mendacity.

In 1979, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings led a coup against the ruling military junta and, as promised, returned power to a civilian government after a purge of corrupt senior army officers. However, the new civilian administration did not live up to Rawlings' expectations, and he seized power again in 1981 and set up the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). It was radically socialist and populist and brutally repressive, banning political parties and free expression. Facing a crumbling economy, Rawlings, in the late 1980s, transformed Ghana into an early model for structural adjustment programs urged by international lenders. A new constitution adopted in 1992 legalized political parties, and Rawlings was declared president after elections that were neither free nor fair.

Ghana has experienced a slow liberalization. The transparency and accountability that are the cornerstones of good governance are lacking, and corruption could block economic growth. A financial crisis has left Ashanti Goldfields, which is Ghana's biggest source of hard currency and one of the biggest mining companies in Africa, vulnerable to a foreign takeover. The crisis was brought on by a sharp increase in the price of gold just weeks after Ashanti laid off 2,000 workers, ostensibly because gold prices were tumbling. The government is suspicious of a takeover, fearing it would further undermine its influence over the company.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The December 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections under Ghana's 1992 constitution allowed Ghanaians their first opportunity since independence to elect their representatives in genuine elections. A broad civic education campaign and international assistance with registration and other electoral procedures preceded voting. However, the elections were also marked by the ruling party's extensive use of state media and patronage to support incumbents. Rawlings' five percent reelection victory, which extended his sixteen-year rule, was also assured by opposition disunity. Ghana's 200-member legislature, elected on a single-member district system, is controlled by the NDC, which holds 133 seats. Legislators can introduce bills, but none has ever done so. The attorney general's office has introduced all legislation since 1996.

Ghanaian courts have acted with increased autonomy under the 1992 constitution but are still subject to considerable governmental influence, especially in media-related cases. Traditional courts often handle minor cases according to local customs that fail to meet constitutional standards. Scarce judicial resources leave many people imprisoned for long periods under harsh conditions without trial. In April 1999 four civilians accused of conspiring with a former army officer to overthrow President Rawlings in 1994 were sentenced to death for treason. The army officer had been captured in Sierra Leone in March.

Ghanaians enjoy open political debate reflected in a robust private print media, but press freedom suffered a setback in 1999, despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. Although several independent radio and television stations are licensed, the government allows little expression of opposition views over the national radio and television networks as well as in the two daily newspapers it controls. The government uses criminal libel laws that make reporting false information a felony in order to intimidate the media. More than 150 criminal and civil libel actions have been brought against the independent press by government officials or associates in recent years. Other obscure and rarely used laws have been invoked to intimidate the media.

An Accra court in November 1999 fined and sentenced a journalist to 90 days hard labor in prison for libeling First Lady Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings. Eben Quarcoo was editor of the *Free Press* when in 1994 it alleged that the president's wife had smuggled gold out of the country. The paper was also accused of implying that she had dealt in drugs. In October, two journalists from Joy FM radio, and the chief executive of the *Statesman's* publishers, were arrested and detained overnight for questioning. In November, police surrounded the home of a *Statesman* correspondent, and arrested him. The *Statesman's* proprietor, opposition member of parliament and human rights lawyer Nana Akufo-Addo, was questioned by police together with a receptionist. All were provisionally charged with making or abetting false reports which bring the government into disrepute. The alleged offense is punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The right to peaceful assembly and association is constitutionally guaranteed, and permits are not required for meetings or demonstrations. Student protests, including an indefinite boycott of lectures over an increase in fees, forced authorities to close a university in September. The government later canceled the fee hike. Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operate openly and freely. Religious freedom is respected, but there are occasional tensions between Christians and Muslims and within the Muslim community itself.

Ghanaian women suffer societal discrimination that is particularly serious in rural areas, where opportunities for education and wage employment are limited, despite their equal rights under the law. Domestic violence against women is said to be common, but often remains unreported. NGOs and the national human rights commissioner are campaigning against the *trokosi* system, which is practiced in parts of northern Ghana, in which young girls are forced into indefinite servitude to traditional religious priests. In November 400 *trokosi* women and children were freed from 95 shrines by International Needs, a nongovernmental human rights group.

Trade union registration requirements under the Trades Union Ordinance are not now used to block union formation, but civil servants may not join unions. The Industrial Relations Act demands arbitration before strikes are authorized. The only labor confederation, the Trade Union Congress, is still aligned with the ruling party, although it has shown signs of autonomy.

Ghana's ambitious privatization program has continued to draw foreign investment into a stock exchange that in 1998 defied global drops in share values. Gold mining profits and increased cocoa exports have contributed to growth. But Ashanti's financial troubles and a decline in world cocoa prices over the last two years by about 40 percent have substantially hurt the economy. Corruption is reportedly on the rise as the country falls deeper into debt.

Greece

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 3
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Status: Free
Population: 10,500,000
PPP: \$12,769
Life Expectancy: 78
Ethnic Groups: Greek (98 percent), other, including Macedonian and Turk (2 percent)
Capital: Athens



Overview:

In February 1999, the kidnapping of the rebel Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan shook Greece's center-left government and led to the resignation of Greece's Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos amid accusations that he colluded in the rebel Kurd's capture. The new foreign minister, George Papandreou (son of Andreas Papandreou, the founder of the ruling Socialist Party) took the biggest risk of his political career by pioneering a drive for better ties with Turkey. Greek-Turkish relations in 1999 were considerably better than in previous years, especially in comparison with 1996, when a territorial conflict in the Aegean nearly sparked a war between Greece and Turkey. The August earthquake in Turkey and the lesser tremor that struck Greece in September led to an outpouring of mutual sympathy and support resulting in an unprecedented rapprochement between the two countries.

As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Greece backed the alliance's war in former Yugoslavia. The government of Prime Minister Costas Simitis provided logistical help to NATO troops despite most Greeks' fiercely pro-Serb sentiments.

Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. The ensuing century brought continued struggle between royalist and republican forces. Occupation by the Axis powers in 1941 was followed by civil war between non-Communist and Communist forces that lasted until 1949. A military junta came to power as the result of a coup in 1967 and ruled until 1973, when naval officers failed to oust the junta and restore the monarchy. The failed 1973 coup led, however, to the formal deposition of the monarch and the proclamation of a republic. The current constitution, adopted in 1975, provides for a parliamentary system with a largely ceremonial president.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties: Greeks can change their government democratically. The Greek parliament has 300 members, elected for four-year terms by a system of proportional representation. Voting is compulsory for citizens between the ages of 18 and 70. The president is elected for a five-year term by parliament. With the exception of politically related restrictions, the media have substantial freedom. The public prosecutor may press charges against publishers and can seize publications deemed offensive to the president or to religious beliefs. A controversial law bans "unwarranted" publicity for terrorists from the media, including terrorists' proclamations following explosions.

Ninety-eight percent of the population belongs nominally to the state-sponsored Greek Orthodox Church. Orthodox bishops have the privilege of granting or denying permission to other faiths to build houses of worship in their jurisdictions. Members of non-Orthodox communities have been barred from entering occupations such as primary-school teaching, the military, and the police.

The government formally recognizes only the "Muslim minority" specified in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, applying the term to several different ethnic communities. Most of the Muslim community (officially estimated at 120,000 persons) is ethnically Turkish and objects to its classification as a merely "Muslim" minority. The country's Pomaks, the ethnically Slavic Muslim minority, make similar objections. Muslim Gypsies (Roma) encounter large-scale discrimination in receiving education and other social benefits. The Muslims object to the Greek government's prerogative to appoint its muftis, or Muslim community leaders.

Greeks enjoy freedom of association, and all workers except military personnel and the police have the right to form and join unions, which are usually linked to political parties.

The judiciary is independent. The constitution provides for public trials, and trial court sessions are usually open to the public. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence.

Greece has a long history of jailing conscientious objectors to military service. In 1997, however, the government passed a new law to allow objectors to perform alternative, civilian service. The measure requires objectors to serve twice as long as military conscripts and was therefore criticized by Amnesty International as "punitive."

Women's groups have begun to organize to seek more equitable child custody and divorce laws and the creation of a family court.

Grenada

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 100,000

PPP: \$4,864

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Mostly black

Capital: St. George's

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Following a series of destabilizing defections from the ruling New National Party (NNP), Prime Minister Keith Mitchell called elections two years early and then went on to lead a rout of the opposition by making a sweep of all 15 seats in parliament. Opposition complaints of alleged corruption seemed to miss the mark in this English-speaking Caribbean country, as the ruling party consolidated its hegemony.

Grenada, a member of the Commonwealth, is a parliamentary democracy. The British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. Grenada gained independence in 1974 and includes the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The bicameral parliament consists of a 15-seat house of representatives and a 13-seat senate, to which the prime minister appoints 10 senators and the opposition leader 3.

Maurice Bishop's Marxist New Jewel Movement seized power in 1979. In 1983 Bishop was murdered by New Jewel hardliners Bernard Coard and Hudson Austin, who took control of the country. A joint U.S.-Caribbean military intervention removed Coard and Austin, who along with two others were originally sentenced to death, only to have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. In the 1984 elections, the NNP, now a coalition of three parties, won the majority of seats. Herbert Blaize became prime minister until his death in 1989, when Deputy Prime Minister Ben Jones replaced him.

In the 1990 elections the NNP coalition unraveled, and there were five principal contenders: The National Party (TNP) headed by Jones; the centrist National Democratic Congress (NDC), led by Nicholas Braithwaite, head of the 1983-1984 interim government; the NNP headed by Keith Mitchell; the leftist Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM), led by Terry Marryshow; and Eric Gairy's rightist Grenada United Labour Party (GULP).

The NDC won seven seats and took in a defector from the GULP, and Braithwaite became prime minister with a one-seat majority. After implementing unpopular economic reforms, the aging Braithwaite stepped down in early 1995 in favor of Agricultural Minister George Brizan.

The 1995 campaign was a raucous affair. Brizan sought to retain power by pointing to the improved economy. The other candidates accused the ruling NDC of corruption and harped on high unemployment.

The NNP startled local observers by winning 8 of 15 seats. The NDC won 5 seats and the GULP, 2. Mitchell became prime minister. Afterwards, NDC deputy leader Francis Alexis split off to form the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), in a move that underscores the fractious nature of Grenadian politics.

In his first months in office, Mitchell was accused by opposition leader Brizan and others of censoring news unfavorable to the government in state-run television and radio broadcasts, and of purging civil servants appointed during the NDC administration. Mitchell denied the allegations. In 1996 Mitchell's reorganization of the state-owned Grenada Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) was viewed by some as another attempt to fill political positions with NNP supporters and to control the dissemination of information at GBC. In 1997 the NDC charged the government with granting a casino license to a foreign company it alleged has gangster connections.

In May 1998, former Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Preudhomme was elected leader of the bitterly divided GULP, a year after Gairy died. Grenada's parliament was dissolved in December 1998, paving the way for elections in 90 days, after the ruling New National Party (NNP) was plunged into crisis over the resignation of its foreign minister, whose loss left it with only 7 of 15 parliamentary seats.

Mitchell was able to enter into the electoral fray boasting an enviable economic record—in four years unemployment plummeted from 25 percent to 14 percent, while economic growth for 1999 was estimated to be 7 percent. Mitchell was also aided by a divided political opposition which, after the crushing defeat, seemed in danger of disappearing altogether. Grenada's strict bank secrecy and offers of citizenship complete

with passports issued together with a new name, created worries of one-stop-shopping for international criminals.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens are able to change their government through democratic elections and the 1999 elections were considered to be free and fair. Many political parties exist, and few obstacles face those establishing new parties. But there has been a decline in turnout, as young people, in particular, appear to have lost confidence in a system riddled with fragmented politics and allegations of corruption. Following the crushing defeat suffered by Grenada's opposition parties, their role as alternatives in future elections was seriously in doubt.

The independent, prestigious judiciary has authority generally respected by the 750-member Royal Grenada Police Force. There are no military or political courts. In 1991 Grenada rejoined the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States court system, with the right of appeal to the Privy Council in London. Detainees and defendants are guaranteed a range of legal rights that the government respects in practice. Like many Caribbean island nations, Grenada has suffered from a rise in violent, drug-related crime, particularly among increasingly disaffected youth. Prison conditions are poor, though they meet minimum international standards and the government allows human rights monitors to visit.

Newspapers, including four weeklies, are independent and freely criticize the government. Television is both private and public, and the main radio station is part of the Grenadian Broadcasting Corporation, a statutory body not directly controlled by the government. Since the 1995 elections, a number of new radio and television stations, not one of which is aligned with the NNP, were issued licenses to operate. In October 1999, the arrest of two journalists critical of the government caused an uproar among the opposition and human rights groups.

Constitutional guarantees regarding the right to organize political, labor, or civic groups are respected. The free exercise of religion and the right of free expression are generally respected.

Numerous independent labor unions include an estimated 20 to 25 percent of the workforce. A 1993 law gives the government the right to establish tribunals empowered to make "binding and final" rulings when a labor dispute is considered of vital interest to the state. The national trade union federation claimed the law was an infringement on the right to strike. Workers have the right to organize and to bargain collectively.

Women are represented in the government, though in greater numbers in the ministries than in parliament. No official discrimination takes place, but women generally earn less than men for equal work. Domestic violence against women is common. Police say that most instances of abuse are not reported, and others are settled out of court.

Guatemala

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 12,300,000
PPP: \$4,100
Life Expectancy: 65
Ethnic Groups: Mayan and other Indian (> 60 percent), mestizo
Capital: Guatemala City

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999 Guatemala held its first presidential elections since the end of the country's 36-year civil war. The victor, Alfonso Portillo, campaigned on a populist platform of fighting crime, reducing unemployment and aiding the poor. The election saw former Marxist guerrillas participate openly for the first time as part of a left-wing coalition. It also saw retired Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, Portillo's father-in-law and a man accused of genocide during his own 1982-1983 presidency, elected to a congressional seat and then president of the congress. The elections were held at a time of growing concern over the failure of the government to implement key reforms it agreed to as part of a United Nations-brokered peace settlement.

The Republic of Guatemala was established in 1839, 18 years after independence from Spain. The nation has endured a history of dictatorship, coups, and guerrilla insurgency, with only intermittent democratic government. It has had elected civilian rule since 1985. Amended in 1994, the 1985 constitution provides for a four-year presidential term and prohibits reelection. An 80-member unicameral congress is elected for four years.

A right-wing businessman, Jorge Serrano, became president in 1991 after winning a runoff election. In 1993 Serrano attempted to dissolve the legislature. After initially supporting him, the military changed course as a result of mass protests and international pressure, and Serrano was sent into exile. The congress chose as his replacement Ramiro de León Carpio, the government's human rights ombudsman.

De León Carpio was practically powerless to halt human rights violations by the military or to curb its power as final arbiter in national affairs. After United Nations-mediated talks were launched between the government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) left-wing guerrillas, the latter called an unilateral truce for the 1995 election and backed the left-wing New Guatemala Democratic Front (FDNG). The top presidential contenders were former Guatemala City mayor Alvaro Arzú, of the National Advancement Party (PAN) and Alfonso Portillo Cabrera of the hard-right Guatemalan Republic Front (FRG). FRG founder and military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was constitutionally barred from running. Arzú won with 36.6 percent of the vote; Portillo Cabrera had 22 percent. In the January 7, 1996, runoff Arzú defeated Portillo, 51.2 percent to 48.8 percent.

Soon after taking office, Arzú reshuffled the military, forcing the early retirement of generals linked to drug trafficking, car-theft rings and human rights abuses. The

purge had the backing of a small but influential group of reformist officers who dominated the military high command. After a brief suspension of peace talks in October 1996 because of a rebel kidnapping, subsequent agreement on the return of rebel forces to civilian life and a permanent ceasefire led to the December 1996 peace accords.

Arzú's government won plaudits for important advances in carrying out the peace process. These included the successful demobilization of the URNG guerrillas and their political legalization; the retirement of more than 40 senior military officers on corruption and narcotics charges, and the reduction of the army's strength by one-third. A U.N.-truth commission mandated by the peace accords began receiving tens of thousands of complaints of rights violations committed during the 36-year internal conflict.

By 1999, however, it was clear that the government would not move further to implement those reforms meant to correct the social and economic inequalities that led to the conflict. These included ending the military's political tutelage and impunity, recognizing the rights of the Maya Indians, and reforming taxation to pay for health, education and housing programs for the poor. In February the truth commission said that state security forces had been responsible for 93 percent of human rights abuses committed during the civil war, which claimed as many as 200,000 lives, and that high-ranking officials had overseen 626 massacres in Indian villages.

In a May 1999 referendum, voters rejected a package of 50 amendments to the constitution, approved by congress a year earlier, which had been prepared in accordance with the UN-brokered peace plan, in an election was characterized by a high degree of abstentions. Before the first-round voting in November, Portillo, who campaigned on a human rights and development platform, admitted killing two men in Mexico 17 years earlier, in "self defense," he said. As a candidate, the FRG standard-bearer successfully dodged the accusation that he was merely a surrogate candidate for Ríos Montt, and was able to moderate the party's ideological hard line. He went on to beat the PAN candidate, former Guatemala City mayor Oscar Berger, 48 to 30 percent. Alvaro Colom, of the New Nation Alliance (ANN), which included the former guerrillas, drew 12 percent. In the December 26 runoff, Portillo overwhelmed Berger, 68 to 32 percent.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their governments through elections. In the run-up to the November elections, which were largely free and fair, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal conducted an energetic voter turnout campaign among the country's 4.4 million registered voters. The constitution guarantees religious freedom and the right to organize political parties, civic organizations, and labor unions. However, despite increasing freedoms, Guatemala has yet to end a tradition of military dominance; recommendations by the truth commission for the purging of senior military commanders involved in atrocities have been largely ignored. The rule of law is undermined by the systemic corruption that afflicts all public institutions, particularly the legislature and the courts.

Despite penal code reforms in 1994, the judicial system remains ineffectual for most legal or human rights complaints. The justice system in general suffers from chronic problems of corruption, intimidation, insufficient personnel, lack of training opportunities, and a lack of transparency and accountability. Drug trafficking is a serious prob-

lem, and Guatemala remains a warehousing and transit point for South American drugs going to the United States. In 1999, the U.S. State Department reported that Guatemalan traffickers, frequently tied to the military, moved between 200 and 300 metric tons of cocaine into northern markets, up from 50 tons earlier in the decade. In April 1999, a constitutional court judge, Epaminondas González Dubon, who had ordered the extradition to the United States of a military officer accused of drug trafficking, was murdered.

Native Americans are largely shut out from the national justice system. Although indigenous languages are now being used in courtrooms around the country, traditional justice systems receive only lip service from Guatemalan authorities. Similarly, cursory recruitment efforts have resulted in only a handful of Native American recruits for the new civilian police. In October 1999, 13 new supreme court justices were sworn in for five-year terms.

Guatemala remains one of the most violent countries in Latin America. The closing of military barracks throughout the country—the armed forces are the one Guatemalan institution that enjoyed a truly national presence—while the National Civil Police force was being created and deployed, created a noticeable vacuum in which criminal interests were free to operate. One result was an upsurge of lynchings, as communities organized to take the law into their own hands; an estimated 240 presumed criminals have been killed since 1994. In Guatemala City, neighborhood patrols—some armed with automatic weapons—have sprung up in a desperate attempt to arrest the spiraling crime wave.

In 1998 the first convictions on war crimes charges were handed down in November when three pro-government paramilitary force members were sentenced to death for their role in a 1982 massacre of Indian peasants. However, in 1999, the prosecutor in the case of the April 1998 murder of a Catholic bishop and human rights activist, Juan Gerardi, was forced into exile after redirecting the criminal inquiry towards possible armed forces involvement in the killing. In August, 12 soldiers, including one officer, were given five-year sentences, with the possibility of parole, for the killing of 11 returned indigenous refugees, including two children, in 1995.

The press and most of the broadcast media are privately owned, with several independent newspapers and dozens of radio stations, most of them commercial. Five of the six television stations are commercially operated. However, journalists remain at great risk. In recent years, more than a dozen Guatemalan journalists have been forced into exile. The 1993 murder of newspaper publisher Jorge Carpio Nicolle, a former presidential candidate, remains unsolved. In a positive development, in 1999 two men were convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison for killing a newspaper editor two years earlier.

Some 32 percent of the population are illiterate; this rate of illiteracy is the highest in the Americas after Haiti. Eighty percent live below poverty levels, and infant mortality among the Maya—some 60 percent of the population—is among the highest on the continent.

The Runejel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ) represents the interests of the country's Indians, a majority of the population who have faced severe repression and violence by the army and allied paramilitary organizations, as well as being used by the URNG guerrillas. In 1996, Indians showed signs of flexing some political muscle. Indians candidates won control of an estimated 40 urban areas—including

Guatemala's second largest city—and ten percent of congressional seats. Under a new law, Maya descendants are allowed to seek office as independents, and not as representatives of the national political parties that have ignored their needs.

Workers are frequently denied the right to organize and are subjected to mass firings and blacklisting, particularly in export-processing zones, where a majority of workers are women. Existing unions are targets of systematic intimidation, physical attack, and assassination, particularly in rural areas during land disputes. The issue of child labor in Guatemala is the most critical in Central America and is a growing problem in the agricultural industry. Use of Guatemala as a transit point for illegal aliens, particularly from Asia, frequently leads to abuses, including death.

Guinea

Polity: Dominant party
(military-influenced)

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 7,500,000

PPP: \$1,880

Life Expectancy: 45

Ethnic Groups: Peuhl (40 percent), Malinke (30 percent),
Soussou (20 percent), smaller tribes (10 percent)

Capital: Conakry

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Guinea was absorbed into the regional conflict that has already enveloped Liberia and Sierra Leone, with incursions across the borders by rebels based in all three countries. West African heads of state, led by Nigeria, which has played a major peacekeeping role in Liberia and Sierra Leone, quickly stepped in to mediate to avert further escalation of conflict in the region. Their initial efforts were successful, but fears linger of military upheaval in Guinea and disintegration among its seven million people.

In addition to its own population, Guinea harbors up to 700,000 refugees from neighboring countries. One in ten people now living in Guinea is a refugee. Resentment has been building among Guineans who see aid being distributed to refugees while they themselves live in impoverished conditions. Lower-ranking soldiers posted along border areas are increasingly disgruntled because of sporadic payment of salaries and erratic rotations. The government of President Lansana Conté has complained to the international community that the refugee problem has severely strained its economy and that it needs more assistance.

President Conté seized power in a 1984 coup and was nearly toppled by a 1996 army mutiny. Amidst general looting in Conakry, the capital, he rallied loyal troops and reestablished his rule. Guinea remains far from achieving either a genuine democratic transition or respect for human rights and the rule of law. Conté defends his tight rule by saying it is necessary to avoid ethnic conflict. The political opposition faces persistent harassment.

Under Ahmed Sékou Touré, Guinea declared independence from France in 1958.

Alone among France's many African colonies, it rejected the domination of continued close ties with France. France retaliated quickly, removing or destroying all "colonial property" and enforcing an unofficial but devastating economic boycott. Sékou Touré's one-party rule became highly repressive, and Guinea was increasingly impoverished under his disastrous Soviet-style economic policies. The country now ranks nearly last on international social development indicators.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Guinean people's constitutional right to freely elect their government is not yet respected in practice. Guinean politics and parties are largely defined on ethnic bases. Conté was returned to office in a December 1998 presidential election that lacked credible opposition as state patronage and media strongly backed the incumbent. His reelection to another five-year term, with 54.1 percent of about 2.7 million votes reported, was unconvincing. The Higher Council on Electoral Affairs was neither autonomous nor powerful enough to level the electoral landscape, although the polls were an improvement over past elections. Hundreds of people, however, were arrested after the election, including the official third-place finisher, Alpha Condé, who leads the opposition Guinean People's Rally (RPG) and remains jailed without trial on charges of attempting to leave the country illegally and seeking to recruit troops to destabilize the country. His lawyers have been hampered in their ability to represent him. Two other members of his party also remain detained without trial.

Electoral manipulation and fraud in the 1993 presidential polls made a mockery of the vote. The June 1995 national assembly elections were more open. A total of eight opposition parties won just enough seats to deny the ruling Progress and Unity Party's (PUP) the two-thirds majority required to enact constitutional changes; but the ruling party's share of seats in the 114-member assembly was probably fraudulently inflated far above the proportion of votes it received.

The president retains decree power that could eviscerate the parliamentary process. While nominally independent, the judicial system remains infected by corruption, nepotism, ethnic bias, and political interference, and lacks resources and training. Minor civil cases are often handled by traditional ethnic-based courts. Arbitrary arrests and detention are common, and persistent maltreatment and torture of detainees is reported. Prison conditions are harsh and sometimes life threatening. In November, an opposition umbrella group, the Coordination of the Democratic Opposition (CODEM), said many of its members had been arrested around the country. The group said the arrests were aimed at torturing people and extracting confessions from them for use in the court case against Condé.

Several statutes restrict freedom of association and assembly in apparent contravention of constitutional guarantees. The government may ban any gathering that "threatens national unity." Two people were shot dead in October 1999 during a student demonstration against transportation fee hikes following a rise in fuel prices. Bus drivers later went on strike when the fee hike was reversed.

Several human rights groups, such as the Guinean Organization for the Defense of Human Rights (OGDH), and many nongovernmental groups operate openly. Constitutionally protected religious rights are respected in practice, although the main body representing the country's Muslims, who constitute more than 80 percent of the population, is government-controlled.

The government has wide powers to bar any communications that insult the president or disturb the peace. All broadcasting, as well as the country's largest and only daily newspaper, are state-controlled, and offer little coverage of the opposition and scant criticism of government policy. Several weekly newspapers in Conakry offer sharp criticism of the government despite frequent harassment. A restrictive press law allows the government to censor or shutter publications on broad and ill-defined bases. In December, the owner of the weekly *Independent* and *Independent Plus* newspapers was detained following publication of articles naming cabinet ministers in connection with an inquiry into corruption and mismanagement.

Women have far fewer educational and employment opportunities than men, and many societal customs discriminate against women. Constitutionally protected women's rights are often unrealized. Spousal abuse and other violence against women is said to be prevalent. Female genital mutilation as a traditional rite is widely practiced.

The constitution provides the right to form and join unions. However, about 80 percent of Guinea's seven-and-one-half million people are subsistence farmers. Only about one-twentieth of the workforce is unionized. Several labor confederations compete in this small market and have the right to bargain collectively. Labor grievances are regularly heard by a labor court in the capital as well as in civil courts elsewhere.

↑ Guinea-Bissau

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy (military-influenced) (transitional)
Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)

Population: 1,200,000

PPP: \$861

Life Expectancy: 44

Ethnic Groups: Balanta (30 percent), Fula (20 percent), Manjaca (14 percent), Mandinga (13 percent), Papel (7 percent), other (16 percent)

Capital: Bissau

Trend Arrow: Guinea-Bissau receives an upward trend arrow, despite the overthrow of the government in May, for the holding of free and fair presidential elections that had been scheduled for March while the ousted president was still in power; they were later held in December.



Overview:

President João Bernardo Vieira was toppled in May 1999 after a nearly year-long rebellion that pitted his forces against those loyal to the army chief, General Ansumane Mané. The capital, Bissau, was nearly destroyed, at least 2,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands of others sought refuge in the countryside. Vieira himself fled to Portugal, Guinea-Bissau's former colonial ruler. Few people were disappointed to see him go, viewing him as the leader of a corrupt ruling class. He won the country's first free and fair presidential election in 1994 but initially came to power through a coup in 1980.

Guinea-Bissau's new military leaders swiftly moved to hold legislative and presidential elections in November in line with an agreement that had been worked out under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in February 1999. International observers declared the voting free and fair. None of the 13 candidates won an outright majority in the initial round of presidential balloting. The January 2000 runoff will pit the populist Kumba Yala, of the Social Renewal Party (PRS), against Malam Bacai Sanha, of the former ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). Yala won 38.8 percent of the first-round votes while Sanha won 23.3 percent.

The ballot is seen by many as a last hope for peace in the country, but fears linger that the military wants to cling to power in one form or another. Before the election, the military called for the setting up of a High Council of the Republic. It would meet quarterly and be chaired by the president, but the army would have ten representatives, including General Mane, and participate in the country's management for the next ten years. The military later said that it had scrapped the plan, apparently pressured by international donors who paid for the elections and threatened to withhold further aid. Soldiers were given three-month advances on their war allowances in December following a street demonstration. A small United Nations mission is to remain in the country until April 2000.

Guinea-Bissau won independence from Portugal in 1973 after a 12-year guerrilla war. The PAIGC held power for the next 13 years. Luis Cabral became president in 1974 and made Vieira his prime minister, but Vieira toppled Cabral in 1980. In 1991 constitutional revisions ended the PAIGC's repressive one-party state. Political parties were legalized, and direct elections for both the president and members of parliament were introduced.

The June 1998 army mutiny broke out when Vieira sacked Mane, accusing him of smuggling arms to rebels in the southern Casamance region of neighboring Senegal, which for years complained that Guinea-Bissau was backing the rebels. Encouraged by France, about 3,000 troops from Senegal and Guinea intervened on behalf of Vieira. They left in March and were replaced by fewer than 600 unarmed West African peacekeepers, which made Vieira vulnerable to his overthrow.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Guinea-Bissau's first open elections took place in 1994, and both direct presidential polls and legislative elections were judged free and fair by international observers. The PAIGC retained the presidency and a parliamentary majority, but five opposition parties were represented in the national assembly. Voting in the November 1999 legislative and presidential elections was declared free and fair by international observers despite widespread delays, isolated cases of violence, and other voting irregularities. The opposition PRS obtained 37 of the 102 seats, followed by the Resistance of Guinea with 27 and the PAIGC with 25. The 13 remaining seats went to five of the ten other parties that fielded candidates. The president is elected for a five-year term, while parliamentarians serve for four years.

Freedom of assembly and freedom of expression are constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected. The judiciary enjoys some autonomy, but is largely controlled by the executive branch. Judicial performance is often unpredictable owing to political interference, poor training, and scant resources. Traditional law usually prevails in rural areas.

The Guinean Human Rights League has raised allegations of numerous instances of torture and other mistreatment by security forces. Police routinely ignored rights of privacy and protections against search and seizure. Severe mistreatment of detainees is reported. The UN has expressed concern over the continued detention of military and political prisoners under harsh conditions and appealed to authorities to speed up the judicial process. Fifty-nine people detained since May were granted provisional freedom in December 1999. In July, 382 people were handed over to the judiciary by the military. Authorities argue that they are allowed to keep a suspect in remand for six months without trial.

State media practice broad self-censorship and rarely question or criticize government policies. Several private radio stations and community radio stations have begun broadcasting. Few private newspapers publish, and the lack of vibrant independent media may be more due to financial constraints than government interference.

Most people follow traditional religions, but proselytizing is permitted and there is a significant Muslim population, as well as a small Christian minority. While official registration is required, no religious group has been denied registration since 1982, and religious freedom is respected.

Women face some legal and significant traditional and societal discrimination. They generally do not receive equal pay for equal work and have fewer opportunities for education and jobs in the small formal sector. Domestic violence against women is common, and female genital mutilation is widespread.

Eleven labor unions operate, and workers have the right to organize and to strike with prior notice. The vast majority of Guinea-Bissau's 1.2 million citizens survive on subsistence farming. Cashew nuts are a key export. There are hopes for substantial oil reserves offshore, where drilling began in 1989. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September agreed to provide Guinea-Bissau with about \$3 million in post-conflict emergency economic aid.

Guyana

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 722,000

PPP: \$2,140

Life Expectancy: 65

Ethnic Groups: East Indian (51 percent), black (36 percent), mixed (5 percent), Indian (4 percent), European

Capital: Georgetown

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Ill health forced the resignation of President Janet Jagan in 1999; she was replaced in August by Finance Minister Bharrat Jagdeo who, at 38, became the continent's youngest head of state. The new government got off to a rocky start when the major opposition party walked out of talks on constitutional reform in October, claiming that Jagdeo's People's

Progressive Party (PPP) was stalling in order to forestall January 2000 elections. The row occurred just when neighboring Venezuela was once again laying claim to the oil-rich Esequiba region, which comprises two-thirds of Guyana's land mass.

Guyana is a member of the Commonwealth. From independence in 1966 until 1992, it was ruled by the autocratic, predominantly Afro-Guyanese, People's National Congress (PNC). The 1980 constitution provides for a strong president and a 65-seat national assembly elected every five years. Twelve seats are occupied by elected local officials. The leader of the party winning the plurality of parliamentary seats becomes president for a five-year term. The president appoints the prime minister and cabinet.

The first free and fair elections were held in 1992, and 80 percent of the eligible population voted. The PNC lost to an alliance of the predominantly Indo-Guyanese People's Progressive Party-Civic alliance (PPP-Civic). PPP leader and independence hero Cheddi Jagan, having moderated his Marxism since the collapse of communism, became president.

Indo-Guyanese outnumber Afro-Guyanese by 52 to 36 percent. Jagan won 52 percent of the vote; PNC leader Desmond Hoyte took 41 percent. A third candidate from the Working People's Alliance (WPA), the only mixed-race party in the country, won less than 2 percent.

Fear and distrust of the Indo-Guyanese ruling party continues among Afro-Guyanese, despite the PPP's record of governing in a relatively evenhanded manner.

Cheddi Jagan's work was cut short by his death in March 1997. He was replaced by Samuel Hinds, a member of Civic, the PPP's coalition partner. Hinds called elections for December 15, 1997. Cheddi's widow, Janet, a 77-year-old American-born journalist, beat the PNC's Hoyte by a 5 to 4 margin, or roughly 60,000 votes. The vote was bitterly disputed as rigged. Before the June 1998 accord was reached, the army needed to be called upon to help quell civil disturbances, even after a special commission sent by Caricom, the regional multilateral group, found no evidence of election fraud. In 1998 progress was made on constitutional reform as parliament began the process of setting up a broad-based committee to oversee changes in the 1980 constitution.

In August 1999, the Soviet-trained economist Jagdeo used his swearing in as president to promise that foreign investment would be welcomed and that he would work to heal racial and political divides. The pledges, coming even as Jagdeo announced he would retain the finance portfolio, were welcomed by critics, who pointed out that in the previous two years he had presided over an economy that had slumped to nearly zero growth, after seven years of posting seven percent growth.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through direct, multi-party elections. Claims by the opposition PNC concerning vote rigging and mismanagement in the 1997 elections were judged by a Caricom-selected investigative commission to be largely without merit, although numerous administrative shortcomings were detected. In 1997, an effort was made to reduce the possibility of the fraud and impersonation that had marred previous contests by requiring voters to have identification cards bearing their photographs when they went to the polls.

Under the 1980 constitution, the president has wide powers and immunities. Because the constitution lacks explicit guarantees, political rights and civil liberties rest

more on government tolerance than on constitutional guarantees. The rights of free expression, freedom of religion, and freedom to organize political parties, civic organizations, and labor unions are generally respected.

The judicial system is independent; however, due process is undermined by the shortage of staff and funds. Prisons are overcrowded, and conditions are poor. Guyana is the only Caribbean country to have cut all ties to the British Privy Council, the court of last resort of other former colonies in the regions. Officials have complained that U.S. efforts to deport Guyanese to Guyana have caused an upsurge in violent crimes such as carjackings and shoot-outs with police. In 1998, a string of murders of mostly East Indian business leaders caused lagan to beef up security, particularly in the capital, including calling out the army to backstop police patrols.

The Guyana Defence Force and the Guyana Police Force are under civilian control, with the latter invested with the authority to make arrests and maintain law and order through the country. The police force is prone to corruption, particularly so given the penetration by the hemispheric drug trade. The Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) has charged the police with occasionally using excessive force, sometimes causing death. The GHRA is autonomous, effective, and backed by independent civic and religious groups.

Several independent newspapers operate freely, including the *Stabroek News* and the *Catholic Standard*, a church weekly. Only two radio stations operate; both are government-owned. The government owns one television station. Fifteen privately owned television stations freely criticize the government.

The largely-PNC opposition complains that the governing alliance discriminates on the basis of race and gives preferential treatment for jobs and contracts to the East Asian population over the Afro-Guyanese. In November 1998, the government reinstated a custom's chief who had been suspended six years earlier on corruption charges. The comptroller's case had been a rallying point for government workers of African descent who charge that racism is rampant within the PPP-Civic coalition.

Guyana's Amerindian population consists of nine tribal groups that constitute about seven percent of the population. Most live on reservations and in villages in remote parts of the interior. The Amerindian Act gives indigenous groups title to their land but without subsoil rights. Native American groups complain that the government is selling mining and logging concessions in Guyana's immense rain forest without regard for the land rights of native peoples. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs is considered weak and ineffectual by Native rights groups.

Domestic violence against women is troubling, as is the government's reluctance to address the issue.

Labor unions are well-organized. In 1995 the government sought to dilute the right to strike among some public sector unions. Companies are not obligated to recognize unions in former state enterprises sold off by the government.

Haiti

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 7,800,000
PPP: \$1,270
Life Expectancy: 54
Ethnic Groups: Black (95 percent), mulatto, and white (5 percent)
Capital: Port-au-Prince

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999, the Haitian government set long-delayed parliamentary elections for March of the year 2000, but few believed the results would do more than hand the forces of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide a handsome victory and set the stage for his return in another presidential election the following December. Haiti's political institutions have barely functioned since the April 1997 elections, which independent observers say were rigged, and which helped create the current atmosphere of crisis. Meanwhile, the U.S.-trained police force was increasingly dogged by accusations of excessive use of force and involvement in narcotics trafficking.

Since gaining independence from France in 1804 following a slave revolt, the Republic of Haiti has endured a history of poverty, violence, instability, and dictatorship. A 1986 military coup ended 29 years of rule by the Duvalier family, and the army ruled for most of the next eight years.

Under international pressure, the military permitted the implementation of a French-style constitution in 1987. It provides for a president elected for five years, an elected parliament composed of a 27-member senate and an 83-member house of representatives, and a presidentially-appointed prime minister.

In the 1990 elections, Aristide, a charismatic left-wing priest, won in a landslide over conservative Marc Bazin. Aristide sought to establish civilian authority over the military; he also railed against corruption. Haiti's mostly mulatto elites and the military then conspired to overthrow him. In response, he overstepped the constitution by calling on supporters to defend the government by violent means.

Aristide was overthrown in September 1991. Haiti came under the ruthless control of the military triumvirate of General Raoul Cedras, General Philippe Biamby, and Colonel Michel François. Tens of thousands of paramilitary thugs terrorized the populace, and the regime was steeped in narcotics trafficking. The United States and the United Nations imposed a trade and oil embargo.

In September 1994, facing an imminent U.S. invasion, Cedras and Biamby agreed to step down. U.S. troops took control of the country, and Aristide was reinstated. His security, as well as that of average Haitians, now depended on U.S. and UN forces.

Aristide dismantled the military before the June 1995 parliamentary elections got under way. International observers questioned the legitimacy of the June election and Aristide's supporters fell out among themselves. The more militant Lavalas movement remained firmly behind him. But the National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD),

a leftist coalition that had backed him in 1990, claimed fraud and boycotted the runoff elections. In the end, the Lavalas won an overwhelming parliamentary majority.

In the fall Lavalas nominated Rene Preval, Aristide's prime minister in 1991, as its presidential candidate. With Aristide backing him and the FNCD and most other major opposition parties boycotting, the result of the December 17, 1995, election, which opposition politicians claimed was marred by serious irregularities and fraud, was a forgone conclusion. Preval won about 89 percent of a turnout of less than one-third of those eligible to vote.

Preval took office February 7, 1996. The UN had planned to withdraw its troops by the end of the month. The new U.S.-trained Haitian National Police, however, clearly lacked the competence to fill the void. At Preval's urging, the UN extended its stay, but by June cut its presence to 1,300. The final U.S. combat force had withdrawn two months earlier.

In September 1996, Preval purged much of his security force, which, according to U.S. officials, was involved in the murders a month earlier of two politicians from the right-wing Mobilization for National Development (MDN) party, which counted on heavy support from former soldiers.

Senate elections held in April 1997 were fraught with irregularities, and the resulting ongoing election dispute meant that parliament would not approve a new prime minister to replace Rosny Smarth, who resigned in June 1997 following growing criticism of the government's economic policies. In September Aristide announced an alliance with other congressional groups to oppose Preval's economic reform plans.

In March 1999, Senator Yvon Toussaint, of the Organization of People in Struggle (OPL), was murdered by unidentified gunmen, and several parliamentary OPL deputies facing death threats later fled into exile. In June, Port-au-Prince Police Chief Jean Coles Rameau, who had been arrested in the Dominican Republic, was extradited to Haiti following the killing of 11 detainees a week earlier in the Haiti capital. In October, the secretary of state for public security was forced to resign, after months of pressure from Aristide's forces. In December the UN General Assembly created a new mission to Haiti designed to help reform the justice system, professionalize the police, support human rights and assist in organizing elections. The March 2000 elections will be for the 83-seat lower house and 19 of the 27 seats in the senate, and will be followed by a second round of voting April 30.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The April 6, 1997, elections for one-third of the senate and 565 local councils, overseen by a politicized and incompetent electoral commission, were characterized by fraud, significant violations of law, and a five percent turnout of eligible voters. In July 1998, the Provisional Electoral Council shut its doors after the its remaining two members resigned. The virtual government shutdown meant that legislative and municipal elections scheduled for November 1998 were postponed indefinitely, and only in October 1999 were they rescheduled for March 2000.

The constitution guarantees a full range of political rights and civil liberties. The protection of such rights in 1999, however, remained precarious, as the rule of law was tenuous at best and was aggravated by a yawning security vacuum. Ongoing subterranean political warfare involving the former military, Aristide supporters, and others continued to claim lives. In 1999, Aristide supporters broke up a meeting held by the

Provisional Electoral Council to launch a voter education program geared to the March 2000 elections.

The judicial system remains corrupt, inefficient, and essentially dysfunctional, particularly in rural areas, and U.S. reform efforts have been tainted by allegations of corruption involving U.S. Agency for International Development contractors and others. Prison conditions are grim, and a severe backlog of cases means hundreds suffer lengthy pretrial detention periods. Haiti continues to be a major transshipment point for Colombian cocaine entering into U.S. markets.

The new 5,200-member Haitian National Police force is inexperienced and lacking in resources. Human rights groups say the police frequently use excessive force and mistreat detainees. Accusations of corruption have also grown more frequent. In 1998 the UN mission in Haiti said that an increasing number of police were involved in drug smuggling. Although efforts by police authorities to sanction misdeeds have met with mixed success, there is no evidence that the grave violations of human rights by the police form part of official policy. The police have been increasingly called upon to put down protests against the government's economic austerity program.

Mob violence and armed gangs posed severe security threats in urban areas. Former soldiers and others linked to the former military regime and common criminals were responsible for much of the violence, including political assassinations. Haitian officials also say that the rise in crime is due to convicted criminals who have been repatriated from other countries, particularly the United States. Turf wars between rival drug gangs have resulted in the killing of scores of people, including several policemen. Private security forces that carry out extralegal search and seizures are flourishing.

A number of independent newspapers and radio stations exist. Outlets critical of the government remain targets of official intimidation, including mob attacks. Television is state-run and strongly biased toward the government. In October 1998, a former Haitian judge was arrested in connection with the 1982 murder of a well-known journalist.

Labor rights, as with all other legally sanctioned guarantees, are essentially unenforced. Unions are generally too weak to engage in collective bargaining, and their organizing efforts are undermined by the high unemployment rate.

Honduras

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy **Political Rights:** 3*
Civil Liberties: 3

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Status:** Partly Free

Population: 5,900,000

PPP: \$2,220

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (90 percent), Indian (7 percent), black (2 percent), white (1 percent)

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Ratings Change: Honduras's political rights rating changed from 2 to 3, and its status from Free to Partly Free, due to military challenges to civilian rule and lack of progress in fighting corruption.



Overview:

In July 1999, the government of President Carlos Flores narrowly averted an army rebellion. The discontent came to a near boil because of military resentment of civilian efforts to provide oversight of the armed forces budget and extensive business holdings. The crisis resulted in the dismissals of more than 30 serving officers and signaled the continuing problem of military insubordination in Honduras. Meanwhile, Transparency International ranked Honduras as the most corrupt country in Latin America, ranking it 94th of 99 countries tracked worldwide.

The Republic of Honduras was established in 1839, 18 years after independence from Spain. It has endured decades of military rule and intermittent elected government. The last military regime gave way to elected civilian rule in 1982. The constitution provides for a president and a 130-member, unicameral congress elected for four years.

The two main parties are the center-left Liberal Party (PL) and the conservative National Party (PN). In the 1993, the PN nominated Oswaldo Ramos Soto, an outspoken right-winger. The PL, which held power during most of the 1980s, nominated Roberto Reina, a 67-year-old progressive and a former president of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Reina won with 52 percent of the vote. The PL won 70 seats in congress, the PN, 56. Two small left-wing parties took the remaining 4.

Reina promised a "moral revolution" and greater civilian control over the military. His administration had a positive, if mixed, record. The size of the military was reduced greatly, although its spending remained secret, and officers suspected of rights offenses protected. The process of separating the police from the military was undertaken following the December 1996 approval by congress of a constitutional amendment to place the police under civilian control.

However, a virulent crime wave, believed to be, in part, the work of former and serving military and intelligence officers, continued unabated. Several leaders of Indian and Garifuna minority groups attempting to defend their land from encroachments by non-Indian landowners were murdered.

On November 30, 1997, PL presidential candidate Flores, a U.S.-trained engineer and newspaper owner, won a resounding, 54 to 41 percent victory over PN candidate

Nora Melgar. The ruling party won 67 congressional seats and retained control over 180 of Honduras' 297 municipal districts. Flores immediately announced that civilian control of the armed forces would be strengthened by the creation of a functional defense ministry and the newly civilianized police would enjoy an increased budget. He also appointed five women to high-level posts, including that of minister of security, the portfolio in charge of the new civilian national police. In September 1998, congress voted to end more than 30 years of military autonomy by suppressing the post of commander-in-chief of the armed forces, a move that created unrest in the barracks.

In May 1999 a civilian judge ordered the arrest for abuse of authority of the general who retired at the end of the previous year as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The crisis within the army, which brought a drastic reorganization of the military high command, was apparently the result of efforts by the civilian defense minister to audit the military's lucrative pension fund and holding company. It was resolved only after Flores granted concessions to the rebellious officers in secret negotiations. In 1999, right-wing paramilitary groups reappeared for the first time in a decade, as landowners worried about public safety decided to take the law into their own hands.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens are able to change their government through elections. The 1997 presidential contest was considered to be generally free and fair.

Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to form political parties and civic organizations are generally respected. But repressive measures coming in the face of peaceful protests and mounting crime have limited political rights and civil liberties.

The judicial system, headed by the supreme court, is weak and corruption prone. In 1998 the new court was packed with lawyers close to both the military and officials accused of corruption. Death threats and violent attacks face judges who assert themselves in human rights cases. Although 90 percent of the 10,000 people incarcerated are awaiting trial, they share deplorable prison conditions with convicted inmates. Drug-related corruption is rampant.

In 1997 the government moved to place the police under civilian control, a task made easier by the emergence of a cadre of police professionals at the top reaches of a force controlled by the military since 1963. However, Reina frequently used the military for internal security tasks, putting down labor unrest, quelling street protests, and seeking to control street crime. The latter action was one continued by Flores in March 1999 when, in response to demands from business organizations, he sent 12,000 troops into the streets. Arbitrary detention and torture by the police still occur. A crime wave throughout Honduras has been fueled by the presence of some 120 youth gangs whose main activities include murder, kidnapping, and robbery. Where crime rings have been effectively broken up, good police work, rather than troops in the streets, has made the difference. The need to strengthen and professionalize the poorly equipped civilian police is hampered by a lack of public confidence in them.

The military exerts considerable, if waning, influence over the government. By naming a civilian instead of a general to head the armed forces in January 1999, Flores said he hoped to strengthen government control over the military. The oversight offensive also included civilian control of the armed forces budget and the independent auditing of military business ventures—the sources of much high-level corruption. A

constellation of military-owned businesses makes the armed forces one of Honduras' 10 largest for-profit enterprises. Most criminal cases against the military remained in military court jurisdiction, and the charges were usually dismissed. However, beginning in 1999 military personnel are no longer immune from prosecution in civilian courts.

In 1998, army officers were implicated in drug trafficking, including taking sides in cartel turf wars and protecting drug shipments in transit through Honduras. The military remains the country's principal human rights violator, and the institution protects members connected to both political repression and street crime, often linked to narcotics. In February 1998, the human rights leader Ernesto Sandoval was murdered in a "death squad"-style assassination. The death squads are now also reportedly involved in the "social cleansing" murders of youth gang members in San Pedro Sula, the country's second largest city.

Labor unions are well organized and can strike, although labor actions often result in clashes with security forces. Labor leaders, religious groups, and indigenous-based peasant unions pressing for land rights remain vulnerable to repression. On December 31, 1999, Jose Cosme Reyes, the local secretary of the National Lenca Indigenous Organization, was strangled to death by unknown assailants. His death brought to 54 the number of indigenous leaders killed in a 9-year period. In May 1999, prosecutors asked courts to issue arrest warrants for 10 landowners on killing at least 42 of the Indians in land disputes. Some 85,000 workers, mostly women, are employed in the low-wage maquiladora export sector, which in 1999 experienced growing difficulties. Child labor is a problem in rural areas and in the informal economy.

Hungary

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 10,100,000

PPP: \$7,200

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Hungarian (90 percent), Roma (4 percent), German (3 percent), Serb (2 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Budapest

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, Hungary was one of Central Europe's most active participants in NATO actions in Kosovo, and it continued to have the region's most dynamic economy. Yet there were signs of economic slowdown and small media controversies suggesting that the press is occasionally susceptible to overt political influence.

With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory under the 1920 Trianon Treaty, which left 3.5 million Hungarians as minorities in neighboring Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, and Ukraine. After World War II, Soviet forces helped install a Communist regime. In 1956, Soviet

tanks quashed an armed uprising by Hungarians, and by the late 1980s, with the economy deteriorating, the ruling Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party (MSzMP) lost its legitimacy. The ouster of MSzMP General Secretary Janos Kadar in 1988 led the way to political reform and the eventual introduction of a multiparty system in 1989.

In 1994, the Hungarian Socialists (MSzP) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) defeated the conservative-populist Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) with promises to ease the transition to a market economy. MSzP and SzDSz formed a coalition government with MSzP leader Gyula Horn as prime minister. Despite macroeconomic gains attributed to the Socialist's 1995 austerity program, the run-up to the 1998 parliamentary elections saw decreasing popularity for the Horn government as many Hungarians became disillusioned with corruption, crime, and an unequal distribution of wealth.

In 1998, the Federation of Young Democrats-Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP) led a coalition of center-right parties to victory over the ruling MSzP-SZDSZ coalition. Fidesz leader Viktor Orban became prime minister and formed a government with the populist Independent Smallholder's Party (FKGP) and the MDF. Orban pledged to attack corruption, tax evasion and organized crime. The new government also continued to pursue membership in NATO and the European Union (EU).

In March 1999, Hungary acceded to NATO. One month later, Hungary became an important member of NATO operations in Kosovo. Throughout the conflict, Hungary carefully balanced its commitments to the alliance against its need to protect the 300,000 ethnic Hungarians who live in northern Serbia. The strong Hungarian economy slowed in 1999. By August, the national bank predicted growth to be 3.7 percent annually, not the government's earlier targets of 4 to 5 percent. Foreign direct investment was half its 1998 level and analysts were concerned that Fidesz's August budget did not do enough to control government spending and inflation. In July, the costs for Hungary's EU accession were estimated at \$3.3 billion, yet the government was confident that it would meet the 2002 entry date.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Hungarians can change their government democratically under a multiparty system enshrined in an amended constitution. The 1998 elections were free and fair.

A 1995 media law was meant to end years of political wrangling over control of the electronic media. Legal battles in 1998 and 1999 involving the Radio and Television Regulatory Body (ORTT) over questions of monopoly and corruption in the licensing process prompted policymakers to agree on the need to revise the media law and clearly define ORTT's legal status. There are three national public television channels, 26 private commercial television stations, more than 200 regional cable outlets, and more than 30 radio stations. In June 1999, the host of a popular criminal investigation program, Laszlo Juszti, was fired and arrested for airing state secrets. The state intelligence documents undermined earlier Fidesz claims that the previous government had spied on Fidesz members. In July, the attorney general dropped the charges, and Juszti initiated a reinstatement and damages suit. There is a wide variety of independent newspapers and publications that offer diverse opinions. Funding cuts in late 1998 to *Courier (Kurir)*, a daily tabloid, and Hungarian Orange (*Magyar Narancs*), an alternative opposition weekly, have continued to raise questions about the use of Postabank, the country's second largest state bank, as a funding source for print media. The govern-

ment cited budgetary reasons for the cuts while the paper's supporters claimed *Magyar Narancs* was being punished for its criticism of the government.

Freedoms of conscience and religion are viewed as fundamental liberties not granted by the state. In March 1999, Jewish organizations claimed that the government was reimbursing victims of communism at a much higher rate than it was reimbursing Hungarian victims of the Holocaust.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Some 200 political parties, movements, and associations have been registered since 1989. The two largest trade unions are the Democratic Federation of Free Trade Unions (LIGA) and the Hungarian Workers Council. The National Federation of Trade Unions (MSZOSZ) is a successor to the Communist-era union. In 1999, railway workers and public employees held strikes and demonstrations over wages and benefits.

The judiciary is independent and the Constitutional Court has ruled against the government on several occasions. In the past, the police have used excessive force and racial profiling. In the fall of 1999, there was increasing testimony from officers and citizens about corruption and links to organized crime throughout the police department in Bekes County.

Hungary's half-million Roma (Gypsies) continue to suffer discrimination in employment, housing, and education. Major ethnic groups have special units of self-government funded by the state. Despite some setbacks, Hungary worked throughout 1999 with Romania and the new government in Slovakia to improve the status of ethnic Hungarians in both countries.

There is freedom of movement, and the state does not control choice of residence or employment. Property rights are formally guaranteed by the constitution and are upheld de facto by contract and property laws. Foreigners, however, are not allowed to acquire agricultural land. Corruption is controlled but present. In June 1999, documents disclosed by an anonymous source revealed that the state-run Postabank had been giving preferential treatment to more than 100 of Hungary's political and cultural elite, including members of government and opposition parties.

Women are represented in government, business, and education, and several organizations represent women's issues.

Iceland

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 300,000

PPP: \$22,497

Life Expectancy: 79

Ethnic Groups: Iclander

Capital: Reykjavik

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In parliamentary elections held in May, Prime Minister David Oddsson's conservative Independence Party and the centrist

Progressive Party led by the Foreign Minister Halldor Asgrimsson held on to a majority of seats in the Althingi (parliament) as voters responded to their promises of continued stability and prosperity. The two parties now enjoy a comfortable majority of 38 of the parliament's 63 seats.

Oddsson, who has been in power for eight years, is now the longest-sitting prime minister of Iceland. Under his leadership, the island has continued its economic upswing, with the unemployment rate dropping in September to 1.4 percent, the lowest in a decade and among the lowest in the world.

In May, Iceland, for the first time, took over the chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Iceland continued its integration into Europe by strengthening its links to the European Economic Area. Although their country has strong historical, cultural, and economic ties with Europe, Icelanders are hesitant to membership in the European Union (EU); a special problem is the EU common fisheries policy, which Icelanders believe would threaten their marine industry. This industry accounts for 80 percent of Iceland's exported goods and half of its export revenues.

In October, Oddsson stated again that his government sees no need to apply to the EU. He also ruled out joining the European Monetary Union. Meanwhile, the opposition is divided into two camps, with the Social Democratic faction of the United Left bloc in favor of submitting an application and the Green-Left Alliance opposing EU membership.

Iceland achieved full independence in 1944. Multiparty governments have been in power since then. On August 1, 1996, the former finance minister and former leader of the leftist People's Alliance, Dr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, was sworn in as independent Iceland's fifth president.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Icelanders can change their government democratically. Iceland's constitution, adopted by referendum in 1944, vests power in a president (whose functions are mainly ceremonial), a prime minister, a legislature, and a judiciary. The president is directly elected for a four-year term. The unicameral legislature is also elected for four years (subject to dissolution). The prime minister, who performs most executive functions, is appointed by the president but is responsible to the legislature. The constitution provides for freedom of speech, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of the press. A wide range of publications includes both independent and party-affiliated newspapers. An autonomous board of directors oversees the Icelandic State Broadcasting Service, which operates a number of transmitting and relay stations. There are both private and public television stations.

The population of Iceland is very homogenous. In recent years Iceland has not received a substantial number of refugees or asylum seekers. During the Kosovo crisis, Iceland accepted a few dozen refugees. Although there is no national refugee legislation, a draft refugee law is under preparation. Legislation adopted in 1996 permits homosexuals to live together in a formal relationship with the same legal rights as in marriage, minus the right to adopt children or to be artificially inseminated.

Virtually everyone in the country holds at least nominal membership in the state-supported Lutheran Church. Freedom of worship is respected, and discrimination on the basis of race, language, social class, or sex is outlawed.

About 76 percent of all eligible workers belong to free trade unions, and all

enjoy the right to strike. Disabled persons enjoy extensive rights in employment and education.

The country's judiciary is independent. The law does not provide for trial by jury, but many trials and appeals use panels comprised of several judges. All judges, at all levels, serve for life.

Gender-based equality is guaranteed by law. There remains about a 20 percent gap in earnings between men and women in comparable jobs. In 1995, women held 17 out of the 63 seats in parliament. After the 1999 elections, the number rose to 22. The Women's Alliance, an Icelandic feminist movement founded in 1983, is registered as a political party and has its own parliamentary faction.

India

Polity: Parliamentary democracy (insurgencies)

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 986,600,000

PPP: \$1,670

Life Expectancy: 60

Ethnic Groups: Indo-Aryan (72 percent), Dravidian (25 percent), other (3 percent)

Capital: New Delhi

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

In October 1999, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Indian People's Party (BJP) returned to office following India's third election in three years, but faced the challenge of governing effectively while holding together an ideologically diverse coalition.

India achieved independence from Great Britain in 1947 with the partition of the subcontinent into a predominantly Hindu India, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and a Muslim Pakistan. The 1950 constitution provides for a lower, 543-seat *Lok Sabha* (House of the People), directly elected for a five-year term (plus two appointed seats for Indians of European descent), and an upper *Rajya Sabha* (Council of States). Executive power is vested in a prime minister, who is the leader of the party commanding the most support in the lower house.

The centrist, secular Congress Party ruled continuously for the first five decades of independence, except for periods of opposition in 1977 through 1980 and in 1989 through 1991. During the campaign for the 1991 elections, a suspected Sri Lankan Tamil separatist assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, heir to the political dynasty of Congress standard-bearers Nehru and Indira Gandhi. After Congress won the elections, the incoming Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, responded to a balance of payments crisis by initiating gradual reforms of the autarkic, control-bound economy.

In December 1992, Hindu fundamentalists, incited by militant Hindu organizations associated with the BJP, destroyed a sixteenth-century mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya. Several weeks of communal violence ensued in northern India and Bombay.

In the mid-1990s, Congress lost eleven state elections, as poor and low-caste voters signaled their opposition to the economic reforms and Muslims expressed anger over the government's failure to prevent communal violence. Regional parties made gains in southern India, and low-caste parties and the BJP increased their influence in the northern Hindi-speaking belt.

These trends continued at the national level in the April-May 1996 parliamentary elections, as the BJP captured 161 seats and the Congress Party had its worst showing ever, with 140 seats. However, in May a BJP-led minority government resigned 13 days later after failing to attract secular allies. In June, thirteen regional and leftist parties formed the minority United Front (UF) government, which Congress supported but didn't join.

UF governments led by H. D. Deve Gowda and I. K. Gujral proved fractious and relatively ineffective. In November 1997, Congress withdrew its support from the UF coalition and precipitated fresh elections after a commission investigating Rajiv Gandhi's death linked a tiny, Tamil Nadu-based UF constituent party to Sri Lankan guerrillas implicated in the assassination.

In early 1998, Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi's widow, publicly campaigned for Congress for the first time, rejuvenating a party that had been wracked by splits, defections, and malaise. The BJP pledged to deliver political stability and introduce Hindu nationalist policies, including eliminating the separate Sharia (Islamic law) code for marriage, divorce, and inheritance followed by the country's 120 million Muslims.

In the February-March 1998 elections, the BJP (178 seats) and its allies won 245 seats; Congress (140 seats) and its allies, 166; and the UF, 95. The remaining 39 seats went to minor parties or were vacant. Throughout India, voters rejected parties in power at the state level. In late March, the BJP and more than a dozen allies formed a government under Vajpayee, capping a decades-old drive for political power and legitimacy by India's Hindu nationalist movement.

In May 1998, India carried out a series of underground nuclear tests, and arch rival Pakistan responded with its own atomic tests. In November the soaring price of onions and other staples helped Congress oust BJP governments in elections in Delhi and Rajasthan, and fight off a BJP challenge in populous Madhya Pradesh.

The Vajpayee government's thin parliamentary majority forced the prime minister to expend considerable political capital placating small parties in order to hold the coalition together. In April 1999, the former film star Jayalalitha Jayaram pulled her Tamil Nadu-based party out of the coalition, and the BJP narrowly lost a no-confidence vote. No party was able to form a new government, and President K. R. Narayanan called early elections.

The BJP campaigned on Vajpayee's handling of a summer crisis over Kashmir that ended with Indian troops repelling an incursion by Pakistani-backed forces, and on suggestions that Italian-born Sonia Gandhi's foreign origins made her unfit to lead an Indian government. Yet polls showed most voters were concerned primarily with local economic issues. Significantly, while the Congress Party continued to portray itself as the natural party of government, the BJP adroitly formed a series of tactical alliances with regional- and caste-based parties.

In elections held in five stages in September and October 1999, the BJP-led, 22-party National Democratic Alliance coalition won 295 seats (182 for the BJP) against 112 seats for Congress. The latter's share of the vote rose from 26 to 29 percent while

the BJP's share held at 25 percent. The voting further confirmed the growing importance of regional- and caste-based parties, the secular decline of leftist parties, and the emergence of two blocs centered around the BJP and Congress.

In another development, a powerful October cyclone and subsequent flooding left millions homeless and killed more than 10,000 people in the eastern state of Orissa.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Indian citizens can change their government democratically. However, democratic rule continued to be undermined by widespread official corruption, the increasing criminalization of politics, fragile state institutions, and a weak rule of law. Key policies and appointments in the Vajpayee government were reportedly shaped by the National Volunteer Service, a far-right Hindu group, modeled on 1930s European Fascist parties, that counted the prime minister and other BJP leaders among its members.

Observers rated parliamentary elections in 1996, 1998, and 1999 as the fairest in India's history. Authorities monitored compliance with campaign spending limits and restricted the use of state resources for campaigning. Photo identity cards helped prevent fraud. Nevertheless, some irregularities and violence accompanied these elections. In the 1999 national elections, guerrilla attacks in Bihar and northeast India and inter-party clashes killed some 130 people.

Since the 1970s the criminalization of politics has accelerated. In 1998, *The New York Times* cited studies showing that more than one-third of state legislators in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, had criminal records. The London-based *Financial Times* cited Indian press allegations that it took three kidnappings to pay for a poll campaign in Uttar Pradesh. In 1997, the Election Commission estimated that 40 members of parliament and 700 state assembly representatives nationwide faced charges for, or had been convicted of, offenses ranging from extortion to murder. The nexus between politics and crime is reportedly strongest in the impoverished northern state of Bihar, where many legislators reportedly lead criminal gangs; political killings are routine; and in 1997 the chief minister resigned following allegations that he and his associates stole nearly \$300 million in state funds.

The constitution allows the central government to dissolve state governments following a breakdown in normal administration. Successive governments in New Delhi have misused this power to gain control of states under opposition administration, although in recent years there have been fewer federal takeovers. Economic reforms continue to devolve power to the states.

The judiciary is independent and in recent years has exercised unprecedented activism in response to public interest litigation over official corruption, environmental issues, and other matters. However, the system has a backlog of more than 30 million cases, is widely considered to be subject to corruption and manipulation at the lower levels, and is largely inaccessible to the poor.

Police, army, and paramilitary forces continued to be implicated in cases of "disappearances," extrajudicial killings, rape, torture, arbitrary detention, and destruction of homes, particularly in Kashmir, and in Assam and other northeastern states. (A separate report on Kashmir appears in the Related Territories section.)

The broadly drawn 1980 National Security Act allows police to detain suspects for up to one year (two in Punjab) without charges. Police routinely torture suspects to extract confessions and abuse ordinary prisoners, particularly low-caste members. Rape

of female convicts remains a problem. The National Human Rights Commission monitors custodial deaths and other incidences of torture, although it cannot investigate complaints of human rights violations committed by security forces. The criminal procedure code requires central or state government approval for prosecutions of security force members, and in practice this permits soldiers and police to commit abuses with relative impunity.

In the seven northeastern states, more than 40 mainly tribal-based insurgent groups continued to sporadically attack security forces, to engage in intertribal and internecine violence, and to be implicated in numerous killings, abductions, rapes, and cases of extortion from tea plantations. The militants ostensibly seek either separate states or independence for their ethnic or tribal groups. The 1958 Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act grants security forces broad powers to use lethal force and detention in Assam and four nearby states, and provides near immunity from prosecution to security forces acting under it. In recent years the army has committed atrocities with impunity during counterinsurgency operations in Assam, Manipur, and other northeastern states. The insurgencies occur in the context of intense competition for scarce land in an underdeveloped region where in recent decades hundreds of thousands of migrants from other parts of India and Bangladesh have settled.

Left-wing Naxalite guerrillas control territory and kill dozens of police, politicians, landlords, and villagers each year in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa, and run parallel courts in parts of Bihar. In 1999, Naxalites and the Ranvir Sena, a technically illegal private army backed by middle-caste politicians and upper-caste landlords, engaged in a series of tit-for-tat atrocities in Bihar that killed scores of people. In April, the New York-based Human Rights Watch/Asia reported that in the past four years, Naxalites had killed more than 1,100 landowners, while the Ranvir Sena had killed more than 400 peasants, many of them Dalits (ex-untouchables). The report alleged collusion between the state and the Ranvir Sena.

The private press is vigorous. The Official Secrets Act empowers authorities to censor security-related articles; in practice authorities occasionally use the act to limit criticism of the government. In 1999, unknown assailants killed at least four journalists. Police and soldiers arrested and attacked several journalists in Assam and other northeastern states. Radio is both public and private, although the state-owned All India Radio is dominant and its news coverage favors the government. The government maintains a monopoly on domestic television broadcasting, although foreign satellite broadcasts are available.

Section 144 of the criminal procedure code empowers state-level authorities to declare a state of emergency, restrict free assembly, and impose curfews. Authorities occasionally use Section 144 to prevent demonstrations. In recent years, human rights groups have reported that police and hired thugs had beaten, arbitrarily detained, or otherwise harassed villagers and members of nongovernmental organizations who were protesting forced relocations, with limited compensation, from the sites of development projects. Human rights organizations generally operate freely, but face harassment in rural areas from landlords and other powerful interests.

Each year, dowry disputes cause several thousand women to be burned to death, driven to suicide, or otherwise killed, and countless others to be harassed, beaten, or deserted by husbands. Although dowry is illegal, convictions in dowry deaths are rare. Rape and other violence against women continued to be serious problems. Many of the

hundreds of thousands of women and children in Indian brothels are held in debt servitude and subjected to rape, beatings, and other torture in a system that thrives with the complicity of local officials. Hindu women are often denied inheritances, and under Sharia (Islamic law) Muslim women face discrimination in inheritance rights. Tribal land systems, particularly in Bihar, often deny tribal women the right to own land.

The constitution bars discrimination based on caste, but in practice members of so-called scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, as well as religious and ethnic minorities, routinely face unofficial discrimination. Caste-related violence kills scores of people each year. Freedom of religion is respected. However, in January 1999, the Delhi-based United Christian Forum for Human Rights reported that Hindu militants had carried out at least 114 assaults on Christians in the past year, including rape, assault, the burning of churches, and destruction of Bibles. Most of the attacks took place in the BJP-controlled western state of Gujarat, and to a lesser extent in eastern Orissa state, where in January, Hindu militants burned to death an Australian missionary and his two young sons. Christian activists blamed several militant Hindu organizations linked to the Sangh Parivar, a Hindu nationalist umbrella organization that includes the BJP. The militant Hindu organizations denied responsibility but suggested that the attacks were in retaliation for alleged conversions by Christian missionaries.

Major cities each have thousands of street children, many of whom work in the informal sector. UNICEF estimates that overall there are up to 60 million child laborers, mostly members of lower castes and ethnic minority communities. Many work in hazardous conditions, and several million are bonded laborers. Labor legislation exists, but corrupt inspectors frequently compromise its implementation. Trade unions are powerful and independent, and workers exercise their rights to bargain collectively and strike. Property rights are weak.

Indonesia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy (military-influenced)

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 211,800,000

PPP: \$3,490

Life Expectancy: 63

Ethnic Groups: Javanese (45 percent), Sundanese (14 percent), Madurese (8 percent), Malay (8 percent), other (25 percent)

Capital: Jakarta

Ratings Change: Indonesia's political rights rating changed from 6 to 4 due to relatively free, though not entirely fair, parliamentary elections in June.

Political Rights: 4*

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999, Indonesia's democratic transition continued as the world's fourth most populous country held its freest legislative election since 1955 and, in the most emphatic break yet with the Suharto regime, Muslim cleric Abdurrahman Wahid became president.

President Sukarno proclaimed Indonesia's independence from the Dutch in 1945. Following an aborted coup in 1965 allegedly backed by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the Army Strategic Reserve, headed by General Suharto, reportedly participated in the massacre of some 500,000 suspected PKI members between 1965 and 1967. In 1968, two years after assuming key political and military powers, Suharto formally became president.

Under Suharto's highly centralized, autocratic regime, economic development lifted millions of Indonesians out of poverty. Yet the president's family and cronies controlled key companies and trading monopolies; corruption drained state resources; and authorities stunted the growth of civil society, the rule of law, and political institutions. Suharto allowed only three political parties: the ruling Golkar; the nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI); and the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP). However, neither the PDI nor the PPP functioned as a true opposition, and the 500-seat parliament had little independent power. Every five years the 1,000-member People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which consisted of the parliament plus 500 additional, appointed members, rubber-stamped Suharto's decision to hold another term.

In 1996 a government-backed, rebel PDI faction ousted Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of the first president and the leading opposition figure, as PDI leader, precipitating the worst rioting in Jakarta since the mid-1970s. The government banned Megawati from running in the 1997 parliamentary elections, which Golkar officially won with 74 percent of the vote.

The regional financial crisis that began in July 1997 caused the value of the *rupiah* to fall sharply as highly leveraged corporations sold the currency to cover dollar-denominated debts. By January 1998, the rupiah's slide had sent food prices soaring. Attacks against the ethnic Chinese minority, which had been become increasingly frequent since 1996, continued in Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, and other parts of the archipelago. Many of the attacks appeared to be orchestrated. In February students began demonstrating over economic conditions, later making unprecedented demands for Suharto's resignation. On March 11, Suharto had the MPR reelect him for a seventh term.

On May 12, 1998 security forces shot dead four students during a demonstration at Jakarta's Trisakti University. Three days of devastating urban riots ensued in many parts of Indonesia. As splits emerged within his regime, on May 21 Suharto resigned, and was immediately succeeded by Vice President B. J. Habibie, a long-time crony with little political or military support. General Wiranto, the defense minister, consolidated his position over the military by demoting General Prabowo Subianto, the strategic reserves commander and a Suharto son-in-law.

In January 1999, parliament approved three electoral laws that permitted the formation of new parties and reduced somewhat the military's legislative representation, clearing the way for early parliamentary, provincial, and district elections on June 7, 1999. Some 48 parties conducted largely peaceful, spirited campaigns. Three influential opposition parties formed a loose coalition: Megawati's new Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P); the National Mandate Party (PAN) led by Amien Rais, the former leader of a 28-million-member Islamic social organization; and the National Awakening Party (PKB) led by Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of Indonesia's largest Muslim social group. Final results for the 462 contested parliamentary seats (38 seats are reserved for the military) gave the PDI-P 37.4 percent of the vote and 154 seats;

Golkar, 20.9 percent and 120 seats; PKB, 17.4 percent and 51 seats; PPP, 10.7 percent and 58 seats; PAN, 7.3 percent and 35 seats; and 16 other parties, 44 seats.

Attention shifted to a special October session of the MPR, which for the first time would choose among competing candidates for president. Opinion polls showed ordinary Indonesians favoring Megawati. Habibie initially refused to concede despite mounting popular anger over a scandal involving a payoff by the private Bank Bali to his Golkar Party; the president's October 12 decision to drop a corruption probe into Suharto-controlled charities; and his policy in East Timor, where a surprise January decision to hold a referendum on independence culminated with the army's ceding of control over the territory to a multinational force in September. On October 20, Habibie withdrew his candidacy and the MPR elected Wahid, 59, president. The next day, the MPR elected Megawati vice president. Wahid formed a cabinet that included all major political parties.

In 1999, clashes between Christians and Muslims in Ambon and other islands in eastern Maluku province beginning in January reportedly killed at least 350 people by April. Attacks by Dayaks and Malays against Madurese in West Kalimantan, Borneo, killed some 200 people, mostly Madurese, in March and April and forced more than 16,000 refugees to flee their homes.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Indonesians voted in parliamentary elections in June 1999 that were reasonably free although not entirely fair. However, the powerful president is still indirectly elected. Political institutions remain weak after three decades in which Suharto systematically depoliticized society.

The 1999 election laws continued to require parties to accept *pancasila*, an overarching, consensus-oriented philosophy that Sukarno and Suharto used to constrain political mobilization. Parties also must demonstrate support in one-third of Indonesia's provinces to be eligible to contest elections, which mitigates against the formation of regional parties. The armed forces continued to hold legislative seats, though their parliamentary representation dropped from 75 to 38 seats.

Several local groups reported allegations that Golkar supporters illegally used welfare funds for campaigning and had tried to bribe voters prior to the June legislative elections. According to two U.S.-based organizations—the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Carter Center—the June polls were generally well organized, despite some problems involving transparency, training of poll workers, and distribution of election materials. The 700-member MPR that elected the president consisted of the parliament plus 135 representatives from provincial assemblies and 65 representatives of professional, ethnic, religious, and gender-based groups. NDI and the Carter Center noted that the MPR contained a disproportionate number of provincial representatives from Golkar's rural stronghold.

The most severe rights violations occur in Aceh, East Timor, and West Papua (separate reports on East Timor and West Papua appear in the Related Territories section). In resource-rich Aceh province in northern Sumatra, the military's counterinsurgency operation against Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh) separatists peaked in 1989 through 1992, although in the ensuing years the army continued to commit extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, rape, arbitrary detention, and other abuses. In August 1998, authorities lifted Aceh's classification as an "Area of Military Operations" that had been

in place since 1990. The army increased its counterinsurgency operations in December 1998 in response to an apparent upsurge in Aceh Merdeka activity, and in 1999 committed dozens of extrajudicial killings and disappearances of guerrillas and alleged civilian defectors. Aceh Merdeka guerrillas are accused of extrajudicial killings of soldiers and of civilians who allegedly assisted the army. More than 90,000 people fled their homes amid the violence and, reportedly, coercion by rebel leaders to relocate to refugee camps. In November 1999, Aceh Merdeka leaders rejected Wahid's offer of a referendum on autonomy for the territory.

The judiciary has yet to establish itself as an independent institution. Although authorities no longer appeared to directly influence judges, the executive branch appoints and can dismiss judges. Prison conditions are poor, and torture of suspects and prisoners continues to be a problem. In 1999, security forces and police continued to commit abuses with relative impunity, although not as routinely as under Suharto. The few soldiers and police convicted of rights violations generally received relatively light sentences. The government has made little effort to investigate past abuses, including an apparently organized campaign of attacks and gang-rapes against ethnic Chinese women, at least 20 of whom reportedly died, in several cities in May 1998. Soldiers and police often refused to intervene in rioting along religious and ethnic lines, although on several occasions security forces opened fire to quell riots in Java, Maluku, East Kalimantan, Aceh, and other provinces.

Human rights groups have called for the government to repeal the 1963 Anti-Subversion Law (ASL), which Suharto used to imprison hundreds of political prisoners for peaceful dissent. The ASL allows authorities to detain suspects without charge for up to one year. In September 1999, the outgoing parliament approved a controversial security law permitting the president to declare a state of emergency in a province if provincial authorities request the declaration and parliament approves. The government delayed implementation following violent clashes in Jakarta between police and demonstrators protesting the law. In December, Agence France-Presse reported that Indonesian authorities had released what they described as the last 105 political prisoners in the country's jails, including 61 West Papuan political prisoners convicted for separatist activities.

The media are emerging from the repression of the Suharto era, when authorities frequently censored sensitive articles, closed several publications, and jailed several journalists. However, during the year, authorities harassed, physically attacked, and detained several journalists. By June 1999, the interior ministry had licensed roughly 1,300 private newspapers and magazines, up from 286 when Suharto resigned. In September, parliament passed a new press law that eliminated licenses for journalists and authorized the creation of an independent press board that will establish a code of ethics for journalists. Shortly after taking office, President Wahid abolished the information ministry, which had been the government's main instrument for controlling the press. Radio and television are both public and private. Under Habibie, political coverage on TVRI and other state-owned media continued to favor Golkar. Suharto supporters own the five private television stations.

Public assemblies and demonstrations require permits, which officials now grant fairly routinely. Authorities generally tolerated peaceful demonstrations, although on several occasions security forces used excessive and at times lethal force on unarmed protesters. Authorities permitted legal aid, human rights, and environmental nongov-

ernmental organizations (NGOs) to operate fairly freely. The official National Commission on Human Rights has criticized government abuses, although it has no enforcement powers.

In addition to being occasionally targeted in violent attacks, ethnic Chinese face some formal cultural, educational, and employment restrictions. Women face unofficial discrimination in education and employment opportunities, and were often the first to be laid off when the economic crisis began. Many Indonesian women are getting involved in politics for the first time through grassroots voter-education programs, NGO activism, and party politics. Female genital mutilation of Muslim women is reportedly widely practiced.

In 1998, Habibie ended the de facto monopoly of the government-controlled All Indonesian Workers Union, signed an International Labor Organization covenant on freedom of association, and recognized the dissident Indonesian Welfare Labor Organization. Since then, workers on plantations and in other sectors have formed several independent unions. Employers frequently ignore minimum wages, dismiss labor activists and strike leaders, and physically abuse workers.

In April, parliament approved an anticorruption bill that authorizes independent investigations into the wealth of officials and long jail terms. In October, the Berlin-based Transparency International rated Indonesia in a tie for 96th place in its corruption index, with the 99th country, Cameroon, being the most corrupt. Economists forecasted zero economic growth in 1999 after a 13 percent contraction in 1998. According to United Nations figures, the percentage of Indonesians in poverty rose from 11 percent before the financial crisis started in 1997 to 40 percent in 1999, and the unemployment rate rose from 4.7 percent to 21 percent.

Iran

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary (clergy-dominated)

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free

Economy: Capitalist-statist

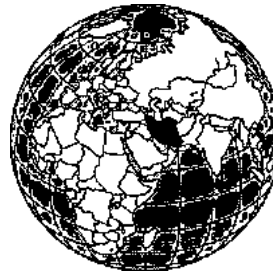
Population: 66,200,000

PPP: \$5,817

Life Expectancy: 69

Ethnic Groups: Persian (51 percent), Azeri (24 percent), Gilaki and Mazandarani (8 percent), Kurd (7 percent), Arab (3 percent), Lur (2 percent), Baloch (2 percent), Turkmen (2 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Teheran



Overview:

Twenty years after the Islamic revolution, the Iranian political scene is dominated by a struggle between the hardline conservatives who control most levers of power and moderates pushing for more freedom within the Islamic system. Supported by an emerging civil society that includes an active student movement and liberal media, reformers made important gains in 1999. But conservatives continued to use their legal and moral

authority to rein in popular opposition figures, while serious human rights abuses, arbitrary enforcement of social and legal restrictions, and a lack of official transparency and of the rule of law continued to characterize the Iranian leadership.

In January 1979, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the hereditary monarch whose decades-long authoritarian regime was marked by widespread corruption, fled Iran amid mounting religious and political unrest. A month later, the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to lead the formation of the world's first Islamic republic. The 1979 constitution provides for a directly elected president and a 12-member Council of Guardians. The Council approves all presidential and parliamentary candidates and certifies that all bills passed by the directly-elected, 270-member *Majlis* (parliament) are in accord with Islamic law. Khomeini was named supreme religious leader for life and invested with control over the security and intelligence services, armed forces, and judiciary. He was also given the power to dismiss the president following a legislative request or supreme court ruling, as well as the final word in all areas of national and foreign policy.

Following Khomeini's death in June 1989, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei assumed the role of supreme religious leader and chief of state. That August, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a cleric, became president after running unopposed and winning nearly 95 percent of the vote.

By 1997 elections, soaring inflation and unemployment, a marked decrease in per capita income due to declining oil revenues, a demographic trend toward a younger population, and restrictions on personal freedom combined to set the stage for change. Of four candidates selected by the Council of Guardians to succeed Rafsanjani, parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, the favorite of Khamenei and the majority conservatives in the *Majlis*, was expected to claim an easy victory. But Mohammad Khatami, a former culture minister who was forced to resign in 1992 for being too liberal, ran on a platform of economic reform, rule of law, civil society, and improved foreign relations. He won the support of intellectuals, women, youth, and business groups seeking greater social openness and an end to state interference in the economy. Ninety percent of the electorate turned out to vote, and 70 percent voted for Khatami.

Under the constraints of a highly restrictive political system, Khatami holds little real power. He is accountable to the *majlis* and bound by the absolute authority of Khamenei. But his popularity has helped advance his moderate agenda. His election gave public opinion a voice in Iranian politics, and that voice has become increasingly influential. In January, public outcry over the 1998 murders of several dissidents led to an unprecedented admission by the intelligence ministry implicating its agents in the killings. An official investigation led to the arrests of ministry officials, a statement denouncing "rogue elements" among intelligence officers, and the resignation of the minister himself.

Khatami received an important vote of confidence in February with Iran's first nationwide municipal elections. The February 26 polls swept moderates into an estimated 80 percent of some 200,000 seats throughout the country. Women were front-runners in at least 20 cities. In Tehran, pro-Khatami candidates, including three women, won 13 of 15 council seats. The elections were considered by observers to be the most free and fair in Iranian history, as the interior ministry blocked last-minute attempts to bar moderate candidates.

In July, simmering public frustration with the slow pace of social and economic

reform exploded into six days of angry protests after police and Islamist vigilantes raided a Tehran University dormitory. The raid followed a student protest against a restrictive new press law and the closure of the reformist *Salam* newspaper. In the most serious unrest since the revolution, tens of thousands of demonstrators lined the streets in 18 cities. Many were beaten and gassed as they demanded the dismissal of Iran's police chief. Khamenei issued a statement condemning the raid and pleading for peace, but in an unprecedented show of defiance, students shouted down the supreme leader's message with refrains of "down with the dictator," a chant traditionally reserved for anti-U.S. protests.

Faced with a flood of negative public opinion, Khamenei began making efforts to shore up the regime's flagging popularity and to present a unified front within the government. After 24 Revolutionary Guards signed a letter denouncing Khatami for inciting "chaos," Khamenei issued a statement of glowing praise for Khatami, and the Guard commander, undoubtedly prompted by Khamenei, publicly declared that he "will not tolerate moves to weaken or insult [Khatami]." In October, Khamenei forbade hardline clerics and their followers to exact summary justice against four students responsible for the publication in a Tehran university newspaper of a satirical play considered insulting to Islam.

But this veneer of tolerance is superficial. Khatami's supporters have been harassed, jailed, and sometimes murdered, while conservatives use show trials to make examples of reformist officials who have amassed too much popularity. Gholamhossein Karbaschi, the former Tehran mayor who supported Khatami's election campaign, began a two-year jail term in May 1999 after a conviction on questionable graft charges. The liberal cleric Mohsen Kadivar was sentenced to 18 months in prison in April for "spreading lies" in writings critical of the ruling regime. And Abdollah Nouri, an outspoken liberal cleric and former interior minister, was convicted in November on a wide range of charges related to political and religious dissent, and sentenced to five years in prison.

Moderates have gained the upper hand in foreign policy. After years of Iranian isolationism, Khatami has campaigned tirelessly to enhance Iran's international stature and attract foreign investment. In the first state visit by a leader of the Islamic republic, he traveled to Italy in March, meeting with Pope John Paul II as well as with Italian leaders. In April, French and Canadian oil companies struck a deal with Iran to exploit an Iranian oil deposit. In May, Iran and Britain agreed to exchange ambassadors for the first time since Khomeini's 1989 death edict against British writer Salman Rushdie. In late April, the U.S. excluded food and medicine from sanctions, and in an annual report on terrorism, the State Department softened its language about Iran, dropping Iran's designation as the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Khatami also toured the Arab world to discuss economic cooperation with leaders in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Qatar.

Foreign relations suffered a setback in June, however, when the government announced that 13 Iranian Jews had been arrested months earlier on charges of spying for the U.S. and Israel. As international leaders and human rights groups appealed for the safety of the detained, some analysts suggested that the arrests may have been devised by hardliners to derail rapprochement between Iran and the U.S.

The future direction of the revolution may depend on parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2000. Free and fair elections would probably result in a more liberal parliament that could shift the balance of power in favor of moderates. But the current

conservative parliament results from aggressive vetting to eliminate liberal candidates and from the removal of some winners. Optimists cite this year's relatively fair municipal elections and new electoral regulations diluting the council's powers to disqualify candidates deemed unfit. But hardliners are only too willing to bring criminal charges against popular reformers in order to end their political careers, as in the case of Abdollah Nouri, who was regarded as the likely leader of the next parliament. According to most observers, the issue is not likely to be settled before January 2000.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Iranians cannot change their government democratically. Political parties are not permitted to participate in elections, though some political groupings have won legal recognition since 1997. Legally, all presidential and legislative candidates must support the ruling theocracy, but in February, the Council of Guardians failed to block municipal candidates they thought to be lacking allegiance to Islamic principles. In advance of legislative elections scheduled for February 2000, regulations were adopted requiring the Council of Guardians to specify in writing the reasons for barring any candidate. The March 1997 presidential election was marred by violations of free expression and low-level harassment of Khatami's campaign. No international observers were permitted to oversee polling or ballot counting.

The state continues to maintain control through terror: arbitrary detention, torture, disappearance, summary trials, and executions are commonplace. Security forces enter homes and offices, open mail, and monitor telephone conversations without court authorization. Hardline vigilante groups commit extrajudicial killings with the tacit consent of the government.

Although security officials have been investigated and brought to trial for misconduct, information about their cases is not made available, and they are rarely punished. Intelligence ministry officials implicated in the 1998 killings of several dissident activists and writers have not been identified, with the exception of two who died in police custody in June and October. No action has been reported against Gholamreza Naqdi, a security police chief charged with torturing several Tehran city officials in 1998 in connection with the Karbaschi case, or against police officers responsible for the July police raid on a Tehran University dormitory.

The judiciary is not independent. Judges must meet strict political and religious qualifications. Bribery is common. Civil courts provide some procedural safeguards, though judges may serve simultaneously as prosecutors during trials. Revolutionary courts try political and religious cases, but are often arbitrarily assigned cases that normally fall under civil court jurisdiction. Charges are often vague, detainees are often denied access to legal counsel, and due process rights are ignored. A penal code adopted in 1996 is based on Sharia (Islamic) law and provides for the death penalty for a range of social and political misconduct. According to opposition groups, the official Iranian press has reported more than 500 executions since mid-1997.

The media are a primary battleground in the conflict between reformers and hardliners. Since 1997, Iran has seen the emergence of numerous publications that have become immensely popular because of their diversity and deviation from the official line. *Jame'ah's* satirical cartoons and advocacy of free and independent civil society attracted a broad audience. The investigative reporting of *Khordad* and *Sobh-e Emrooz* exposed intelligence ministry involvement in the 1998 murders of several dissidents

and writers. But conservatives accuse the independent press of plotting against Islam and the revolution, and the conservative-dominated judiciary has banned most influential reformist papers. Many re-open under different titles but are not legally protected, and tolerance is arbitrary. According to Reporters Sans Frontiers, 11 journalists have been jailed in 1999. Abdollah Nouri's *Khordad* was banned in November for "anti-Islamic propaganda." *Sobh-e Emrooz* is currently in court on similar charges.

A press law passed in July compels journalists to reveal sources, bars opposition journalists and editors from practicing journalism, limits government subsidies to reformist publications, and institutionalizes the right of revolutionary courts to try complaints against the media.

Broadcast media remain tightly controlled by conservatives. However, a ban on satellite dishes is not strictly enforced, and many viewers look to foreign television for entertainment and news. The government blocks Internet sites considered offensive, while service providers practice self-censorship.

The constitution permits public assembly that does not "violate the principles of Islam." Amnesty International reported that dozens of people were injured and at least five killed in the July student demonstrations, while officials reported some 1,500 arrests. At least twelve people were convicted in Tehran of inciting unrest. Three received death sentences, while nine received prison sentences. In Tabriz, at least nine students received prison sentences. Other cases are under consideration.

Women face discrimination in legal, educational, and professional matters. They may be fined, imprisoned, or lashed for violating Islamic dress codes, though enforcement has slackened in recent years. Unlike women in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states, Iranian women may vote, stand for public office, and drive. A woman must have permission from a male relative to obtain a passport, and the testimony of two women equals that of one man in court. In May, the government announced that it would allow women to train as police officers beginning in March 2000.

Religious freedom is limited. The 1979 constitution recognizes Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as religious minorities. Iran is approximately 99 percent Muslim, with 89 percent Shia and 10 percent Sunni. Religious minorities are barred from election to representative bodies (except for seats in the Majlis reserved for them) and from holding senior government or military positions, and face restrictions in employment, education, and property ownership. Minorities may conduct religious education and establish community centers and certain cultural, social, sports, or charitable associations. Jewish families may not travel abroad together.

The Bahai faith is not recognized. The largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, more than 300,000 Iranian Bahais face official discrimination, a complete lack of property rights, arbitrary arrest, a ban on university admission, employment restrictions, and prohibitions on teaching their faith and practicing communally. According to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States, more than 200 Bahais have been executed since 1979.

There are no independent trade unions. The government-controlled Worker's House is the only legal federation. Collective bargaining is nonexistent.

Iraq

Polity: One-party

Political Rights: 7

presidential dictatorship

Civil Liberties: 7

Economy: Statist

Status: Not Free

Population: 22,500,000

PPP: \$3,170

Life Expectancy: 59

Ethnic Groups: Arab (75-80 percent), Kurd (15-20 percent), other, including Turkmen and Assyrian (5 percent)

Capital: Baghdad



Overview:

President Saddam Hussein's grip on power appears undiminished despite a year of intermittent bombing by the United States and Great Britain, American attempts to bolster the Iraqi opposition, and nine years of sanctions that have created a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. The Iraqi leader continues to defy the international community, demanding that sanctions be lifted and refusing reentry to United Nations weapons inspectors who withdrew on the eve of Western air attacks in December 1998. He also exploited divisions among members of the UN Security Council, who spent most of 1999 in disagreement over a new Iraq policy.

Iraq gained formal independence in 1932, though the British maintained influence over the Hashemite monarchy. The monarchy was overthrown in a military coup in 1958. A 1968 coup established a government under the Arab Baath (Renaissance) Socialist Party, which has kept power since. The frequently amended 1968 provisional constitution designated the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) as the country's highest power, and granted it virtually unlimited and unchecked authority. In 1979, Saddam Hussein, long considered the strongman of the regime, formally assumed the titles of state president and RCC chairman.

Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, touching off an eight-year war of attrition during which Iraq's economy suffered extensively and at least 150,000 Iraqis died. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. At least 100,000 Iraqi troops were killed in the Persian Gulf War before a 22-nation coalition liberated Kuwait in February 1991. In April, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 687, which called on Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, to accept long-term monitoring of its weapons facilities, and to recognize Kuwait's sovereignty. The UN also imposed an oil embargo on Iraq, which may be lifted when the government complies with the terms of Resolution 687.

An April 1998 progress report by chief United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) Weapons Inspector Richard Butler stated that Iraq had provided much information about its nuclear and chemical weapons programs, but was less forthcoming about biological weapons. Saddam maintained that Iraq was in compliance with Resolution 687 and demanded an end to sanctions. In June 1998, the discovery of traces of a nerve agent on missile fragments in an Iraqi weapons dump prompted a protracted standoff. The Security Council voted to suspend sanctions reviews, and by October Iraq had ended all cooperation with UNSCOM. The U.S. and Britain began bombing military and potential weapons production sites in December.

With UNSCOM effectively disbanded and U.S.-British air strikes continuing, the Security Council spent most of 1999 deadlocked over a new policy resolution on Iraq. The five permanent council members agreed on the resumption of weapons monitoring and the importance of improving conditions for Iraqis living under sanctions, but disagreed on the conditions that Iraq must meet before the council would ease sanctions and the extent to which sanctions would be eased. China, France, and Russia, eager to restore economic ties with Iraq, proposed suspending sanctions in return for Iraqi cooperation on weapons monitoring. The U.S. refused to suspend sanctions without full Iraqi compliance with a weapons monitoring program.

On December 17, 1999, the Security Council voted in favor of Resolution 1284, which would suspend sanctions for renewable 120-day periods provided Baghdad cooperates with a new UN arms control body, called the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). However, China, France, and Russia abstained from the vote, raising questions as to whether Iraq will have any real incentive to comply. Saddam rejected the resolution, pledging to refuse access to weapons inspectors without an unconditional lifting of sanctions.

The sanctions have taken a massive toll on Iraq's population. According to UNICEF, infant and child mortality rates more than doubled between the periods 1984 to 89 and 1994 to 99. Amnesty International reported that only 41 percent of the population has regular access to clean water. Contaminated water, deteriorating sewage treatment facilities, and sharp declines in health care services have increased the spread of disease, and a food crisis is compounded by the worst drought in nearly a hundred years. A UN study found that one out of four Iraqi children is chronically malnourished. Under a UN program, Iraq is allowed to sell an agreed upon amount of oil every six months to pay for food and medicine. However, dilapidated oil production infrastructure, delays in receiving replacement parts, and low oil prices hinder the program's effectiveness.

Exploiting international weariness with sanctions and sympathy for the Iraqi people, Saddam worked to rally international support for the lifting of sanctions. The Iraqi foreign minister took on the rotating chairmanship of the Arab League for the first time since 1990, and in September he spoke of rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Also in September, Iraq announced the reestablishment of radio, television, and telephone links with ten Arab countries via the Arabsat satellite network. Several Arab states have sent trade delegations to Baghdad in hopes of investing should Iraq open to commerce. With regard to the West, notably France and Russia, Saddam warns that continuing sanctions might jeopardize pending oil investment deals.

As Saddam tried to generate pressure on the United States to change its sanctions policy, the U.S. began implementing a policy to bolster the Iraqi opposition, with a long-term view to overthrowing Saddam. In January, the U.S. designated seven opposition groups as eligible to receive military assistance, and named a special representative to oversee the project. However, the plan faces opposition from some Arab states as well as from some of the opposition groups themselves. Iraq's neighbors frown upon foreign intervention in an Arab country and worry about the destabilizing effect of ousting Saddam. And at least two of the selected opposition groups refused to take part in a U.S.-backed operation. Many observers express skepticism about the plan, citing serious disunity among Iraqi opposition groups and the refusal of two major groups to participate. By year's end, several Iraqis in the U.S. had begun "political opposition training"—including sessions on leadership training and civil-military relations.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Iraqis cannot change their government democratically. Saddam holds supreme power, and relatives and friends from his hometown of Tikrit hold most key positions. Opposition parties are illegal, and a 250-seat national assembly has no power.

Iraq reportedly held local elections in August 1999, the first during Saddam's presidency. Candidates were forbidden to hold rallies, appear on television, or publish campaign literature. All were either members of the Baath Party or independents. There was no independent monitoring of the polls, so there were no clear figures about turnout. Local councilors have little power; they recommend policy to local officials appointed by the central government.

State control is maintained through the extensive use of intimidation through arrest, torture, and summary execution. According to Amnesty International, people suspected of involvement in opposition activities "can expect to be arrested without a warrant, held in secret detention, without access to family and lawyers, be brutally tortured—including, in one case, having their eyes gouged out—and finally, could face execution." The UN special rapporteur for human rights in Iraq accused the government of denying citizens freedom of thought, expression, association, and assembly. Iraqi opposition groups reported the execution of hundreds of prisoners in 1999, and of dozens of army officers for alleged conspiracy against the regime.

Some safeguards exist in civil cases, but political and "economic" cases are tried in separate security courts with no due process considerations. Theft, corruption, desertion from the army, and currency speculation are punishable by amputation, branding, or execution. Doctors have been executed for refusing to carry out punishments and for attempting reconstructive surgery.

In 1998, non-Baath newspapers were allowed to publish for the first time since 1968. Criticism of local officials and investigation into corruption were occasionally tolerated, as long as they did not extend to Saddam or to major policy issues. The government made little effort to block the signal of Radio Free Iraq, which began broadcasting in October 1998. Nonetheless, the government carefully controls most information available to Iraqis, and in September 1999, the editor in chief of a paper owned by Saddam's son Uday was arrested after refusing to take over another of Uday's publications. In May, another of Uday's newspapers was shutdown for publishing "incorrect news." The government allowed restricted access to satellite broadcasting beginning in October.

Shiite Muslims, constituting more than 60 percent of the population, face severe persecution. The army has arrested thousands of Shias and executed an undetermined number of these detainees. Security forces have desecrated Shiite mosques and holy sites. The army has indiscriminately targeted civilian Shiite villages, razed homes, and drained southern Amara and Hammar marshes in order to flush out Shiite guerrillas. The murder of a leading Shiite cleric in February 1999 sparked widespread protests, which led to clashes between Shiite protesters and security forces across southern Iraq and in Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad. Dozens were killed in the clashes, including a number of security officers. Opposition groups reported that 33 residents of various Shiite suburbs were executed following the unrest. The U.S. State Department reported that the government bulldozed or gutted about 160 homes in Al-Masha village and that tank columns attacked Rumaita and Khudur after Shiite protests early in the summer.

Forced displacement of ethnic Kurds, Turkomans, and other non-Arab minorities continued in 1999. Kurdish officials reported in late 1998 that some 200,000 Kurds had been evicted from areas under government control since 1991. In late April 1999, an opposition group reported that the government had expelled some 400 Kurdish and Turkoman families into the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq. The head of a coalition of Turkoman parties reported that some 5,000 evicted Turkomans were living in "subhuman conditions in northern Iraq."

Islam is the state religion, and Muslims constitute an estimated 95 percent of the population. A 1981 law gives the government control over mosques, the appointment of clergy, and the publication of religious literature. Jewish citizens are restricted in traveling abroad and in communication with Jews outside Iraq.

Although laws exist to protect women from discrimination in employment and education, to permit women to join security and police forces, to require education for girls, and to grant women rights in family matters such as divorce and property ownership, it is difficult to determine whether these rights are protected in practice. Men are granted immunity for killing female relatives suspected of "immoral deeds." In May 1999, the government announced that it would seek to recruit children between the ages of 12 and 17 into a volunteer army charged with "defending Iraq against foreign conspiracy or aggression."

Independent trade unions do not exist; the state-backed General Federation of Trade Unions is the only legal labor federation. The law does not recognize the right to collective bargaining and places restrictions on the right to strike.

Ireland

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 3,700,000
PPP: \$20,710
Life Expectancy: 75
Ethnic Groups: Celtic, English minority
Capital: Dublin

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, Ireland continued to be dogged by a wave of financial scandals involving the country's political and business elite. As of December, there were five major corruption investigations under way, most involving tax fraud, but also one probing illegal payments for political and property development favors. One of the investigations deeply embarrassed the ruling Fianna Fail party with revelations embroiling its former leader Charles Haughey and hurt the current prime minister, Bertie Ahern, an old protege of Haughey's.

The ruling coalition government that included Fianna Fail (Soldiers of Destiny) and the Progressive Democrats relied heavily on the support of four maverick independents to stay afloat. Mary Harney, the leader of the small, conservative Progressive Democrats party and deputy prime minister, has threatened to withdraw from the gov-

ernment and bring down the coalition if more damaging disclosures are made during the investigation.

Ireland's main opposition party Fine Gael (Family of the Irish) proposed new legislation to crack down on corruption, including the introduction of a seven-year jail term for bribery.

In spite of recriminations, Bertie Ahern's frail coalition continued to stay in power throughout 1999, at least partly as a result of the country's unprecedented economic prosperity: Ireland is Europe's fastest-growing economy; the unemployment rate has been falling rapidly and averaged only 6 percent in 1999, and the nation has amassed a large government surplus and considerably reduced its public debt. For the first time in many decades, more people moved to Ireland than left it. In January, Ireland joined the European Monetary Union.

In December, the country became part of the NATO-led Partnership for Peace. Foreign Minister David Andrews tried to assuage fears that the move marked the end to Ireland's decades-old neutrality by stating that Ireland would never join NATO itself.

Ireland's struggle to maintain identity and independence dates from the beginning of its conquest by England in the early Middle Ages. Ruled as a separate kingdom under the British Crown and, after 1800, as an integral part of the United Kingdom, Ireland received a measure of independence in 1921 when Great Britain granted dominion status to the 26 counties of southern Ireland. Six Protestant-majority counties chose to remain within the United Kingdom. The partition has long been regarded as provisional by the Irish republic, which until recently remained formally committed to incorporation of the northern counties into a unified Irish nation. Ireland's association with the Commonwealth was gradually attenuated and finally terminated in 1949. Since 1949, governmental responsibility has tended to alternate between the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael parties.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Irish citizens can change their government democratically. The Irish constitution, adopted in 1937, was theoretically applicable to the whole of Ireland; thus residents of Northern Ireland were considered citizens and could run for office in the South. As part of the peace accord signed in northern Ireland in 1999, Ireland amended its constitution by formally revoking Articles Two and Three, which laid claim to the six counties of the North. The constitution provides for direct election of the president for a seven-year term and for a bicameral legislature consisting of a directly elected lower house (Dail) and an indirectly chosen upper house (Seanad) with power to delay, but not veto, legislation. The cabinet, which is responsible to the Dail, is headed by a prime minister, who is the leader of the majority party or coalition and is appointed by the president for a five-year term on the recommendation of the Dail. Suffrage is universal; anyone over 18 can vote.

Although free expression is constitutionally guaranteed, a five-member Censorship of Publications Board under the jurisdiction of the ministry of justice is empowered to halt publication of books. The board was established under the Censorship of Publications Act of 1946 and is frequently criticized as an anachronism by civil libertarians.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government does not hamper the teaching or practice of any faith. Even though Ireland is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, there is no state religion. However, most primary and secondary schools are denominational, and their boards of management are partially controlled by the Catholic Church. Although religious instruction is an integral part of the curriculum,

parents may exempt their children from such instruction. There is no discrimination against nontraditional religious groups despite growing concern over the rapid growth in popularity of such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Scientology, The Church of Christ, The Solar Temple, Avatar, and others.

The rights of ethnic and racial minorities are generally respected, although isolated racial incidents occur regularly. There are some 25,000 nomadic persons who regard themselves as a distinct ethnic group called "Travellers," roughly analogous to the Roma of continental Europe. Travellers are regularly denied access to premises, goods, facilities, and services; many employers do not hire them. The Employment Equality Act of 1998 that came into force in October 1999 extends protection against discrimination in the workplace to include family status, religious belief, age, race, sexual orientation, disability, and membership in the Traveller community.

Ireland has an independent judicial system that includes a district court with 23 districts, a circuit court with eight circuits, the high court, the court of criminal appeals, and the supreme court. The president appoints judges on the advice of the government. In 1999, the credibility of the Irish judicial system was seriously damaged by the mishandling of a high-profile criminal case, which led to the resignation of a high court judge and a supreme court judge in February.

Discrimination against women in the workplace is unlawful, but inequalities persist regarding pay and promotions in both the public and private sectors. Only about 12 percent of the members of parliament are women. Women's reproductive rights are limited: abortion is legal only when a woman's life is in danger.

Labor unions are free to organize and bargain collectively. About 55 percent of workers in the public and private sectors are union members. Police and military personnel are prohibited from striking, but they may form associations to represent themselves in matters of pay and working conditions.

Israel

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 6,100,000

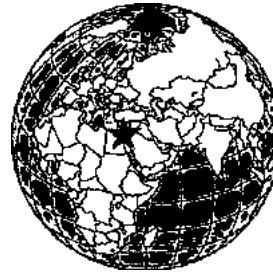
PPP: \$18,150

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: Jewish (82 percent), non-Jewish [mostly Arab] (18 percent)

Capital: Jerusalem

Ratings Change: Israel's civil rights rating changed from 3 to 2 due to the supreme court's decision to outlaw the use of torture by the General Security Service, the legalization of radio stations run by right-wing and religious groups, and the announcement of plans to cancel the legal basis for holding Lebanese prisoners in administrative detention.



Overview:

The election of Labor Party leader Ehud Barak as Israeli prime minister in May 1999 brought an end to three years of stag-

nation in the Middle East peace process. The landslide electoral defeat of the right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu saw Labor, renamed the One Israel Party, capture 57 percent of the vote against Likud's 43 percent. By July, Barak, a career soldier and former chief of staff, had assembled a wide coalition government composed of seven parties occupying a total of 75 seats, a strong majority in the 120-seat Knesset. The coalition represents a less fractious and more peace-oriented body than that which existed during Netanyahu's tenure. Immediately following his election, Barak reiterated his campaign promise to initiate final status talks with the Palestinians, withdraw Israeli troops from southern Lebanon, and reach a peace agreement with Syria, all within 18 months. By September, Israel and the Palestinians formally reaffirmed their commitments under the Wye River Accords. In December, Israel and Syria resumed peace talks outside Washington, D.C.

Israel was formed in 1948 from less than one-fifth of the original British Palestine Mandate. Its neighbors, rejecting a United Nations partition plan that would have also created a Palestinian state, attacked immediately following independence in the first of several Arab-Israeli conflicts. Israel has functioned as a parliamentary democracy since independence. Since 1977, the conservative Likud and the center-left Labor Party have shared or alternated power.

Following June 1992 Knesset elections, Yitzhak Rabin's Labor-led coalition government secured a breakthrough agreement with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993. The Declaration of Principles, negotiated secretly between Israeli and Palestinian delegations in Oslo, Norway, provides for a phased Israeli withdrawal from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and for limited Palestinian autonomy in those areas. Negotiations on the status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, refugees, and Israel's borders began in November 1999.

On November 4, 1995, a right-wing Jewish extremist, opposed to the peace process on the grounds that it would lead to a Palestinian state in the West Bank, assassinated Rabin in Tel Aviv. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres became acting prime minister and served until the 1996 elections, when, after a wave of suicide bombings carried out in Israel by Islamic radicals, Benjamin Netanyahu was elected.

On October 23, 1998, after nearly a year of intense pressure from the United States, Netanyahu signed an interim peace accord with Arafat following nine days of talks at Wye River Plantation, Maryland. The agreement calls for Israeli withdrawal from 13.1 percent of the West Bank in exchange for security guarantees from the Palestinians, including a provision for CIA monitoring of Palestinian action to combat terrorism. Implementation of the Wye Accords stalled during Netanyahu's term, but was revived in September in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt, under U.S. and Egyptian auspices. The new Israeli government went on to release Palestinian prisoners, transfer more West Bank land to the Palestinian Authority, and open a safe passage route connecting Gaza and the West Bank.

The run-up to Israel's spring 1999 elections saw the formation early in the year of the Center Party, a pro-peace centrist group led by Yitzhak Mordechai, the former minister of defense ousted by Netanyahu in January. Another new party, Shinui ("Change"), appeared on the scene, run by popular radio talk-show host Tommy Lapid. Running on a strictly secular platform that demanded the exclusion of religious parties from government, Lapid's party captured a respectable six Knesset seats in the election. In March, Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, was convicted on

corruption charges. He was accused of having accepted bribes in exchange for directing state funds to religious schools while he ran the interior ministry. He was sentenced in April to four years in jail, a conviction he is appealing. Deri's conviction translated into electoral gains for Shas, whose Sephardic supporters have long felt disaffected from the Ashkenazic power elite and believed their leader was innocent. Shas claimed 17 parliamentary seats in the election, up from 10.

Israel's political right wing was significantly marginalized during the elections. The anti-Oslo National Religious Party (NRP) occupies five seats in the coalition government, down from nine. However, the NRP controls the housing ministry, and its authorization in the spring of new construction in West Bank settlements threatens to further complicate final status talks with the Palestinians. Benny Begin, son of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, resigned as leader of the far-right National Union Party in May, formally quitting politics.

Israel continues to occupy a "security zone" in southern Lebanon to guard against attacks by Hezbollah guerillas. Before leaving office, Netanyahu authorized air and artillery attacks in March in response to a Hezbollah ambush that left four Israeli soldiers dead. Upon assuming office, Prime Minister Barak pledged to withdraw troops from the enclave, heeding the popular Israeli belief that Israel's army is fighting a losing battle. In late June the specter of war along the Lebanese frontier was raised as Israeli tanks rolled toward the border after two Israelis were killed in a Hezbollah attack. In September Israeli jets attacked suspected Hezbollah bases in south Lebanon.

Before and after his election, Barak expressed a desire to reach a peace agreement with Syria. The Syrian leadership welcomed Barak's electoral victory and expressed optimism for a peace deal. In December, Syria's Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara met with Barak in Washington to lay the groundwork for the resumption of Israeli-Syrian peace talks, which had been stalled for over three years. The Syrians continued to insist that any deal be based upon the return of the entire Golan Heights, a promise they say was quietly made by Barak's predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin. Barak maintained that Israel would negotiate over the Israeli-held Golan from a fresh position, and insisted that Syria agree to specific security and diplomatic arrangements before Israel commits to a withdrawal. Both sides committed themselves to resume talks into the new year.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Israeli citizens can change their government democratically. Although Israel has no formal constitution, a series of Basic Laws has the force of constitutional principles.

The judiciary is independent, and procedural safeguards are generally respected. Security trials, however, may be closed to the public on limited grounds. The Emergency Powers (Detention) Law of 1979 provides for indefinite administrative detention without trial. The policy stems from emergency laws in place since the creation of Israel. Most administrative detainees are Palestinian, but there are currently several Lebanese detainees being held as "bargaining chips" to be used in prisoner exchanges to secure the release of Israeli servicemen. In July Justice Minister Yossi Beilin announced a plan to cancel the legal basis for holding Lebanese detainees for indefinite periods without formal charges. He also announced the eventual canceling of the emergency laws, seen as increasingly irrelevant in an overall climate of peace.

In a landmark ruling in September, Israel's supreme court outlawed the routine use

of torture of Palestinian prisoners by the Shin Bet (General Security Service). Long accused by Human Rights Watch of "widespread and systematic" torture, the Shin Bet had been authorized in 1987 to use "moderate physical pressure," including violent shaking, binding, gagging, forcing suspects to wear vomit- or urine-soaked hoods, and sleep deprivation, as a means of extracting information about terrorist operations. While most uses of torture were outlawed, security agents may still resort to extreme methods on suspects who know of a "ticking bomb." Agents faced with criminal charges over interrogation methods may invoke the ticking bomb clause as a defense.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Newspaper and magazine articles on security matters are subject to a military censor, though the scope of permissible reporting is expanding. Editors may appeal a censorship decision to a three-member tribunal that includes two civilians. Arabic-language publications are censored more frequently than are Hebrew-language ones. Newspapers are privately owned and freely criticize government policy. In February the Knesset legalized pirate radio stations run by settlers and religious activists who in the past had been accused of inciting hatred through anti-peace broadcasts. In May Reporters Sans Frontières protested the beating by Israeli police of 12 journalists covering Palestinian demonstrations in East Jerusalem.

Freedom of religion is respected. Each community has jurisdiction over its own members in matters of marriage, burial, and divorce. In the Jewish community, the Orthodox establishment handles these matters. A heated debate has erupted in recent years over the Orthodox monopoly on conversions, which denies certain rights, such as citizenship and marriage, to Reform and Conservative converts. However, a recent lower court ruling rejected the Orthodox hold on conversions, clearing the way for the participation of the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism. The ruling, combined with supreme court decisions early in the year that exemption from military service for students in religious schools was illegal, touched off significant religious protests. In February a conflict erupted at the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City after Orthodox Jews confronted a group of American Reform rabbis praying there. Also in February, 250,000 Orthodox Jews staged a protest rally in Jerusalem against the supreme court. The gathering followed threats against the lives of justices and a campaign by ultra-Orthodox rabbis to denounce the supreme court for not recognizing religious law.

Women are underrepresented in public affairs; only nine women were elected to the 120-seat Knesset in 1996. In the May 1999 election, an Arab woman, Husaina Jabara, was elected to the Knesset for the first time. However, women continue to face discrimination in many areas, including in military service, where they are barred from combat units, and in religious institutions.

Some 900,000 Arab citizens receive inferior education, housing, and social services relative to the Jewish population. Israeli Arabs are not subject to the military draft, though they may serve voluntarily. Those who do not join the army do not enjoy the financial benefits available to Israelis who have served, including scholarships and housing loans. Bedouin housing settlements are not recognized by the government and are not provided with basic infrastructure and essential services.

Workers may join unions of their choice and enjoy the right to strike and to bargain collectively. Three-quarters of the workforce either belong to unions affiliated with Histadrut (General Federation of Labor) or are covered under its social programs and

collective bargaining agreements. In March, 400,000 unionized workers staged a general strike over wage proposals. A compromise on wage increases was eventually reached, ending the strike.

Italy

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 57,700,000

PPP: \$20,290

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: Italian, small minorities of German, French, Slovene, and Albanian

Capital: Rome

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Although the pattern of fragile and shifting coalitions that characterized Italian politics since World War II was evident in 1999 when Massimo D'Alema's government fell, D'Alema easily assembled a seven-party center-left coalition and won key votes of confidence to enable him to lead Italy into 2000.

Massimo D'Alema, prime minister since October 1998 and the first former Communist to achieve that office, presided over a string of important achievements for Italy in its domestic politics and foreign policy.

In March 1999, his center-left coalition government secured the appointment of Romano Prodi, the former prime minister, as president of the European Commission, European Union's executive body. This was the first time in thirty years that Italy had taken the commission presidency, testimony to the country's improved bargaining power within the EU.

In May, D'Alema brokered the appointment of Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the former treasury minister, as the new president of Italy. Both the government and opposition leaders agreed to vote for Ciampi, avoiding a prolonged contest.

Also in May, D'Alema played a vital role in facilitating the leveraged takeover bid of Olivetti, Italy's largest telecommunications company, for the recently privatized state monopoly Telecom Italia. The merger, one of the world's biggest, became a milestone in Italy's corporate life and heralded a new era for the European stock markets.

D'Alema's most successful achievement was in the foreign policy area. The prime minister was able to maintain the support of his multiparty coalition for NATO's military offensive in Kosovo. Italy's support for NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia marked a turning point in its postwar foreign policy, which until recently was heavily influenced by a strong pacifist tradition.

During 1999, D'Alema's government benefited from the weakness of the center-right opposition led by Silvio Berlusconi. The media magnate has faced several trials for corruption. He has already been found guilty of illegally funding political parties,

bribing the tax police, and using fraudulent accounting. Berlusconi was acquitted of two of those charges on appeal. Three more cases (and possibly a fourth) are due to come to trial in 2000. The leader of the opposition was also hurt by endless squabbles with Gianfranco Fini, his ally on the far right. Nevertheless, Berlusconi's success in elections for the European Parliament (EU's legislative body) in June, when Forza Italia received more than 25 percent of the vote, suggests that the opposition's problems might be ending.

A disappointment for D'Alema's government was its failure to change the country's electoral law during a referendum in April. Voters were asked to scrap proportional representation in parliamentary elections in favor of a simple majority system, a reform that would end the historic pattern of a succession of weak coalition governments. Although 91 percent of voters approved the proposed changes, the referendum was declared null and void because of a low turnout.

In December, D'Alema's first government fell when three small parties opposing the proposed changes in the electoral system withdrew their support from the governing coalition. A few days later the prime minister won a key confidence vote in the parliament and formed his second government, the 57th in Italy since 1945.

Modern Italian history dates from the nineteenth-century movement for national unification. Most of Italy had merged into one kingdom by 1870. Italy allied itself with Germany and Austria-Hungary at the outset of World War I, but switched to side with the Allied Powers during the war. From 1922-1943, the country was a Fascist dictatorship under Benito Mussolini, who sided with Hitler during World War II. A referendum in 1946 replaced the monarchy with a republican constitution. In 1994, the separatist Northern League, with eight percent of Italians' votes, wrecked Silvio Berlusconi's center-right government after seven months in office. Berlusconi lost general election in 1996 to Romano Prodi, whose Olive Tree coalition lasted two and a half years, thus distinguishing itself as the second-longest serving government of the postwar era. In October, 1998 a far-left party, the Communist Refoundation, brought down Prodi's center-left government when it withdrew support over the 1999 budget.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Italians can change their government democratically. The president is elected to a seven-year term by an assembly of parliamentarians and delegates from the regional councils. The president chooses the prime minister, who is often, but not always, a member of the largest party in the chamber of deputies, the lower house of parliament. Members of the upper house, the senate, represent the regions.

Italian citizens are free to form political organizations, with the exception of the constitutionally forbidden prewar Fascist Party. The postwar constitution, designed to prevent another Mussolini-style dictatorship, sharply restricts the powers of the executive in favor of the legislative and judicial branches. The result has been unstable governing coalitions, political deadlock, and heavy reliance on the referendum as a political tool.

The Italian press is free and competitive, with restrictions on obscenity and defamation. Most of approximately 80 daily newspapers are independently owned. The main state-owned network and the three main channels of Radio Audizioni Italiane (RAI) provide Italians with most of their news. Their boards of directors are entirely parliament-appointed.

Religious freedom is guaranteed in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. The government subsidizes several religions through tax revenue collection. Taxpayers who choose to do so may donate a percentage of their income tax payment to the Roman Catholic, Adventist, Waldensian, Baptist, and Lutheran churches, the Assembly of God, or the Jewish community. Other religious groups, including Buddhists and Muslims, have initiated necessary procedures required to obtain similar status. Italy's first grand mosque opened in 1995. North African migrants constitute many of the estimated 650,000 Muslims residing in Italy. Nontraditional religious groups are free to practice their beliefs and proselytize, provided that they respect public order and general moral standards.

Freedom of assembly and association is guaranteed by the constitution though Fascist and racist groups are excepted. The law forbids discrimination against disabled persons in employment, in education, or in the provision of state services.

Immigrants and other foreigners frequently face societal discrimination. According to official estimates, Italy has 800,000 legal immigrants (excluding visitors from the EU). There are also some 300,000 clandestini, or illegal entrants. They are often precluded from obtaining residence and work permits because they do not possess valid identity documents from their countries of origin. With no legal source of income, the clandestini often turn to begging or petty crime.

Italy's judiciary is independent but notoriously slow. A 1995 law allows for preventive detention as a last resort or in cases in which there is convincing evidence of a serious offense, such as illegal activity involving organized crime or related to drugs, arms, or subversion. A maximum of two years is permitted for a preliminary investigation. The average waiting period for a trial is about 18 months, but can exceed two years. In Italy, a defendant is given two chances to appeal a guilty verdict, during which he is presumed innocent and not jailed. The average civil trial lasts between three and five years. In June, the parliament approved a bill to decriminalize about a hundred minor offences as part of an effort to streamline the country's penal code. Under the reform, defaming the flag, being drunk in public, and insulting the dead or public officials will no longer be crimes. Other transgressions will be downgraded from criminal to civil offences. The new law allow judges to impose curfews or sentence minor offenders to do community services.

There are no restrictions on women's participation in government and politics. However, few women hold elective offices. Women make up about 12 percent of the members of parliament. Women enjoy legal equality with men in marriage, property, and inheritance rights.

The law provides for the right to organize and bargain collectively. Some 40 percent of the workforce is unionized. The right to strike is embodied in the constitution and is frequently exercised. The law prohibits discrimination by employers against union members and organizers.

Jamaica

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 2,600,000

PPP: \$3,440

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Black (76 percent), Creole (15 percent), European, Chinese, East Indian

Capital: Kingston

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

A fierce crime wave swept through Jamaica in 1999, forcing some businesses to close and residents of a number of Kingston neighborhoods to flee their homes, and added to the exodus of middle-class Jamaicans overseas. In response, in July Prime Minister Percival J. Patterson put the army at the head of efforts to suppress gang warfare prevalent throughout the capital, giving it broad powers to conduct weapons searches and impose curfews. By year's end, Kingston's police commissioner said the efforts to stamp out gang activity had resulted in a significant drop in the murder rate in the first 10 months of 1999, compared to the same period the year before.

Jamaica, a member of the Commonwealth, achieved independence from Great Britain in 1962. It is a parliamentary democracy, with the British monarchy represented by a governor-general. The bicameral parliament consists of a 60-member house of representatives elected for five years and a 21-member senate, with 13 senators appointed by the prime minister and 8 by the leader of the parliamentary opposition. Executive authority is vested in the prime minister, who leads the political party commanding a majority in the house.

Since independence, power has alternated between the social-democratic PNP and the conservative Jamaica Labor Party (JLP). The PNP's Michael Manley, who died in 1997, was prime minister from 1972 to 1980, and again from 1989 until his resignation for health reasons in 1992. JLP leader Edward Seaga held the post from 1980 until 1989.

In 1992 the PNP elected Patterson to replace Manley as party leader and prime minister. In the 1993 elections, the PNP won 52 parliamentary seats, and the JLP 8. The parties differed little on continuing the structural adjustment begun in the 1980s, but the JLP was hurt by long-standing internal rifts.

Irregularities and violence marred the vote. The PNP agreed to address subsequent JLP demands for electoral reform. Meanwhile, the Patterson government continued to confront labor unrest and an unrelenting crime wave.

In October 1995 Bruce Golding, a well-respected economist and businessman and the former chairman of the JLP, left the party to launch the National Democratic Movement (NDM), one of the most significant political developments since independence. Golding brought with him a number of key JLP figures, including one other member of parliament, cutting the JLP's seats to six.

Politically motivated fighting between supporters of the JLP and the NDM claimed

at least ten lives during 1996. In December 1997, the PNP won a third successive victory in parliamentary elections, winning 50 seats in the lower house to the JLP's 10. Confidence in Patterson's unprecedented second full term was reaffirmed in local elections held in September 1998, as the ruling PNP gained 75 percent of the vote and took possession of the capital and all 13 rural parishes. The 1997 vote, and that in 1998, were characterized by unusually low levels of political violence and were judged generally free and fair, despite a creaky electoral administration.

In April 1999, sweeping tax changes proposed by Patterson sparked a riot that left nine people dead, most killed by the police. In July, Vivian Blake, the alleged leader of a gang known as the Shower Posse, was extradited to the United States to face charges in a Miami court for participation in hundreds of murders, mostly drug-related, in the United States in the 1980s.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Citizens are able to change their government through elections. However, voter apathy in the 1998 local elections resulted in one of the lowest turnout rates—31 percent—in Jamaican history. Although the violence associated with the 1997 preelectoral period was significantly less than in previous years, it was none the less marked by thuggery on both sides, police intimidation, and large-scale confusion. Progress on electoral reform has been slow, and the municipal elections had been postponed for five years in order for electoral rolls to be updated and the voting system reformed. International concern has been expressed about candidate access to so-called garrison communities—armed political fiefdoms in 9 of the 60 parliamentary districts. Seaga's JLP controls only one—Tivoli Gardens—while the PNP controls seven and the NDM one.

Constitutional guarantees regarding the right to free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize political parties, civic organizations, and labor unions are generally respected.

The judicial system is headed by a supreme court and includes several magistrate courts and a court of appeals, with final recourse to the Privy Council in London. The system is slow and inefficient, particularly in addressing police abuses and the violent conditions in prisons. Despite government efforts to improve penal conditions, a mounting backlog of cases and a shortage of court staff at all levels continue to undermine the judicial system. In February 1997 Jamaica signed on to the hemispheric antidrug strategy formulated by the Organization of American States (OAS).

Violence is now the major cause of death in Jamaica, and the murder rate is one of the highest in the world. Much of the violence is the result of warfare between drug gangs known as posses. Criminal deportees from the United States—in 1998 alone, 2,150 Jamaican criminals were deported from the United States, Britain and Canada—and a growing illegal weapons trade are major causes of the violence. Mobs have been responsible for numerous vigilante killings of suspected criminals. Inmates frequently die as a result of prison riots.

Human rights groups say that there are continuing concerns over criminal justice practices in Jamaica. These include the imposition of death sentences following trials of questionable fairness; killings by police in disputed circumstances and deaths in custody; corporal punishment; alleged ill treatment by police and prison wardens; appalling detention centers and prisons; and laws punishing consensual sexual acts in private between adult men.

A mounting crime rate led the government to take the controversial steps of restoring both capital punishment and flogging. Rights groups protested both measures. Critics charge that flogging is unconstitutional because it can be characterized as "inhuman or degrading punishment," which the constitution prohibits. In 1998, a six-month limit on death-row appeals to international bodies was adopted. Jamaica has also announced its intention to withdraw from an agreement with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the OAS that gives prisoners the right to appeal to the commission in order to remove barriers to executions. There are 600 prisoners on death row.

There are an estimated 1.9 million radios in Jamaica—the highest ratio in the Caribbean—but only 330,000 television sets, and there is generally low newspaper readership. Newspapers are independent and free of government control. Journalists are occasionally intimidated during election campaigns. Broadcast media are largely public but are open to pluralistic points of view. Public opinion polls play a key role in the political process, and election campaigns feature debates on state-run television.

In 1998, a woman was for the first time elected as speaker of parliament.

Labor unions are politically influential and have the right to strike. An Industrial Disputes Tribunal mediates labor conflicts.

Japan

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 126,700,000

PPP: \$24,070

Life Expectancy: 81

Ethnic Groups: Japanese (99 percent), other, mostly Korean (1 percent)

Capital: Tokyo

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi's government continued to use public works spending and tax cuts in an effort to lift Japan out of its worst postwar recession.

Following its World War II defeat, Japan adopted a U.S.-drafted constitution in 1947 that vested legislative authority in the two-house *Diet* (parliament) and ended the emperor's divine status. In 1955, the two main conservative parties merged to form the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and the two wings of the opposition Japan Socialist Party (JSP) united. This "1955 system" remained in place throughout the cold war, as the LDP won successive elections, presided over what became the world's second largest economy, and maintained close security ties to the United States. The leftist JSP became an institutional opposition.

Following a string of LDP corruption scandals in the 1980s and the end of cold war security tensions, ordinary Japanese increasingly questioned the "iron triangle" of politicians, business, and the bureaucracy that favored corporations, farmers, and other special interests and allowed the powerful bureaucracy to control policy and impose

costly regulations. The LDP lost power for the first time in the 1993 elections, but returned in a coalition government in 1994.

In early elections in October 1996, held with a 59.6 percent turnout, the LDP under Ryutaro Hashimoto won 239 seats and formed a minority government. The conservative New Frontier Party (NFP), headed by maverick Ichiro Ozawa and promising economic deregulation and a more assertive foreign policy, won 156 seats; the reformist Democratic Party, 52; the Communist Party, 26; the Socialist Democratic Party (SDP), the successor to the JSP, 15; and minor parties and independents, 12.

Hashimoto's government was the first to confront economic problems that had been mounting since the collapse of the "bubble economy" and its inflated asset prices in the early 1990s. The regional financial crises that began in 1997 put added pressure on a banking system that was already carrying at least \$600 billion in bad debt. In November 1997, authorities took the unprecedented measure of allowing three major financial institutions to enter bankruptcy. In December, Ozawa dissolved the fractious NFP and formed a new, center-right Liberal Party, which later entered into an LDP-led governing coalition.

In early 1998, authorities made several unprecedented arrests on corruption charges at the powerful ministry of finance, exposing the close links between regulators and banks that many blamed in part for Japan's financial woes. By the end of the first quarter, the economy had sunk into its first recession in 23 years. Consumer spending stalled amid negligible wage growth; corporate restructuring that has led to tens of thousands of job cuts; anxiety that rising levels of public debt will further erode the pension system's capacity to provide for Japan's aging—and shrinking—population; and a 1997 national sales tax increase. In the July 1998 elections for 126 upper house seats, held under a 59 percent turnout, the LDP lost 17 of its 61 contested seats. The party's support came mainly from Japan's shrinking rural population. The Democratic Party solidified itself as the main opposition by gaining 9 seats. Hashimoto resigned and Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi became prime minister. Parliament approved more than \$500 billion to restructure debt-ridden banks in October 1998, and a \$195 billion fiscal stimulus package in November.

In early October 1999, Obuchi brought the New Komeito party into the ruling coalition in order to give the government a majority in the upper and lower houses of parliament, despite some criticism that New Komeito's links to the lay-Buddhist organization, Soka Gakkai, represented an inappropriate mix of religion and politics.

In another development, in the spring, parliament approved controversial legislation to improve military cooperation with the United States in the event of a security crisis in East Asia. Proponents cited the threat from North Korea's long-range missile program, while critics called the legislation incompatible with Article Nine of the constitution, which limits military activities to self-defense.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Japanese can change their government democratically. The lower house has 300 single-seat districts and 200 seats chosen by proportional representation. The upper house has 152 single-seat districts and 100 seats chosen by proportional representation. Lower house elections are due by October 2000. Official and corporate corruption continue to be problems.

The 700,000-strong ethnic Korean community faces unofficial discrimination in

housing, education, and employment opportunities. Ethnic Koreans born in Japan are not automatically considered Japanese citizens. Instead, they must submit to an official background check and adopt Japanese names to become naturalized. The Burakumin, who are descendants of feudal-era outcasts, and the indigenous Ainu minority also face unofficial discrimination and social ostracism.

The judiciary is independent. The criminal procedure code allows authorities to restrict a suspect's right to counsel during an investigation and bars counsel during interrogations. Human rights groups say the practice of holding suspects in police cells from arrest to sentencing encourages police abuse of detainees. In 1998, the United Nations Human Rights Committee recommended that the government reform the pre-trial detention system on the grounds that convictions in criminal trials are often based on coerced confessions. In March, Amnesty International criticized the prolonged detention in police cells of three Greenpeace activists who had committed minor offenses during a peaceful protest. Human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) criticize the penal system's extreme emphasis on regimentation and dehumanizing punishments. NGOs also accuse immigration officers of regularly beating detained illegal aliens.

Civic institutions are strong. Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association are generally respected in practice. Exclusive private press clubs provide major media outlets with access to top politicians and bureaucrats. In return, journalists often practice self-censorship regarding sensitive issues, including those involving organized crime and the financial condition of troubled companies and banks. The education ministry routinely censors passages in history textbooks describing Japan's World War II atrocities. In 1997, the supreme court affirmed the government's right of censorship, but for the first time ruled that the education ministry had broken the law by censoring references to well-documented Japanese germ warfare experiments in China in the 1940s.

Women face employment discrimination and are frequently tracked into clerical careers. A 1997 law banned workplace discrimination against women and lifted restrictions on women's working hours. However, sanctions for corporate violators are weak. Women hold only 23 of the 500 lower house seats. In 1998, police began a crackdown on gangsters who traffic Filipino and Thai women to Japan with the promise of regular jobs and then force them to work as prostitutes.

There is full freedom of religion; Buddhism and Shintoism have the most adherents. Authorities stripped the Aum Shinrikyo cult of its status as a religious group following its 1995 Tokyo subway terrorist attack. According to the Kyodo news service, at least 35 cities have rejected Aum members' residency applications or otherwise tried to drive out members. Trade unions are independent and active.

Economists attributed the economy's growth during the first two quarters of 1999 mainly to government spending rather than consumer demand. The economy contracted one percent in the third quarter. Unemployment hit a record high of 4.9 percent in July, but fell to 4.5 percent by November.

Jordan

Polity: Monarchy and elected parliament

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 4,700,000

PPP: \$3,450

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Arab (98 percent), Armenian (1 percent), Circassian (1 percent)

Capital: Amman

Ratings change: Jordan's civil liberties rating changed from 5 to 4 because of an amendment to last year's harsh press law, efforts to punish honor killings and end discrimination against women, and measures to fight corruption and improve economic freedom.

Political Rights: 4

Civil Liberties: 4*

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Thirty-seven year-old King Abdullah assumed power in February 1999 after the death of his father, King Hussein. Despite initial pledges to continue the policies of the late king, Abdullah set his own domestic and diplomatic agenda. Rising to the challenges posed by Jordan's prolonged economic recession and unpopular peace with Israel, he initiated economic reform, won the support of mainstream opposition leaders, and rebuilt strained relationships with Arab neighbors.

Great Britain installed the Hashemite monarchy in 1921 and granted it full independence in 1946. King Hussein ascended the throne in 1952. His turbulent reign saw the loss of all territory west of the Jordan River in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, assassination and coup attempts by Arab nationalists, and sporadic efforts to make peace with Israel. Under the 1952 constitution, executive power rests with the king, who appoints the prime minister and may dissolve the national assembly. The assembly currently consists of a 40-member upper house appointed by the king and an 80-member, directly elected lower house.

In 1989, Hussein responded to riots over fuel price increases by lifting restrictions on freedom of expression and ending a 32-year-old ban on political party activity. The Muslim Brotherhood's political wing, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), took 22 seats in general elections that year. The electoral law was amended to prevent such a strong showing in 1993 elections, in which Islamists won 16 seats. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, formally ending a 46-year state of war. In 1997, nine opposition and Islamist parties, led by the IAF, boycotted parliamentary elections to protest normalization of relations with Israel, restrictions on public freedom, ineffective economic policy, and the amendments to the electoral law that left Islamists at a disadvantage with regard to tribal leaders who support the king.

In January 1999, an ailing Hussein dismissed his longstanding heir, his brother Hassan, and named Abdullah crown prince in a surprise decision. The king's motives for naming the largely unknown and untested Abdullah are unclear, but Abdullah's credentials as former commander of the elite internal security force and his marriage to a Palestinian woman are obvious assets in a country where the military holds political power and more than half the population is Palestinian.

Abdullah inherited a kingdom beset by unemployment estimated at 20 to 30 percent, rampant poverty, and an inefficient bureaucracy perceived by most to be corrupt. The economic "peace dividend" expected to result from normalization with Israel failed to materialize, while sanctions against Iraq and a deadlock in the Middle East peace process blocked Jordanian exports. Political liberalization had been sacrificed to ensure parliamentary loyalty to Jordan's Israel policy, and restrictions on freedom of expression had increased to silence a growing anti-normalization movement. Many observers wondered whether the new king would demonstrate his father's ability to balance international obligations with domestic interests.

King Abdullah almost immediately opened a dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood and secured the Islamists' participation in municipal elections in July 1999. The IAF won majorities on councils in three major cities and made an impressive showing in Amman. Calling the elections free and fair, Islamists praised government efforts to increase political participation. The IAF is expected to make a full return to politics in the 2001 general elections.

Abroad, Abdullah embarked upon a strenuous diplomatic effort to win debt relief, rebuild strained relationships with neighboring states, and promote Arab economic cooperation. He toured the Arab world, renewing ties and trade contacts with Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Libya. In Europe and the United States, he promised economic reforms in exchange for debt-forgiveness and expressed willingness to cooperate on a "more productive" policy toward Iraq. With regard to the Middle East peace process, he shuttled between Syria and Israel in hopes of restarting negotiations on the Golan Heights. In a major boost to the process, he shut down the offices of the militant Palestinian group Hamas in August and eventually expelled its senior members from the country, effectively ending its activities in Jordan.

Economic reform made great strides in 1999 as the government moved to dismantle trade barriers and barriers to foreign investment, set up special industrial zones with tax and export quota exemptions, streamline bureaucracy, and privatize state industries such as telecommunications, railways, and airliners. In November, a U.S. Treasury official remarked that Jordan had achieved more economic liberalization since Abdullah came to power than it had in the previous decade. Economic growth rose dramatically, from negative 2.5 percent in 1998 to a projected 2 percent in 1999. In a bid to join the World Trade Organization, Jordan signed bilateral trade agreements with at least 14 countries. The WTO General Council approved Jordan's acceptance into the organization in December. Accession must be ratified by the Jordanian parliament.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Jordanians cannot change their government democratically. The king holds broad executive powers and may dissolve parliament or dismiss the prime minister or cabinet at his discretion. Parliament may approve, reject, or amend legislation proposed by the cabinet, but is restricted in its ability to initiate legislation. The electoral law and the distribution of parliamentary seats favor pro-Hashemite strongholds. King Abdullah has promised to reform the election law, and proposed changes, such as increasing the number of seats in the lower house of parliament and introducing a two-vote system, are designed to ensure more equitable participation.

Security forces arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens, particularly Islamists, and abuse detainees in order to intimidate or extract confessions from them. Suspects in cases

involving state security enjoy few procedural safeguards. The judiciary is subject to executive influence through the justice ministry and a committee whose members are appointed by the king. In July, the justice ministry proposed legislation to reduce its own jurisdiction over judicial administrative matters and otherwise enhance judicial independence.

In September, Jordan's restrictive press law was amended to lift prohibitions on criticism of the royal family, armed forces, and leaders of Arab, Islamic, and friendly countries. However, journalists are still subject to tough penalties, including prison sentences, for vaguely defined violations of objectivity and "reasonability." Jordan Radio and Television Corporation is state-owned and operated, as is Petra, the Jordanian news agency. The government also owns large shares of the popular *Al-Ra'i* and *Al-Dustour* newspapers. Jordanians have wide access to foreign broadcasts via satellite. In May, King Abdullah issued a decree canceling prior censorship of foreign publications, and in August, the Jordanian printing and publication department began lifting embargoes on some 2,500 books that have been banned in Jordan since the department was established in 1927.

Journalists are legally required to join the government-controlled Jordan Press Association (JPA). In October 1999, three journalists were expelled from the JPA for visiting Israel in violation of a union policy rejecting normalization with Israel. The journalists apologized in November and were reinstated. At least five journalists were arrested in 1999 for such transgressions as "defamation" and "unethical reporting." In July, Petra cut its service to *Al-Arab Al-Yawm*, effectively suspending the daily for its criticism of the government. In August, the state security court began examining Jordan's first known Internet crime case, in which a Jordanian-American is accused of using his Web site to criticize government policy. Internet use is generally unrestricted in Jordan.

The government grants permits for demonstrations, though it may refuse to permit demonstrations on national security grounds. Four Muslim Brothers were arrested in September for organizing a rally in support of Hamas at a Palestinian refugee camp. Political parties and other associations are licensed by the government. A new centrist party was licensed in October. Similar to "green" parties in Europe, the new party will focus on environmental and socioeconomic issues.

Some 25 women are victims of "honor killings" by their male relatives each year for alleged sexual misconduct. Increasing attention to these killings and activism by Jordanian and international women's groups have effected change: in December, the upper house of parliament voted to revoke a penal code article that allows lenient punishment of those who kill their female relatives for reasons of honor. The bill must pass the lower house as well. Women may vote, drive, stand in elections, and pursue careers in many professions. However, they constitute only 14 percent of the workforce. Aside from legal discrimination in matters such as divorce, inheritance, pension and social benefits, and travel, women face social pressures that discourage their political and professional participation. Only three women won seats in the July 1999 municipal elections.

Islam is the state religion; over 90 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. Christianity and Judaism are recognized faiths, and the government does not interfere with worship. Although not recognized as a religious minority, Baha'is may practice their faith. However, they face legal and social discrimination, and their personal status matters

are heard in Islamic sharia courts. The Palestinian majority faces discrimination in government and military employment and university admission.

More than 30 percent of workers belongs to trade unions. All unions belong to the sole trade federation, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, though membership is not mandatory. Workers have the right to bargain collectively and may strike with government permission. Jordanian labor laws do not protect domestic servants, most of whom are South Asian nationals. Abuse of these workers, including beatings, rape, long work hours, and inadequate food, is pervasive. Many domestics fail to report abuse for fear of deportation.

Kazakhstan

Polity: Presidential
(dominant party)

Economy: Mixed statist
(transitional)

Population: 15,400,000

PPP: \$3,560

Life Expectancy: 65

Ethnic Groups: Kazakh (51 percent), Russian (30 percent),
Ukrainian (3 percent), Uzbek (2 percent), Tatar (1 percent), other

Capital: Astana

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Kazakhstan began 1999 by holding presidential elections strongly criticized from inside and outside the country as being unfair. The January presidential election, held almost two years before it was scheduled, was the first in Kazakhstan's history in which voters had a choice of candidates. However, the key challenger, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, was barred from running on a legal technicality. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which monitored the elections, refused to recognize the results and said they fell "far short" of being democratic.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev received about 80 percent of the votes, the other three candidates dividing the rest. The challengers complained about being harassed by local authorities, not having equal access to the media, and having to undergo a burdensome registration procedure. Nazarbayev already enjoys sweeping executive powers and rules virtually unchallenged while the parliament has a reputation of bowing under presidential pressure. Keen to win the approval of Western monitors, Nazarbayev introduced some electoral reforms preceding the fall parliamentary elections. These reforms included increasing the number of seats in the lower chamber by 10, to 77, abolishing a rule requiring a 50 percent turnout for the elections to be valid, and reducing the registration fee for parliamentary candidates. The electoral law has also been relaxed to allow candidates with administrative charges against them to participate in the elections nevertheless.

The parliamentary elections held in September and October 1999 under the new laws were the first multiparty elections in Kazakhstan's history and marked "a tenta-

tive step in the country's transition to democracy," according to the OSCE. In September, 33 candidates competed for the 16 seats coming vacant in the 39-seat senate; in October, more than 500 candidates from ten parties vied for the 77 seats of the parliament's lower house, the Majlis. Despite improvements since the controversial presidential ballot in January, 1999 the parliamentary elections remained deeply flawed. The OSCE's monitors criticized the obstruction and intimidation of opposition candidates as well as the lack of independent elections commissions. As expected, Otan, the newly formed party loyal to Nazarbayev, won more seats in the Majlis than any other party.

This sparsely populated, multi-ethnic land, which is the size of India and stretches from the Caspian Sea east to the Chinese border, was controlled by Russia from 1730 to 1917. After a brief period of independence in 1917, it became an autonomous Soviet republic in 1929 and a union republic in 1936.

Kazakhstan formally declared independence from a crumbling Soviet Union in December 1991. Nazarbayev, former first secretary of the Kazakhstan Communist Party, was elected president in 1991. In March 1995, Nazarbayev dissolved parliament and ruled by decree. Nazarbayev ordered a referendum extending the term of the presidency from five to seven years. Four months later, voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitution, which gave the president the right to dissolve parliament if it approves a no-confidence vote in the government or twice rejects his nominee for prime minister. The constitution also codified periods of presidential rule by decree.

In 1999, Kazakhstan's economy was hit hard by the declining values in 1998 of oil and metals, its key exports; the crisis in neighboring Russia; and the downturn in the emerging global markets. In April, 1999 the national currency (the tenge) lost nearly half its value against the dollar when it was allowed to float against the dollar in response to the influx of cheap imports from Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyz Republic, whose currencies had been devalued earlier. The crisis complicated the adoption of a budget for the year 2000 and became a factor in the dismissal of Prime Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev in October.

In 1999, the U.S.-Kazakhstan relations were temporarily complicated by an arms scandal which broke out in August, when a deal to supply 40 Kazakh MIG-21 jet fighters to North Korea was discovered.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Although the constitution provides for democratic elections, in practice the government infringes on the right of citizens to change their government. The constitution concentrates power in the presidency, granting the president considerable control over the legislature, the judiciary, and local governments. The constitution cannot be modified or amended without the consent of the president. All mayors and provincial governors are appointed by the president.

Under the 1995 constitution, parliament's powers are more limited than before. The senate consists of two representatives from each of Kazakhstan's 14 provinces and two cities, Astana and Almaty. An additional seven senators are appointed by the president. The senators serve a six-year term, with a number of seats coming up for re-election every two years. The lower house of parliament has 77 members elected for five years. Ten of the 77 seats of the Majlis are distributed according to proportional party representation, while the remaining 67 are contested by individual candidates.

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, but the government has closed or otherwise harassed many of the independent media. The potential for government control and harassment results in widespread self-censorship among the media. The key subjects considered off limits by journalists are the president and his family. The press is generally permitted to criticize government decisions, official corruption, and the ineffectiveness of the parliament. Nazarbayev's eldest daughter Dariga controls one of the two national television networks. A government decree mandates that half of all material broadcast be in the Kazakh language. The decree has been enforced only sporadically and the Russian-language media continue to dominate in Kazakhstan.

Religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed. However, the government sometimes harasses Islamic and Christian groups whose members it regards as religious extremists. Religious organizations must register with the ministry of justice to receive legal status. Without registration, religious organizations cannot buy or rent real property, hire employees, obtain visas for foreign missionaries, or engage in any other legal transactions.

Religious organizations that encountered difficulties during registration include Jehovah's Witnesses and some Korean Protestant groups, as well as Muslim and Orthodox groups independent of the mufti or Russian Orthodox archbishop. Ethnic Kazakhs historically are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Although most Kazakhs identify themselves as Muslims, government and independent experts believe that a large number of Kazakhs are nonobservant.

The government continued to discriminate in favor of ethnic Kazakhs in government employment, where Kazakhs predominate, as well as in education, housing, and other areas. The first Kazakhstani census, held in February 1999, showed that for the first time since 1926, ethnic Kazakhs make up more than half of the country's population. In November, a group of 22 people, including 12 Russian citizens, was arrested in Ust-Kamenogorsk on suspicion of preparing a separatist uprising with the aim of establishing an independent Russian republic in the northeastern part of Kazakhstan.

Freedom of association, while generally respected, was sometimes hindered by complicated requirements that restrict this right to hold political gatherings. The government cited minor infractions of the law, frequently related to unsanctioned assembly, to arrest and detain government opponents arbitrarily.

The law gives workers the right to join or form unions. The Confederation of Free Trade Unions claims membership of about 250,000; the actual number of independent trade union members, however, is estimated to be much lower. To obtain legal status, an independent union must apply for registration with local judicial authorities and with the ministry of justice. Registration is generally lengthy, difficult, and expensive. Independent unions gravitated towards opposition candidates but turned more pro-government earlier this year when the authorities introduced protectionist trade policies aimed at supporting domestic industries. The law does not provide mechanisms to protect workers who join independent unions from threats and harassment by enterprise management or state-run unions. Members of independent unions have been dismissed, transferred to lower-paying jobs, threatened, and intimidated.

The constitution significantly constrains the independence of the judiciary. The president appoints three of the seven members of the constitutional council, including the chairman. All judges are appointed directly by the president. Rights to an attorney and a public trial have been denied political detainees. Corruption is evident at every level of the judicial system.

There is no legal discrimination against women, but traditional cultural practices limit their role in society and in owning or managing businesses and property. Women are severely underrepresented in higher positions in government and in the leadership of state enterprises and overrepresented in low-paying and menial jobs.

Under the 1995 constitution, private property is an inviolable right. Basic rights of entrepreneurship are codified, but bureaucratic hurdles and the control of large segments of the economy by clan elites and government officials who are loyal to President Nazarbayev impede equal opportunity and fair competition.

Kenya

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Capitalist
 (highly corrupt)
Population: 28,800,000
PPP: \$1,190
Life Expectancy: 49
Ethnic Groups: Kikuyu (14 percent), Luhya (14 percent), Luo (13 percent), Kalenjin (12 percent), Kamba (11 percent), Kisii (6 percent), Meru (6 percent), other African (15 percent), Asian, European, and Arab (1 percent)
Capital: Nairobi

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free



Overview: Overall, Kenya failed to make progress in promoting political rights and civil liberties in 1999. Through both a cabinet reshuffle and a decision to reroute needed constitutional reform through the parliament (effectively controlled by the ruling party KANU - Kenyan African National Union), President Daniel arap Moi signaled his intention to keep power firmly in hand, despite widespread calls for meaningful change. One positive development was the appointment of a respected opposition leader and man of unquestioned honesty, Richard Leakey, as head of the corruption-plagued civil service.

Britain conquered Kenya in the late eighteenth century in order to open a route to control the Nile River headwaters in Uganda. In 1963 Kenya achieved its independence. The nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta was president until his death in 1978, when he was succeeded by Moi. Moi's ascent to the presidency kept KANU in power, but gradually diminished the power of the previously dominant Kikuyu.

In 1992, after a lengthy period as effectively a one-party state, multiparty elections were held as a result of domestic unrest and pressure from international aid donors. Moi was reelected president in controversial polling. In December 1997 presidential and parliamentary elections were held, and Moi again secured victory over a divided opposition, gaining 40.1 percent of the vote; KANU won 107 of the 220 seats in the newly expanded national assembly. An additional 12 seats were appointed by the government, which in effect gave KANU a majority. Moi's reelection was ensured by massive use of state patronage and the official media to promote his candidacy and by harassment of the divided opposition. Today, there is no clear successor to the long-

time president. In 1999, the president and KANU sent conflicting signals about whether they would try to change the constitution to permit Moi to seek reelection after his current term expires in 2003.

Kenya's politics are divided along ethnic lines. KANU has maintained power through the support of the president's own minority ethnic grouping, the Kalenjin, while combining an alliance of other minority groups and playing the two largest ethnic groups—the Kikuyu and the Luo—off against each other. The country is divided into seven provinces run by provincial commissioners appointed by the president.

In November 1997 the government instituted a number of constitutional changes. These allowed the formation of a coalition government, the review of the constitution by an independent commission (disbanded in 1999), and an increase in the number of directly elected seats in the parliament from 188 to 210. While President Moi initially tried to derail the review process that had been, in effect, forced on him, in 1998 he changed tack and accepted most opposition demands. However, by mid-1999 Moi changed tack once again and announced that any constitutional review would take place within the government-dominated parliament and would not involve public consultation, promoting suspicions that little will change. This provoked controversy within parliament and prompted public demonstrations in Nairobi.

Despite Kenya's history of authoritarian rule, many necessary elements for the development of a democratic political system exist. Opposition parties are active and vocal. The parliament is the setting for much of the nation's political discourse. A varied and energetic civil society plays an important role in public policy debates. The print press at times adopts independent and probing stances. These elements, however, do not often succeed in translating into actual policy change.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Until the present, Kenyans have been unable to exercise their right to choose their leaders in genuinely open and competitive elections. Moi's election victories have been achieved through political repression, media control, and dubious electoral procedures. Moi's shrewd ability to play upon divisions within the opposition and to use the form, but not the spirit, of democratic institutions to advance his own interests and those of KANU are legendary. Physical violence, a usually docile judiciary, police powers, and executive decrees have been used against political opponents and in efforts to undermine the wider civil society. Power is heavily concentrated in the executive branch of government.

The right of citizens to participate in the political life of the country, which had been implicitly acknowledged in legislation that established a constitutional review process with the participation of a wide range of civic and associational groups, suffered a setback in 1999. In April President Moi announced that the legislation under which a wide-ranging constitutional review process had begun would be referred back to parliament. The ostensible reason was that the various groups that were part of the process were unable to determine the composition of the review commission. Observers noted, however, that parliament is effectively controlled by the ruling party, KANU.

In a series of ministerial changes, Moi strengthened the power of a longtime ally, Nicholas Biwott, the Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Trade, and Biwott's supporters in the Government who are seen as being the most fervent advocates of entrenching KANU's hold on power at any cost. Biwott is strongly implicated in the death of former

Foreign Minister Robert Ouko in 1990. Moi tabled a report on Ouko's death in 1999, claiming that it was dwelling on hearsay and trivia. Biwott is in a position to control the battle for Moi's successor as president and may even be a candidate himself.

The security forces regularly violate constitutional guarantees regarding detention, privacy, search, and seizure. Groups such as the Kenyan Human Rights Commission and the National Council of Churches of Kenya have publicized abuses and demanded respect for civil and political liberties. The government's attitude towards civil society, however, is generally hostile and suspicious. In 1999, for example, a senior government minister warned non-governmental organizations that "meddle in politics" that they risked deregistration, although such an action would be of questionable legality.

A number of judicial reforms have been announced in recent years. A report on judicial corruption was issued in 1999. Courts, however, are still heavily influenced by the executive and cannot be relied on to protect constitutional rights or to offer fair trials. Local chiefs still exercise sometimes arbitrary and violent power. Prison conditions are harsh and often life threatening.

Freedom of expression is severely limited by lack of access to the dominant state broadcast media and continued repression of the private press. The country's few private radio and television stations are either pro-Moi or carefully apolitical. Private print media remain vibrant, but under serious threat. In 1998, a government minister urged ruling party activists to attack journalists "in self-defense." Journalists have been charged with criminal libel, and independent publications are subject to harassment in their business operations. Moi has decreed that it is a crime to "insult" him, and sedition laws have been employed in efforts to silence any criticism.

Trade unions generally follow government policy on key issues. For example, the general secretary of Central Organisations of Trade Unions (COTU) instructed members not to support calls by opposition parties and civil society groups for demonstrations over constitutional reform. Unions have occasionally defied a 1993 ministry of labor decree that forbids all strikes, despite constitutional guarantees to the contrary. Civil servants and university academic staff may join only government-designated unions. Approximately one-fifth of the country's 1.5 million industrial workforce is unionized.

Ethnically based tension continued in parts of Kenya, including the northern Rift Valley. Pro-KANU elements have been accused of instigating ethnic cleansing for political purposes. A Judicial Commission on Tribal Clashes has been appointed, but it has had little effect.

Some cabinet members have been mentioned in the parliament's Public Accounts Committee and Public Investments Committee reports as having aided and abetted corruption in the public service. Excessive government regulation concerning economic activity breeds corruption. For example, one report claims that opening a butcher shop in the city of Nairobi requires obtaining at least 19 licences.

Under pressure from donors to straighten out Kenya's economic mess, President Moi made key changes in his administration, putting respected opposition leader Richard Leakey in charge of the civil service. In addition, Martin Odour Otieno, financial director of Barclays Bank Kenya and a reformer, was named permanent secretary in the ministry of finance. Leakey quickly fired the managing director of Kenya Ports Authority and other officials who were widely viewed as corrupt.

In general there is freedom of religion, although there have been violent incidents

involving the nation's Moslem minority. For example, a police officer entered a mosque and killed five Moslems in the nation's coastal area in August.

Most of Kenya's 29 million people are poor and survive through subsistence agriculture. Nepotism and fraud inhibit economic opportunity and discourage greater foreign investment. In 1999 the International Monetary Fund determined that Kenya had not made sufficient progress in curbing corruption and keeping government spending under control to be eligible for resumption of a \$220 million loan suspended two years ago.

Women in Kenya continue to face serious obstacles in the exercise of their freedoms. Some evidence suggests that violence against women is increasing. A survey carried out by a women's rights group states that more than 49 women were murdered by their spouses in 1998 alone, a 79 percent increase in cases since 1995. Another survey revealed that more than 75 percent of married women surveyed reported being beaten often by their spouses. Many of the cases have gone unpunished, despite repeated complaints by women's groups that Kenyan laws remain too lenient in sentencing offenders in cases of violence against women.

Victims of sexual offenses, crimes that are also on the increase, get similar treatment. Police statistics state that more than 1,050 cases of rape were reported in 1997, while in the first half of 1999, more than 900 cases of rape were reported, at least double the number of cases reported ten years ago. The existing law requires that a rape victim's evidence must be corroborated by witnesses, despite the fact that such offenses are committed in private, away from the public eye.

Women are also seriously underrepresented in Kenya's politics and government. With only 7 women legislators in a 222-member parliament, Kenya ranks last among the 15 eastern and southern African countries in its number of women legislators.

Kiribati

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 800,000

PPP:na

Life Expectancy: na

Ethnic Groups: Micronesian (84 percent), Polynesian (14 percent), others

Capital:Tarawa

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In July 1999, Kiribati gained full membership to the United Nations. Tarawa, the main island and capital city, and Ocean Island were declared disaster areas by the government following an extended drought of more than eight months. President Teburoro Tito appealed for foreign assistance, seeking, among other things, desalination plants.

The Republic of Kiribati consists of 33 inhabited islands of the Gilbert, Line, and Phoenix groups scattered over two million square miles of the central Pacific Ocean,

as well as Banaba Island in the west. The country, with a Micronesian majority and a Polynesian minority, achieved independence from Great Britain in 1979.

The first post-independence legislative elections were held in March 1982. In July 1991, President Ieremia Tabai, the republic's first president, served out his third and final term. Tetao Teannaki, who received Tabai's backing, defeated Roniti Teiwaki in the presidential race. In May 1994, however, Teannaki was forced to resign after his government lost a vote of no-confidence introduced by the parliamentary opposition, which accused his administration of financial irregularities. In accordance with the constitution, a three-member caretaker Council of State, consisting of the speaker of parliament, the chief justice, and the chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC), took over government authority until new elections were held. A brief constitutional crisis ensued after acting head of state Tekira Tameura was removed forcibly on the grounds that his tenure as chairman of the PSC had expired three days earlier.

In early parliamentary elections in July 1994, the Protestant-based Christian Democratic Party (MTM) won 13 seats; the incumbent Gilbertese National Progressive Party (GNPP), 7; and independents, 19. In September, Teburoro Tito won the presidential election, in which all four candidates represented the MTM, with 51 percent of the votes.

A record 191 candidates competed in the September 1998 general elections. The main campaign issues were economic and constitutional reform, the sale of Kiribati passports to foreigners, and the foreign establishment of a rocket launch facility in international waters just east of Kiribati. In the subsequent presidential election in November 1998, Teburoro Tito was reelected with 52 percent of the votes, defeating Amberoti Nikora of the opposition Boutokan Te Kaoua Party and the veteran politician Dr. Harry Tong.

A five-member committee, established in late 1994, continues to review the 1979 constitution. The 1994 constitutional crisis, although minor, highlighted the fact that many clauses relating to key issues are vague and ill defined.

Although Kiribati has sought to take advantage of its location along the equator for monitoring satellite launches and operations, prospects have dimmed with the construction of sea-launch sites by the United States and other countries. Kiribati has also become increasingly concerned about the impact of the global greenhouse effect on surrounding sea levels because of the low elevation of most of its islands.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Citizens of Kiribati can change their government democratically. The 1979 constitution established a unicameral legislature, the Maneba ni Maungatabu, with 40 members directly elected for a four-year term, one appointed member, and one ex-officio member. The president, serving as both head of state and head of the government, is chosen in a nationwide ballot from among three or four candidates selected by parliament and is limited to three terms. Local island councils serve all inhabited islands. Several parties exist, although most lack true platforms and are organized around specific issues or in support of particular individuals.

Freedom of speech and of the press is respected. The government-run radio station and newspaper offer diverse views, and Protestant and Catholic churches publish newsletters and other periodicals. While Christianity is the predominant religion, there is no state religion and freedom of worship is respected.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, and the government respects these rights in practice. More than 90 percent of the workforce is involved in fishing and subsistence farming. The small wage sector is represented by the well-organized and independent Kiribati Trade Union Congress, with approximately 2,500 members. The law provides for the right to strike, though the last strike occurred in 1980.

The judiciary is independent and free of government interference. The judicial system is modeled on English common law and provides adequate due process rights. The police force of about 250 is under civilian control. Traditional customs permit corporal punishment, and island councils on some outer islands occasionally order such punishment for petty theft and other minor offenses.

Citizens are free to travel domestically and abroad. The law prohibits interference in personal or family matters, and the government respects these provisions in practice. Employment opportunities for women in this traditionally male-dominated society are slowly improving, and women enjoy full rights to own and inherit property.

Korea, North

Polity: Communist
one-party dictatorship

Economy: Statist
Population: 21,400,000

PPP: \$4,058
Life Expectancy: 66

Ethnic Groups: Korean
Capital: Pyongyang

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Despite famine and economic hardship throughout the country, Kim Jong-Il appeared to have consolidated his power as supreme leader of North Korea. The North Korean economy shrank by 1.1 percent in gross domestic product (GDP) in 1999, the ninth straight year of economic contraction, and North Korean trade dropped to only \$80 million in the first half of the year. Although starvation-related deaths appeared to have declined, food production remains dismal and continuing international aid is needed. Since 1994, some 2.4 million North Koreans, or ten percent of the population, are estimated to have died from hunger. However, the government still bars international relief agencies from working in many famine-stricken counties for "security reasons." There were also reports that food aid was diverted to the military and government officials. The food shortage is the result of a combination of floods and droughts in recent years, a legacy of agricultural mismanagement and the end of food subsidies from former Communist states.

On June 15, 1999, North Korea patrol boats clashed with South Korean warships in a disputed zone in the Yellow Sea. North Korean vessels fired at South Korean warships, which were pushing them out of the maritime boundary. One North Korean boat sank and five others were damaged. This was the most serious clash between the two countries since the armistice agreement was signed in 1953.

This incident was also a blow to Kim Jong-Il's plans to use South Korean tourism as a quick way to bring in foreign exchange. Pyongyang and Hyundai, South Korea's largest conglomerate, agreed in 1998 to develop a tourist facility in the Diamond Mountains in North Korea and to organize tours for South Koreans. For this, Hyundai agreed to pay North Korea \$906 million over the next six years. The first group of South Koreans visited the North in November 1998 under heavily restricted conditions.

There were also signs that Pyongyang would experiment with more free economic zones, in addition to the existing Rajin-Sonbong area and the Nampo-Wonson area south of the capital. The government has come to view such zones as a means to revive the economy without undertaking serious reform. The number of North Koreans crossing borders to trade in China has been increasing, and there are few signs that the government is stopping this.

Pyongyang continued its high-risk game of missile and nuclear threats to extract aid from the United States and Japan. On August 31, 1998, North Korea launched a three-stage missile, which flew over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido and crashed into the Pacific Ocean. Pyongyang claimed that the launch was part of an effort to put a satellite into space. Both the United States and Japan reacted with tightened sanctions against North Korea. On September 12, 1999, North Korea and the United States reached agreement during talks in Berlin. North Korea agreed to suspend long-range missile testing in exchange for easing of comprehensive sanctions imposed by the United States. The next day, North Korea made an unusual call for inter-Korean dialogues at all levels of government and society. In December, Japan decided to lift the remaining sanctions: a freeze on talks to normalize bilateral relations and suspension of food aid.

International concern over North Korea's ambitions to develop nuclear weapons also mounted in 1998. The United States asked to inspect a site north of Pyongyang, where weapons construction was suspected. North Korea counter-demanded \$300 million in cash and food aid for inspection rights. Pyongyang's demand was rejected, and the deteriorating situation threatened to undermine the 1994 Framework Agreement, under which North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear program in exchange for light-water reactors, which could not easily be used to make weapons. A breakthrough occurred on March 16, 1999, when Pyongyang agreed to open the facility in question to a U.S. team in May 1999, May 2000, and thereafter in exchange for a U.S. pledge to launch an agriculture project in North Korea and to provide 100,000 tons of food aid. The U.S. sent its first shipment of food and seeds to North Korea in May. This coincided with the fifth round of four-party talks by the two Koreas, China, and the U.S. in Geneva to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. In December 1999, agreement to build two of the light-water reactors was signed.

In August, CNN made the first broadcast of live reports from North Korea. Pyongyang also used its satellite to make international broadcasts of North Korean movies, news, and history programs, as well as shows on Kim Jong-Il and his father and predecessor, Kim Il-Sung.

The Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established on September 9, 1948, following the end of World War II and the partition of the Korean peninsula by the Soviet-led Communist forces and U.S.-led Western democracies. With assistance from Moscow, Kim Il-Sung, a former Soviet army officer, became head of the North Korean government. In June 1950, Kim, with Soviet military support, invaded South Korea in

an attempt to reunify the peninsula under Communist rule. The three-year Korean War ended in a truce after intervention by U.S. and Chinese troops, and left the two Koreas bitterly divided.

Throughout the Cold War, Kim Il-Sung solidified his power base in the north through an extensive personality cult and the development of *Juche* (self-reliance), a home-grown ideology said to be an application of Marxism-Leninism specific to North Korea. In practice, it became an ideological justification for Communist leadership under Kim's rule and for the pervasive Stalinist control of the economy and all aspects of public and private life.

By the 1990s, the North Korean economy was in negative growth annually. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant the loss of Pyongyang's Cold War patrons in Moscow and increasing isolation for North Korea. Kim Il-Sung died suddenly of a heart attack in 1994, and his son and appointed successor, Kim Jong-Il, assumed power. This marked the first known Communist dynastic succession. While the younger Kim was regarded as the ruler of North Korea after his father's death, he delayed formally assuming positions of power for several years, not becoming general secretary of the Korean Workers' Party until 1997.

In 1998, elections were held for representatives of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), North Korea's rubber stamp legislature. This tenth SPA was regarded as the opening of the Kim Jong-Il era. The SPA revised the socialist constitution by renaming it the "Kim Jong-Il Constitution" and abolishing the post of president, which Kim was expected to assume. Kim was reelected chairman of the National Defense Commission, the nation's highest military supervisory body. With the post of president abolished, the NDC became the highest organ of power in the North Korean government and its chairman became the *de facto* head of state. Kim also holds the country's two other power offices: head of the ruling party and supreme military commander.

In April 1998, the two Koreas met in Beijing for direct government-to-government talks for the first time in four years. The talks were part of a continuing series of negotiations aimed at bringing a formal end to the Korean War, which was ended by a truce but without a formal treaty, leaving the two Koreas technically in a state of war. The border between the two Koreas is among the world's most heavily armed, with some two million troops deployed on both sides.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: North Korea is arguably the most tightly controlled country in the world. Its citizens cannot change their government democratically. Elections are held regularly, but all candidates are state-sponsored and belong either to the ruling Workers' Party or smaller, state-organized parties. The SPA, nominally the highest organized state power, provides little more than a veneer of legitimacy to government decisions. Opposition parties are illegal, and there appears to be little organized dissent as a result of the regime's repression, widespread internal surveillance, and isolationist policies. Even the most basic elements of a civil society do not exist in North Korea.

The judicial system consists of the Central Court, under which there are various municipal courts. The SPA has the power to elect and recall the president of the Central Court. The criminal law subjects citizens to arbitrary arrest, detention, and execution for "counterrevolutionary crimes" and other broadly defined political offenses. In practice, these can include nonviolent acts such as attempted defection, criticism of

the leadership, and listening to foreign broadcasts. Defense lawyers persuade defendants to plead guilty rather than advocate for them. The rule of law is nonexistent.

Prison conditions are characterized by severe mistreatment of prisoners and, by some accounts, frequent summary executions. The regime operates "reeducation through labor" camps that reportedly hold tens of thousands of political prisoners and their families. Defectors say some political prisoners are "reeducated" and released after a few years, while others are held indefinitely.

Authorities implement arbitrary checks of residences, use electronic surveillance, and maintain a network of informants to monitor the population. At school, children are encouraged to report on their parents. The government assigns a security rating to each individual that, to a somewhat lesser extent than in the past, still determines access to education, employment, and health services. North Koreans face a steady onslaught of propaganda from radios and televisions that are pre-tuned to government stations.

Travel within the country generally requires a permit, which is normally granted only for state business, weddings, or funerals, although some reports suggest that internal travel restrictions have been slightly eased. Travel into the capital is heavily restricted, with permission usually granted only for government business. The government reportedly forcibly resettles politically suspect citizens. Chinese authorities return some refugees and defectors at the border, many of whom are reportedly summarily executed. Chinese sources say many North Koreans are, in fact, captured by North Korean agents operating across the border. Only a handful of foreign journalists are accredited in North Korea and entry for foreign visitors is highly restricted.

The General Federation of Trade Unions is the sole legal trade union federation, and its affiliates are used to monitor workers. The regime does not permit strikes, collective bargaining, or other core labor activity. Religious practice is restricted to state-sponsored Buddhist and Christian services. Private property ownership is prohibited.

Korea, South

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 46,900,000
PPP: \$13,590
Life Expectancy: 74
Ethnic Groups: Korean
Capital: Seoul

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview: With his popularity waning and unemployment still stubbornly high, in fall 1999 President Kim Dae Jung worked to form a new, broader-based ruling party ahead of the parliamentary elections due by April 2000.

The Republic of Korea was established in August 1948 with the division of the

Korean Peninsula. In the next four decades authoritarian rulers undertook a state-directed industrialization drive that transformed a poor, agrarian country into the eleventh largest economy in the world. South Korea's democratic transition began in 1987, when strongman Chun Doo Hwan and his chosen successor, Roh Tae Woo, conceded to direct presidential elections amid widespread student protests. In December, Roh beat South Korea's best-known dissidents, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, to become president.

The 1988 constitution limited the president to a single five-year term and took away his power to dissolve the 299-seat national assembly. Kim Young Sam merged his party with the ruling party in 1990 to form the conservative, governing Democratic Liberal Party (DLP), and won the 1992 presidential election to become the first civilian president since 1961.

Kim Young Sam curbed the powers of the domestic security services, sacked hardline military officers, prosecuted former presidents Chun and Roh for corruption and treason, and launched an anticorruption campaign. However, his popularity waned as the reforms slowed and a series of ethics scandals emerged. At the April 1996 legislative elections, the DLP, renamed the New Korea Party (NKP), won only a 139-seat plurality, with the remainder going to Kim Dae Jung's center-left National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) and the conservative United Liberal Democrats (ULD).

In 1997, an economic slowdown forced eight highly indebted *chaebols* (business conglomerates) into bankruptcy, which placed severe stress on the financial system and raised questions about politicized lending and weak banking supervision. In early December, the government agreed to a \$57 billion International Monetary Fund-led bailout to prevent a private sector debt default in return for commitments to reform the chaebols and end lifetime labor guarantees. Amid popular anger over South Korea's worst economic crisis in decades, on December 18, 1997, Kim Dae Jung secured 40.4 percent of the vote to become the first opposition candidate to win a presidential election. Kim Dae Jung ran in an alliance with the ULD's Kim Jong-pil, whom he promised to name prime minister. Lee Hoi Chang of the ruling party, renamed the Grand National Party (GNP), and Rhee In Je, a ruling party defector, split the conservative vote.

In 1998, the Kim Dae Jung administration restructured some \$150 billion in private sector debt, signed laws ending a tradition of lifetime employment, and wooed enough GNP defectors to give the ruling coalition a parliamentary majority with 158 seats. South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 5.8 percent in 1998.

In February 1999, the two largest trade union confederations withdrew from a tripartite dialogue between government, workers, and businesses, charging that workers were bearing the brunt of the restructuring while the chaebols largely resisted reform (one confederation rejoined later in the year). In April, the government responded somewhat by introducing a national pension scheme. In June and July, several ethical scandals tarnished the administration's image. Also in July, the government imposed a major restructuring plan on Daewoo to prevent the country's second largest conglomerate from entering bankruptcy.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: South Koreans can change their government democratically. The judiciary is independent although corruption is a problem. In February 1999, the government fired six prosecutors over a bribery scandal. Detainees are often beaten to extract confessions and generally

do not have access to an attorney during interrogation. Prison conditions fall short of international norms, and there were continued reports of abuse of prisoners.

In 1998, Kim Dae Jung initiated a so-called sunshine policy toward Pyongyang, which has included increased civilian contacts with North Korea. Nevertheless, his administration has arrested hundreds of students, labor leaders, and political activists for generally peaceful activities under the draconian National Security Law (NSL). Courts handed down suspended sentences or short prison terms to most, but long prison sentences to others. Authorities held most detainees under Article Seven of the NSL, which provides for up to seven years imprisonment for "praising, encouraging or supporting an anti-state organization." Article Two defines anti-state organizations broadly. Officials justified the continued use of the law by citing the omnipresent North Korean security threat. Kim has released dozens of political prisoners held under the NSL, although after a fourth amnesty in August 1999, human rights groups said the government still held some 240 additional political prisoners.

The Kim Dae Jung administration has carried out some reforms of the renamed National Intelligence Service, the domestic security agency, but not a comprehensive restructuring. Critics continued to accuse government agencies of occasionally illegally wiretapping opposition politicians. There is also concern over the government's legal surveillance powers. According to the London-based *Economist*, authorities can use electronic surveillance while investigating 150 types of crime, or a suspected national security threat, and may do so for up to 36 hours without a warrant.

In 1998, courts sentenced two journalists to one- and two-year terms on criminal libel charges brought by the ruling party for defaming President Kim Dae Jung during the 1997 election campaign. According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, politically powerful families and conglomerates own the mainstream media and place some pressure on journalists to avoid critical coverage of economic affairs. The broadcast media are subsidized by the state but offer varied viewpoints.

Civic institutions are strong, and local human rights groups operate openly. Women face unofficial social and employment discrimination and are frequently the first to be laid off during corporate restructuring. Domestic violence is reportedly fairly widespread. Religious freedom is respected.

On several occasions police responded to large student and labor demonstrations with excessive force and mass arrests. In 1998, authorities arrested dozens of trade union leaders for organizing strikes deemed illegal. Courts released most of them in early 1999, but some remain in prison. In January, courts sentenced 15 labor activists to between 3 and 15 years in prison under the NSL for joining an allegedly pro-Pyongyang group.

Trade unions are relatively small but vigorous. The two largest confederations are the military-era Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), with around 1.2 million members, and the smaller, independent Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). In November, the government formally legalized the KCTU, ending the FKTU's status as the sole legal confederation. The 1998 Trade Union Labor Relations Adjustment Act lifted a ban on multiple trade unions in each industry that had maintained the FKTU's dominance, and will permit multiple unions at the company level in 2002. However, the act places some restrictions on labor activity, including a ban on strikes in some nonessential services. In January 1999, civil servants received the right to form workplace associations (but not to join unions), and in July teachers received the right to

form unions, but they remain banned from bargaining collectively and striking. Authorities rarely prosecute employers engaging in illegal layoffs. Employers frequently physically abuse foreign laborers and force them to work longer hours and for less pay than initially promised.

Anecdotal reports suggest that bribery, official extortion, and influence-peddling are pervasive in politics, business, and daily life. The GDP rose 7.3 percent in the first half of 1999 from a year earlier. Unemployment fell to 4.8 percent in September from a peak of 8.6 percent in February, although many of the estimated 1.5 million people laid off during the financial crisis are still unemployed.

Kuwait

Polity: Traditional monarchy and limited parliament

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 2,100,000

PPP: \$25,314

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Kuwaiti (45 percent), other Arab (35 percent), South Asian (9 percent), Iranian (4 percent), other (7 percent)

Capital: Kuwait City

Ratings Change: Kuwait's Political Rights rating changed from 5 to 4 due to the emergence of a dynamic and democratic parliament.

Political Rights: 4*

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

After years of legislative stagnation caused by an acrimonious battle between the government and parliament, the Kuwaiti emir dissolved parliament in May 1999 and called for elections on July 3. More than half the seats in the 50-member parliament changed hands in the election, with the liberal opposition increasing its representation from 4 to 14 seats. Islamists won 20 seats altogether: the more conservative Sunnis, 14, and Shias, 6. Pro-government candidates won 16 seats, while the appointed cabinet retains 16 votes. Despite a relative increase in moderate representatives, it is yet unclear whether this parliament will work with the government to enact badly needed economic reforms.

The al-Sabah family has ruled Kuwait since 1756. Under a special treaty, Kuwait ceded control of its foreign affairs and defense to Britain in 1899. The emirate gained full independence in 1961, and the 1962 constitution assigns broad executive powers to the emir, currently Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, who rules through an appointed prime minister and cabinet. The government shares power with the parliament, or national assembly, which is subject to dissolution or suspension by decree.

The legislative process has been paralyzed in recent years by a struggle between the government, which wants to reform the economic and financial sectors to offset decreased oil revenues, and opposition parliamentarians, who oppose any perceived "Westernization" that would endanger social spending. Parliament has blocked government initiatives to cut a \$3 billion budget deficit, privatize state-run industries, and

promote foreign investment by launching investigations into alleged mismanagement and corruption by government ministers. A crisis ensued in May when MPs threatened a no-confidence vote against the Islamic affairs minister for allowing the circulation of 120,000 misprinted copies of the Koran. Sheikh Jaber dissolved parliament and called for elections in July.

While parliament was dissolved, the government promulgated some 60 decrees, including one that would give women the right to vote and to stand as candidates in elections. Currently, the electorate includes only Kuwaiti men over age 21 and those who have been naturalized for 20 years. All decrees require parliamentary ratification, and whether these 60, which also include measures related to the budget, become law will be regarded as a test of government-parliament cooperation in coming months. While the advancement of liberals and moderates in the new parliament is a positive sign, some speculate that the opposition may reject the decrees out of hostility toward the government. In November, parliament narrowly voted to reject granting women full political rights.

Economists routinely express concern that Kuwait's cradle-to-grave welfare state cannot be maintained indefinitely. Some 93 percent of working Kuwaitis draw monthly tax-free salaries from the state, while an estimated 55 percent of the workforce is "underemployed"—that is, placed in menial state jobs for the sake of employment statistics. The oil revenues that support this system have dropped dramatically since 1997, yet the government avoids budget cutting measures that would place an economic burden on citizens. Instead, it raised fuel and petrol prices in August.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kuwaitis cannot change their government democratically. Under the 1962 constitution, the national assembly has limited power to approve the emir's choice of crown prince. The emir holds executive authority and rules through an appointed prime minister (usually the crown prince) and an appointed council of ministers. Legislative authority is shared by the emir and the national assembly, which is subject to dissolution by decree. Women, citizens naturalized for less than 20 years, members of the armed forces, the police, and other interior ministry personnel may not vote or seek election to the national assembly. In 1999, several national assembly candidates were prosecuted for defamation of government officials during an election campaign marked by widespread verbal attacks against the government for alleged corruption. About thirty tribal leaders were also prosecuted for holding illegal primary elections.

The emir appoints all judges and renewal of many judicial appointments is subject to government approval. One court system tries both civil and criminal cases. Sharia (Islamic law) courts for Sunnis and Shias handle family law cases. Defendants have the right to appeal verdicts and to be represented by legal counsel, which the courts provide in criminal cases. People convicted of collaboration with Iraq during the 1990 to 1991 occupation remain incarcerated. Most of those tried in the Martial Law Court in 1991 and the Special State Security Court, which was abolished in 1995, did not receive fair trials. In February the government pardoned the last of the Jordanian prisoners held in Kuwaiti prisons for collaboration with Iraq.

Several laws restrict freedom of speech and the press, and although prepublication censorship was abolished in 1992, journalists practice self-censorship. The Press Law prohibits direct criticism of the emir and of relations with other states, material deemed

offensive to religion, and incitement to violence, hatred, or dissent. In practice, newspapers are privately owned, and they frequently criticize government policies and officials. Enforcement of restrictions is arbitrary. In October, the government briefly suspended *Al-Seyassah* for publishing remarks by an Islamist leader criticizing the emiri decree granting women full political rights. A contributor to *Al-Seyassah* was imprisoned in October for allegedly defaming the Prophet Mohammad in 1996. In June, authorities shut down the Kuwaiti offices of Qatari-based satellite television channel *Al-Jazeera* for one month. Of 17 journalists imprisoned in 1991 for their work with the Iraqi newspaper *Al-Nida*, three were released in February 1999, leaving two still incarcerated. In September, Kuwait lifted a nine-year-old ban on Jordanian newspapers.

Public gatherings require government approval. Informal, family-based, almost exclusively male social gatherings known as *diwanis* provide a forum for political discussion. Political parties are banned, but informal political groups, including those with opposition views, exist without government interference. Nongovernmental organizations must be licensed, although many work without licenses.

Women face discrimination in legal and social matters. Sharia courts do not give a woman's testimony equal weight to that of a man, women must have permission of a male relative to obtain a passport, and only men are able to confer citizenship on children. Inheritance restrictions vary between Shias and Sunnis. Although women are prohibited from certain professions, they receive equal pay for equal work. In June, the interior ministry announced that women would be allowed to become full-fledged police officers for the first time. In July, the defense minister authorized women to join the armed forces and receive combat training. In December, a woman civil servant at the education ministry was granted some ministerial duties.

Islam is the state religion, and both Sunnis and Shias worship freely. The government recognizes the Christian community of more than 150,000, including Roman and Greek Catholics, National Evangelicals (Protestants), Greek and Armenian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, and Maronites. Leaders of these churches describe the government as tolerant. Members of religions not sanctioned in the Koran, such as Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais, and Buddhists, may not build places of worship, but may worship privately without interference. They number more than 60,000. A ban on organized, non-Muslim religious education is not widely enforced.

Some 120,000 *bidoon*, or stateless people, are considered illegal residents and denied citizenship and civil rights. In September, the government set a June 2000 deadline for *bidoon* to provide documented proof of original Kuwaiti citizenship in order to gain residency and work licenses.

The government maintains financial control over unions through subsidies that account for 90 percent of some union budgets. Only one union is permitted per industry or profession, and only one labor federation, the pro-government Kuwaiti Trade Union Federation, exists. Workers may strike, but no law protects them from resulting legal or administrative action. Foreigners must have five years' residence in Kuwait before joining labor unions. Roughly 100,000 foreigners who work as domestic servants are not protected under the labor law and are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse by employers. A Kuwaiti couple was arrested in August for allegedly beating their Sri Lankan maid to death. Many employers control their servants by holding their passports.

Kyrgyz Republic

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 5
Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)
Status: Partly Free

Population: 4,700,000

PPP: \$2,250

Life Expectancy: 67

Ethnic Groups: Kyrgyz (52 percent), Russian (18 percent), Uzbek (13 percent), Ukrainian (3 percent), German (2 percent), other (12 percent)

Capital: Bishkek



Overview:

In one of the country's more serious security crises in recent years, Islamic militants crossed into southern Kyrgyz Republic from Tajikistan twice in August, seizing several villages and taking hostages, including four Japanese nationals. The events highlighted the increasing concern of the leaders of the Kyrgyz Republic and other Central Asian secular governments regarding the presence of Islamic militants in the region, including religious fundamentalists, and their potential threat to the area's political stability.

Populated by nomadic herders and ruled by tribal leaders for centuries, the Kyrgyz Republic was conquered by Russia in the mid-1800s and incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1924. Following a declaration of independence from the USSR in August 1991, Askar Akayev, a respected physicist, was elected president two months later in the country's first direct presidential vote. While Akayev introduced multiparty elections and pursued economic reforms in conjunction with International Monetary Fund (IMF) requirements, he faced strong resistance from a Communist-dominated parliament elected in 1990.

In 1994, voters overwhelmingly endorsed two referenda, one on a market reform program advanced by the president, and a second abolishing the existing 350-member unicameral legislature and creating a smaller, bicameral body. The 1995 parliamentary elections, which were contested by more than 1,000 candidates representing twelve political parties, saw voting occur largely along ethnic and clan lines. No single party won a clear majority, with a mix of governing officials, intellectuals, and clan leaders capturing 82 out of a total 105 seats. Later that year, Akayev was reelected president in early elections with over 70 percent of the vote. In a February 1996 referendum, 94 percent of voters endorsed constitutional amendments which substantially increased the strength of the president, including the power to appoint all top officials.

A series of constitutional amendments proposed by the president in September 1998 was adopted by public referendum the following month. The revisions included restructuring the parliament, providing for private ownership of land, and limiting parliamentary immunity to activities connected with parliamentary duties. In December, the entire cabinet resigned after Akayev accused its members of mishandling the country's growing economic difficulties. Zhumabek Ibraimov, the former head of the property fund responsible for privatization, was subsequently appointed by Akayev as the new prime minister, replacing Kubanychbek Dzumaliev. Also that month, Kyrgyzstan

became the first Central Asian state to be admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In April 1999, Prime Minister Ibraimov died of cancer after just three months in office. His successor, Armangeldi Muraliyev, a former governor of the southern region of Osh, became the country's fourth prime minister since April 1998. Later that month, Felix Kulov, the influential mayor of the capital Bishkek, resigned in protest over supposed allegations that he was part of a plot to overthrow the government. Kulov is widely regarded as a possible candidate in next year's presidential elections. Despite ongoing economic reforms praised by international financial institutions, the Kyrgyz Republic's economy continued to suffer from the effects of the August 1998 Russian crisis, the low price of its key export, gold, an unproductive agricultural sector, and corruption. In early August, some two dozen armed Islamic militants entered southern Kyrgyz Republic from bases in neighboring Tajikistan, seizing a village and holding its inhabitants hostage. Kyrgyz officials sent to negotiate were also captured before a ransom was paid and the hostages released. Later that month, a much larger group captured several Kyrgyz towns and took hostages, including a high-level interior ministry official and four Japanese geologists. The inability of the small, poorly trained Kyrgyz military to deal with the crisis prompted the government to request assistance from nearby countries, particularly Uzbekistan. Following weeks of negotiations with—and ground and air attacks against—the rebels, many of whom escaped back to Tajikistan, the last of the hostages was released in October.

The militants appeared to be mostly part of a larger group of Uzbek nationals who had fled to Tajikistan after a government crackdown following a series of bombings in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent in February, as well as some former members of demobilized military units of Tajikistan's United Tajik Opposition (UTO) group. Many were supporters of Uzbek rebel leader Juma Namangoni, whom the Uzbekistan government believe had a role in the murders of four policemen in 1997 and the Tashkent bombings. The rebels' ultimate goals were a subject of considerable dispute. Among their various purported objectives were the release of political prisoners from Uzbek jails, the financing of their activities from ransom money collected through hostage-taking, and the establishment of Islamic states throughout Central Asia.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic can change their government democratically. However, international election observers reported that the 1995 presidential and parliamentary elections were marred by irregularities, including the stuffing of ballot boxes, inflation of voter turnout, and interference by local administrations. The 1996 constitution, approved by public referendum, codifies strong presidential rule and a weak parliament. The post of prime minister is largely ceremonial. Both presidential and parliamentary elections are held every five years. In 1994, voters approved a referendum replacing the unicameral 350-member legislature with a bicameral, 105-member body. The new legislature was composed of a permanent 35-seat lower chamber (Legislative Assembly) and a 70-member upper chamber (Assembly of People's Representatives), meeting only occasionally to approve the budget and confirm presidential appointees. Subsequent constitutional amendments adopted by referendum in 1998 expanded the number of seats in the lower chamber to 60 and decreased them in the upper chamber to 45. The next parliamentary elections will be held in February 2000. During the October 1999

local elections, reports by impartial Kyrgyz monitors noted widespread problems with local government officials interfering in election-related activities.

While there is some degree of press freedom in the Kyrgyz Republic, state and private media are vulnerable to government pressure, causing many journalists to practice self-censorship. All media are required to register with the ministry of justice and must wait for ministry approval before commencing operation. An article in the criminal code regarding libel is used to prosecute journalists for criticizing government officials. In March, the newspaper *Utro Bishkeka* was found guilty of defamation of character in a suit brought by three parliamentary deputies. Numerous independent newspapers appear regularly, and several private radio and television stations operate throughout the country. In August, the independent daily *Vecherny Bishkek* faced possible closure following allegations that the paper's editor, Alexander Kim, was guilty of tax evasion. Critics charged that the accusations against Kim were unfounded and politically motivated, as the newspaper had recently profiled various opposition members in connection with next year's presidential election. As of late 1999, the paper continued to be published.

Freedom of religion is generally respected in this largely Muslim country, although at times the government has infringed upon these rights. Under a 1997 presidential decree, all religious organizations must register first with the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA), and then with the ministry of justice to obtain status as a legal entity. The government continues to regard radical Islam as a threat to the country's stability, particularly in light of the recent hostage-taking crisis in August.

Freedom of assembly and association is respected inconsistently, with local authorities sometimes using registration requirements for demonstrations to inhibit this right. In May, 38 participants of demonstrations in the Yssyk-Kul region organized to protest local environmental damage and demand compensation and promised medical care were arrested at the order of the regional prosecutor. According to a recent report by the National Democratic Institute, a 1988 decree restricting freedom of assembly was used to prevent political meetings during the period preceding October 1999 local elections. Of the approximately two dozen political parties in the country, most are small and weak. Several new parties have emerged recently in advance of parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2000. One such group, the People's Party of Kyrgyzstan (PPK), composed of influential opposition members of parliament, has faced intimidation of its members by the authorities and restrictions on organizing meetings with the public.

While some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate with little or no state interference, the Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (KCHR), an affiliate of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, has faced ongoing harassment by the authorities. In October, President Akayev signed a bill on NGOs which defines the organizational and legal status of NGOs and establishes their clear distinction from commercial organizations. The adoption of the law followed two years of negotiations between government officials and representatives from NGOs and international organizations. A 1992 law permits the formation of trade unions and the right to bargain collectively. Most workers belong to the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, the successor to the Soviet-era labor organization.

Despite various legislative reforms in the court system, the judiciary is not independent and remains dominated by the executive branch. The procurator, rather than

the judge, is in charge of criminal proceedings, and courts of elders continue to operate in remote regions of the country. Corruption among judges is reportedly widespread. Credible reports suggest that police frequently use violence against suspects during arrest and interrogation. Prisons suffer from limited budget resources, resulting in very poor conditions including overcrowding, food shortages, and a lack of other basic necessities. Three days after declaring an amnesty for 2,000 prisoners, President Akayev signed a decree on December 5 imposing a two-year moratorium on the death penalty.

Certain restrictions remain on freedom of movement. Under a Soviet-era law, citizens are required to have official government permission, through possession of an internal *propiska* identity document, to work or reside in a particular part of the country. In addition to a 1990 property law allowing private ownership of housing and enterprises, a 1998 constitutional amendment permits private land ownership. The legal and regulatory environment for business operations is generally regarded as superior to those in neighboring countries. Nevertheless, personal connections, corruption, and insider privatization limit competition and equality of opportunity.

Women are active in the workforce and educational institutions, although they are underrepresented in government and politics. Domestic violence, rape, and trafficking of women and girls into forced prostitution abroad are serious problems.

Laos

Polity: Communist one-party **Political Rights:** 7

Economy: Statist **Civil Liberties:** 6

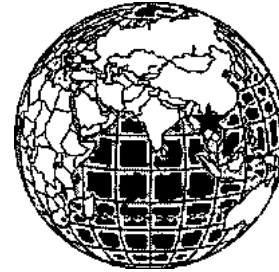
Population: 5,000,000 **Status:** Not Free

PPP: \$1,300

Life Expectancy: 51

Ethnic Groups: Lao Loum (68 percent), Lao Theung (22 percent), Lao Soung [includes Hmong and Yao] (9 percent), ethnic Vietnamese/Chinese (1 percent)

Capital: Vientiane



Overview:

The financial crisis in Asia continues to hurt the Laotian economy. The Laotian *kip* has fallen more than any other Asian currency, depreciating by more than 500 percent since 1997. Several regional airlines stopped flights to Vientiane, the capital, because of lack of demand. In August 1999, two key economic officials—Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kamphoui Keoboulapha and Central Bank Governor Cheuang Sombounknam—were removed from the cabinet for their alleged mismanagement of fiscal and banking policy. On October 26, 31 people were allegedly arrested for protesting in the capital against the government's failure to tackle mounting economic problems and for demanding free elections, release of political prisoners, and dialogue with opposition groups. In June the government released eight Christians who were jailed for more than a year for their participation in a Bible class, but six Christian leaders arrested along with 100 pro-democracy activists in November for planning to stage a public demonstration. Although Thailand, the biggest foreign investor in Laos, has

pushed for greater economic openness, Vietnam remains the dominant force in Laotian politics, and Laotian president Khamtay Siphandone has been shown to lack the will and strength needed to activate reform.

Laos, a landlocked, mountainous Southeast Asian country, became a French protectorate in 1893 and was occupied by Japan during World War II. In October 1953, the Communist Pathet Lao (Land of Lao) won independence from the French. Civil warfare broke out among Royalist, Communist, and conservative factions in 1964. In May 1975, the Pathet Lao took the capital from a Royalist government and seven months later established a one-party state under Prime Minister Kaysone Phomvihane's Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP).

In theory, the 85-member national assembly is elected for a five-year term and names the president. In reality, the parliamentary elections are tightly controlled, and the LPRP leadership picks the president. The government is dominated by the military, and currently seven of nine members of the Lao Politburo are generals. The 1991 constitution codified the leading political role of the LPRP and transition to a limited market economy. Kaysone subsequently took over as president, and veteran revolutionary Khamtay Siphandone succeeded him as prime minister. The constitution also expanded the powers of the president, who heads the armed forces and can remove the prime minister.

Kaysone died in 1992. Assembly Speaker Nouhak Phoumsavan and Prime Minister Khamtay became state president and LPRP chairman, respectively. The government permitted pre-approved independents to compete for the first time in the December 1992 parliamentary elections. Four independents won seats.

Personnel changes in the sixth LPRP congress in March 1996 continued the generational shift in leadership. The congress also strengthened the military's political role and promoted several hardliners who feared that privatization and other economic reforms could erode the LPRP's authority. At the December 1997 parliamentary elections, the party's pre-approved roster of candidates favored old-guard conservatives over technocrats supportive of market reforms. In February 1998, the national assembly chose Khamtay to replace Nouhak as president, and Vice President Sisvath Keobouphanh, the former minister of agriculture, became the prime minister.

The LPRP introduced market reforms in 1986 to revive the Laotian economy. The authorities privatized farms and some state-owned enterprises, removed price controls, and encouraged foreign investment. By 1998, Thailand was the biggest source of direct foreign investment in Laos, injecting \$3 billion into the country over the last ten years. The military entered into business, including logging and a casino in the north that is part of a joint venture with Malaysian companies.

Fears of Thai economic hegemony, continued poverty, and international isolation led the government's push for membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1997. Since then, however, the government has been concerned that ASEAN may pressure Laos to abide by international legal and human rights standards.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Laos is a one-party state controlled by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, and citizens cannot change their government democratically. Opposition parties are not expressly banned, but in practice they are not tolerated by the government.

Some elements of state control, including the widespread monitoring of citizens

by police, have relaxed in recent years. Domestic and international travel restrictions were eased in 1994. However, the security service still searches homes without warrants, monitors some personal communications, and maintains neighborhood and workplace committees that inform on the population.

The rule of law is absent. The judiciary is not independent of the government, and trials lack adequate procedural safeguards. Prison conditions are harsh. In February 1998, one of three former government officials imprisoned in 1990 for advocating peaceful reform died because he was denied medical treatment for diabetes. The two other men remain in prison. Most of the tens of thousands of people who were sent to "re-education" camps following the Communist victory in 1975 have been released, but unconfirmed reports suggest that the regime may still be holding several hundred political prisoners.

The constitution allows for freedom of speech and expression, but this freedom is extremely limited in practice. The government owns all newspapers and electronic media. The LPRP controls all associations and political assemblies, and prohibits nearly all except those approved by the government. Nonetheless, a protest by Hmong tribal people before the U.S. embassy in Vientiane in February 1998 over land policy won them some concessions from the Laotian government.

There are no known convicted religious prisoners, but authorities frequently arrest and detain persons temporarily because of their religious beliefs. Tolerance of religion varies by region. The country's 30,000 to 40,000 Roman Catholics face greater repression in the north than in the central and southern provinces. Furthermore, the central government appeared unable to control or mitigate harsh treatment by some local or provincial authorities. All religious groups have to obtain state approval, so any unauthorized groups and gatherings are treated as illegal. Foreigners cannot proselytize, and proselytizing by Laotians is strictly circumscribed in practice.

A ministerial decree in 1990 permits the formation of independent trade unions in private companies, but they must operate within the framework of the party-controlled Federation of Lao Trade Unions. There is no legal right to bargain collectively. The right to strike does exist, but bans on "subversive or destabilizing activities" prevent strikes from occurring.

Women and members of minority groups are represented in the national assembly, although not proportionately to their overall presence in the population. There are no women and only a few minorities in the Politburo and Council of Ministers. The Hmong, the largest of several hill tribes, have conducted a small-scale insurgency since the Communist takeover, but they have become less active in recent years. Both the Hmong guerrillas and the armed forces have been accused of occasional human rights violations in the context of the insurgency, including extrajudicial killings.

Latvia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 2,400,000

PPP: \$3,940

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Latvian (57 percent), Russian (30 percent), Belorussian (4 percent), Ukrainian (3 percent), Polish (3 percent), other (3 percent)

Capital: Riga

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

The long-anticipated collapse of the ailing coalition government of Prime Minister Vilis Kristopans finally took place in July, when Kristopans resigned and was replaced by his arch rival Andris Skele. In a surprising result to several rounds of voting in June presidential elections, political outsider Vaire-Vike Freiberga was chosen as the country's first female head of state.

After having been ruled for centuries by Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Russia, Latvia gained its independence in 1918, but was annexed by the USSR during World War II. More than 50 years of Soviet occupation saw a massive influx of Russians and the deportation, execution, and emigration of tens of thousands of ethnic Latvians. In 1991, Latvia regained its independence in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Following the October 1995 parliamentary elections, nonparty businessman and former agriculture minister Andris Skele was chosen to lead a tenuous six-party coalition government in December. The year 1997 was marked by continual government instability, with Skele surrendering the premiership to Guntars Krasts of the right-wing nationalist Fatherland and Freedom Party in July-August.

In the October 1998 parliamentary elections, Skele's newly created People's Party (PP) received the most votes, capturing 24 seats. However, Skele remained unpopular among many political forces for his authoritarian and abrasive style, and the People's Party and Kristopans' Latvia's Way, although similar in political orientation, found their leadership at odds over personality conflicts and various business interests. After nearly two months of negotiations, parliament finally approved a new 46-seat minority government led by Kristopans and consisting of the center-right Latvia's Way, Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (FF/LNNK), and the center-left New Party, along with the tacit support of the left-wing Alliance of Social Democrats. The People's Party was excluded from the ruling coalition, which most observers predicted would not survive for long because of the ideological diversity of its members and its minority status in parliament.

On June 17, 1999, Canadian-Latvian academic and virtual political unknown Vaira Vike-Freiberga was elected by parliament as the country's first female president. Incumbent President Guntis Ulmanis, who had served as head of state since 1993, was

prevented by law from seeking a third term. Vike-Freiberga, who had no formal party affiliation but was supported by the People's Party, FF/LNNK, and the Social Democrats, defeated Latvia's Way's candidate Valdis Birkavs and Economics Minister Ingrida Udre in a seventh round of voting with 53 votes.

After only nine months in office, Prime Minister Kristopans stepped down on July 5, precipitating the collapse of his minority coalition government. His resignation followed the signing of a cooperation agreement two days earlier between coalition partner FF/LNNK and the People's Party. Kristopan's brief term had been plagued by various policy defeats and political crises, culminating in the virtual isolation of the prime minister's party in its opposition to Vike-Freiberga's candidacy for president. However, Latvia's Way, the People's Party, and FF/LNNK put aside enough of their differences to agree to form a new coalition led by Kristopan's rival Andris Skele as prime minister. The 62-seat majority government, which was confirmed by parliament on July 16, promises to be more stable than its predecessors.

On December 9, parliament finally passed a revised version of a controversial language law adopted in July which regulates language use in the public sector and in some areas of private business operations. The first version of the law adopted in July was criticized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe for violating Latvia's commitment to various international human rights treaties. President Vike-Freiberga subsequently returned the law to parliament for further review, where it was adopted five months later with some modifications which were praised by the international community.

The previous year's financial crisis in Russia caused a slowdown in Latvia's economic growth in 1999, resulting in parliament's adoption of a negative supplementary budget in August. In the most controversial and unpopular cost-cutting measure passed at the same legislative session, parliament adopted amendments to the pension law which would gradually raise the retirement age to 62 and restrict payments to working pensioners. Although the opposition succeeded in delaying the law's implementation and in obtaining enough signatures to put the issue to a public referendum in November, the referendum failed because of low voter turnout. Privatization plans of major infrastructure and utility projects, including Latvian Shipping Company, Latvenergo power utility, and Latvian Gas, were delayed throughout the year. In the international arena, Latvia became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in February and was invited along with five other countries to begin formal accession talks with the European Union in December.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Latvians can change their government democratically. However, Latvia's citizenship laws have been criticized for disenfranchising those who immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet period and who must now apply for citizenship. The constitution provides for a unicameral 100-seat parliament (*Saeima*), whose members are elected for four-year terms by proportional representation, and who in turn select the country's president. According to international observers, the most recent national legislative elections in 1998 were free and fair.

The government respects freedom of speech and the press. Private television and radio stations broadcast programs in both Latvian and Russian, and the more than 200 estimated newspapers publish a wide range of political viewpoints. However, many

media outlets routinely report rumors and accusations as fact without benefit of hard evidence. A new criminal law adopted in April stipulates excessively severe penalties for libel and incitement of racial hatred, including imprisonment for up to three years for certain infractions. Freedom of worship is generally respected in practice.

Freedom of assembly and association are protected by law and gatherings occur without government interference. More than 40 political parties are officially registered, although Communist, Nazi, and other organizations whose activities would contravene the constitution are banned. Workers have the right to establish trade unions, strike, and engage in collective bargaining. However, some private sector employees fear dismissal if they strike, as the government is limited in its ability to protect their rights. Over 50,000 teachers staged two one-day strikes in late November to protest lower-than-expected pay increases, leading to the resignation of the country's education minister.

Although the government generally respects constitutional provisions for an independent judicial system, the judiciary is weak, prone to corruption, and not adequately trained. In April, a new criminal law entered into force which introduced the more frequent availability of alternative punishments, including community service, while at the same time imposing harsher penalties for certain crimes. There have been credible reports of police using excessive force against suspects, prisoners, and asylum seekers. Prison facilities remain overcrowded and conditions poor, with widespread incidents of tuberculosis. On April 15, parliament voted to abolish the death penalty, despite widespread popular support for capital punishment.

Amendments adopted in 1998 to the Law on Citizenship, which were designed to ease and accelerate the naturalization process, came into effect in 1999. The amendments eliminated the so-called "naturalization windows," or specific periods during which noncitizens may apply for citizenship, resulting in a fourfold increase in naturalization applications during the first half of 1999. They also offer citizenship to noncitizens' children born after August 21, 1991, at their parents' request and without a Latvian language test.

Women possess the same legal rights as men, although they frequently face hiring and pay discrimination. While women are underrepresented in senior-level business and government positions, Vaira Vike-Freiberga became Latvia's first female head of state in June.

Lebanon

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary (military- and foreign-influenced, partly foreign-occupied)

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 4,100,000

PPP: \$5,940

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Arab (95 percent), Armenian (4 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Beirut

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free



Overview:

One year after significant governmental changes in Lebanon, which saw the country's first municipal elections in 35 years and a widely popular former army chief, General Emile Lahoud, installed as president, the political direction of the country, particularly whether its new leaders will undertake the badly needed economic reform and rural development advocated by opposition activists, still remains unclear. A new state budget was criticized for its large defense and debt service allocations, although it was well received by the business community. Lebanon reabsorbed a town previously held by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the Israeli-controlled "security zone" in south Lebanon. Upon the withdrawal, many SLA troops who chose not to withdraw were arrested and jailed for having "collaborated" with Israel.

Lebanon gained full sovereignty from France in 1946. An unwritten National Pact in 1943 gave Christians political dominance over the Muslim population through a mandatory six-to-five ratio of parliamentary seats. After three decades during which non-Christians tried to end this system, a civil war erupted between Muslim, Christian, and Druze militias in 1975, claiming over 150,000 lives before it ended in 1990. Complicating the situation was the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which, after having been expelled from Jordan in 1971, used Lebanon as a base for attacks against Israel and constituted an occupying force. Syria sent troops into Lebanon to support the government in 1976. Syrians, who consider Lebanon part of Greater Syria, continue to occupy the country today.

The Lebanese assembly ratified a peace plan put forward by the Arab League on November 5, 1989, in Taif, Saudi Arabia. The Taif Accord maintained the tradition of a Maronite Christian president indirectly elected to a six-year term, but it transferred most executive power to the prime minister, a Sunni Muslim, by agreement. A Shiite Muslim serves as speaker of parliament, which is now evenly split between Muslims and Christians.

The Lebanese government is not sovereign in its own country. With some 35,000 to 40,000 troops in Lebanon, Syria dominates the country politically and militarily. The 128-member parliament, elected in September 1996, follows the Syrian line on internal and regional affairs. The Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) controls a 440-square-mile security zone in the south; the Shiite, pro-Iranian Hezbollah militia is still active in many southern towns; and Palestinian groups operate autonomously in refugee camps throughout the country.

Municipal elections held in May and June 1998 were not subject to sectarian quotas, as are legislative elections. After boycotting two legislative elections since 1991 to protest Syrian occupation, Maronite Christians took part in the polls to contest 646 municipal councils and 2,000 mayoral seats. A "Beirut Accord List" representing Hezbollah, Maronites, and others won 23 of 24 seats in Beirut, bringing a balance of Christians and Muslims to the capital's municipal council. The government and the Muslim, pro-Syria Amal movement fared poorly in Mount Lebanon, while Hezbollah and Christians made notable gains. Voter turnout ranged from 32 to 80 percent.

The balance of power enshrined in the Taif Accord resulted in overlapping authority among the speaker, prime minister, and president. Sectarian tensions and conflicting priorities among the three have often led to political infighting and stalled political and economic progress. Syria, meanwhile, has worked to manipulate these tensions in order to keep its position as mediator. But by choosing Emile Lahoud as Lebanon's president, Syria brought in a popular politician who is respected across sectarian lines. As head of the armed forces, he turned fragmented civil war militias into a unified army and gained wide public support in the process. It is thought that Syria, recognizing that political stability is vital to its economic interest, has decided to try to foster internal cooperation rather than incite hostilities.

In late November 1998, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri sparked a crisis by turning down Lahoud's invitation to form a new government. Though Hariri claimed that Lahoud had conducted unconstitutional dealings with parliament, analysts believe that Hariri was angry over Lahoud's attempts to influence his choice of ministers. In December, Lahoud appointed Salim al-Hoss, a former prime minister and widely respected economist, to the post of prime minister. Al-Hoss scrapped Hariri's agenda of restoring Lebanon to its pre-war glory as a regional trade and financial center, citing the need to be "realistic." Instead, he stressed administrative reform and increased transparency in public departments as priorities. As a first move, the new prime minister cut the number of cabinet ministers from 30 to 16, largely ignoring religious quotas and including 11 first-time members.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Shortcomings in the electoral system limit the right of Lebanese citizens to change their government. Parliamentary elections held in 1996 were neither prepared for nor carried out impartially. According to the constitution, a president is to be elected by parliament every six years. In fact, Syria's choice of president is simply ratified by parliament. At the last election in 1995, the Syrian government extended the term of the incumbent Elias Hrawi for an extra three years. Just prior to the election of Lahoud in October 1998, parliament amended a constitutional requirement that senior government officials resign their posts at least two years before running for office.

Municipal elections held in May and June 1998 were considered reasonably free and fair by the U.S. State Department. Opposition activists routinely complain that villages and towns in more remote areas have gone neglected while postwar reconstruction efforts have focused on Beirut.

The judiciary is influenced by Syrian political pressure, which affects the appointments of key prosecutors and investigating magistrates. The judicial system comprises civilian courts, a military court, and a judicial council. International standards of criminal procedure are not observed in the military court, which consists largely of military

officers with no legal training. The average case is tried in minutes. Extragovernmental groups, such as the Israeli-backed SLA, Palestinian factions, and Hezbollah, detain suspects and administer justice in areas under their control, generally without due process safeguards.

Arbitrary arrest and detention are commonplace. Security forces use torture to extract confessions. Prison conditions do not meet international standards. After the SLA withdrew from the south Lebanese town of Jezzín, handing it over to Lebanese control, a Lebanese military court sentenced several of the 200 militiamen who declined to join in the pullback to prison terms of six months to two years. They were charged with collaborating with Israel for having served in the SLA.

The government has not abated its crackdown on independent broadcasting, which flourished during the civil war. In 1998, a government decree banned two of the country's four satellite television stations from broadcasting news or political programming. Since the crackdown began in 1996, the government has licensed only five television stations, three of which are owned by government figures; it has also licensed six radio stations that may carry news and 20 stations that may carry only entertainment. Fifty-two television stations and 124 radio stations have been closed. The appropriation of frequencies is a slow and highly politicized process.

Print media are independent of the government, though their content often reflects the opinions of the various local and foreign groups that finance them. Insulting the dignity of the head of state or foreign leaders is prohibited. All foreign print media are subject to government approval. Marcel Khalifa, a Lebanese singer, was placed on trial in November 1999 for writing songs that included verses from the Koran. He was accused of insulting Islam, a charge that could result in a three-year prison term. Human Rights Watch noted that Khalifa's recordings are protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty to which Lebanon is a signatory.

Rates of Internet access in Lebanon continued to grow in 1999. There are an estimated 50,000 users and more than 25 Lebanese Internet service providers. Many "cybercafes" can be found in Beirut. Internet access does not appear to be closely monitored or controlled by the state.

In December 1998, the new government lifted a five-year-old ban on public demonstrations. Protests were banned in 1993 after a demonstration against the Oslo Middle East peace accords turned violent. Public assemblies require government approval, which is frequently denied to Christian groups. Freedom of religion is generally respected. Citizens may travel abroad freely, though internal travel is restricted in certain areas under Israeli or Hezbollah control. Syrian troops maintain checkpoints in areas under their control. The government does not extend legal rights to some 180,000 stateless persons who live mainly in disputed border areas. In January the government announced a plan to lift travel restrictions imposed on Lebanon's Palestinian population. Palestinian travel documents are to be treated the same as passports. After 1995, Lebanon had required Palestinians once living in Lebanon to obtain visas to return. Some 350,000 to 500,000 Palestinian refugees live without adequate electricity and water; they face restrictions on work, on building homes and on purchasing property. Palestinians are denied citizenship rights.

Palestinian gunmen were thought to be responsible in June for the shooting deaths of four judges in a Sidon courtroom. Palestinian suspects were in the courtroom at the time awaiting trials on drug and murder charges. The attack highlighted the increasing

tension between Lebanon's disenfranchised Palestinian population and Lebanese authorities, who warily avoid the often violent Palestinian refugee camps

Women suffer legal and social discrimination. Although women commonly work in fields such as medicine, law, journalism, and banking, they are severely underrepresented in politics. Women council members constituted only one percent of the newly elected municipal councils.

All workers except those in government may establish unions, strike, and bargain collectively. Foreign domestic workers are routinely abused by employers who pay them little or nothing and confiscate their passports to prevent them from leaving. Women are most vulnerable to brutality or sexual abuse. Lebanon has no written code to arbitrate domestic worker disputes.

Lesotho

Polity: Parliamentary
(transitional)
(post-conflict)

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 2,100,000

PPP: \$1,860

Life Expectancy: 56

Ethnic Groups: Sotho (99.7 percent), other, including European and Asian (0.3 percent)

Capital: Maseru

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Troops from South Africa and Botswana left Lesotho by the end of May 1999 after having derailed a potential overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili in 1998.

The troops had been sent to the mountain kingdom at the government's request under the mandate of the 14-country Southern Africa Development Community in September 1998 to quell army-backed violence touched off by the results of national assembly elections the previous May. Although international observers described the voting as free and fair, demonstrators rejected the results that gave the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) 79 of 80 national assembly seats. By the time foreign troops had entered Lesotho, the capital was on the brink of anarchy, and a military coup, perhaps with support from King Letsie III, appeared imminent. At least 60 people were reportedly killed before order was restored several days later. South Africa's intervention, which was resisted by some of Lesotho's soldiers, has ensured at least a temporary peace. Some have stayed behind to train members of the Lesotho army.

An agreement, drafted by the Commonwealth, allows the elected, but highly unpopular, government to retain power, but stipulates that new elections be supervised by an independent election commission. The vote was supposed to be held in April 2000, but little progress has been made on preparations and the setting of a date remains highly contentious. A 24-member Interim Political Authority (IPA) was formed in December 1998 with two representatives from each of the country's 12 main political parties to oversee preparations for the polls. The Commonwealth is to form an ex-

perts group to determine the procedures for new polls and recommend when the country will be ready to hold them. The recommendations, however, will not be binding, and it is unclear if this process will lead definitively to elections in the near term. The agreement also calls for the formation of a security liaison committee with representatives of all political parties and the Lesotho army, as well as a joint committee on the public media to ensure equitable air time for campaigning.

Entirely surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho is highly dependent on its powerful neighbor. Its economy is sustained by remittances from its many citizens who work in South Africa. Lesotho's status as a British protectorate saved it from incorporation into South Africa. King Moshoeshoe II reigned from independence in 1966 until the installation of his son as King Letsie III in a 1990 military coup. Democratic elections in 1993 did not lead to stability. After violent military infighting, assassinations, and a suspension of constitutional rule in 1994, King Letsie III abdicated to allow his father's reinstatement. He resumed the throne following the accidental death of his father in January 1996.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Legislative elections in May 1998 were determined to be generally free and fair, but the LCD's 60 percent vote translated into an almost total exclusion of opposition representation from the national assembly. The appearance of irregularities and the virtual elimination of opposition voices from government fueled protests against the results. A new Mixed Member Parliament (MMP) electoral model, which will expand the number of seats in parliament by 50, to 130, to give the opposition more representation, has been developed. The additional seats will be elected by proportional representation, while the others will continue to be chosen by the "first past the post" system of awarding seats to whomever gets the most votes.

The senate, the upper house of the bicameral legislature, includes royal appointees and Lesotho's 22 principal traditional chiefs, who still wield considerable authority in rural areas. Any elected government's exercise of its constitutional authority remains limited by the autonomy of the military, the royal family, and traditional clan structures.

Courts are nominally independent, but higher courts are especially subject to outside influence. Freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion are generally respected. Mistreatment of civilians by security forces reportedly continues. Several nongovernmental organizations operate openly. There are concerns that people alleged to be involved in the 1998 riots are being held in jail with little prospect of a speedy trial. Thirty-three police mutineers who were arrested in February 1997 continue to be held without completion of their trials. Opposition leaders claim that 50 army personnel accused of fomenting mutiny and high treason in 1998 were arbitrarily detained and are being held unfairly. In January 1999, 12 were released because of insufficient evidence.

Journalists have suffered occasional harassment and attacks. The press suffered badly during the 1998 rioting, when the offices of nearly all independent publications were pillaged. All have resumed publishing. The government maintains a monopoly over broadcasting, but extensive South African radio and television broadcasts reach Lesotho and there are four private radio stations. In October, the information minister demanded the resignation of all state broadcasting employees who had participated in antigovernment demonstrations.

Labor rights are constitutionally guaranteed. Approximately ten percent of the country's labor force, which is mostly engaged in subsistence agriculture or employment in South Africa, is unionized. Collective bargaining rights and the right to strike are recognized by law, but are sometimes denied by government negotiators. Legal requirements for union registration have not been enforced.

The 1993 constitution bars gender-based discrimination, but customary practice and law still restrict women's rights in several areas, including contracts, property rights, and inheritance. A woman is considered a legal minor while her husband is alive. Domestic violence is reportedly widespread. A woman was appointed speaker of the national assembly for the first time in 1999. She is one of three women serving in the 80-member assembly. One woman serves in the 14-member cabinet.

The 1995 Privatization Act calls for extensive divestiture of state-run enterprises, which constitute almost all of the modern economic sector. Land is the property of the kingdom, and its distribution is generally controlled by local chiefs. The country's economy has suffered as a result of the worldwide slump in gold prices. Many of Lesotho's citizens depend on income brought home by workers in South Africa.

Liberia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 2,900,000
PPP: na
Life Expectancy: 59
Ethnic Groups: Indigenous tribes (95 percent), Americo-Liberians (5 percent)
Capital: Monrovia

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

President Charles Taylor faced the first real challenge to his power in April and August 1999 when rebels based in neighboring Guinea attacked villages in the northwest, threatening lucrative logging and diamond concessions. Liberian forces retaliated, making cross-border raids into Guinea. Fearing a further escalation of regional conflict, West African leaders mediated an at least temporary peace. Taylor, who spent six years as a rebel leader before being elected in 1997, called on the international community to lift an arms embargo against Liberia that was imposed in 1992. He was turned down in light of persistent reports that his country has been used as a transshipment point for arms to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone. Insecurity prevails in the porous northwest border region of the three countries. A number of foreign aid workers were taken hostage in April and August, but were freed unharmed. Harassment of journalists and human rights activists increased in 1999. A lack of discipline prevails among security forces, which operate with impunity.

Taylor and his National Patriotic Party (NPP) won in July 1997 elections that independent observers judged generally free and fair. But his administration's goals ap-

pear aimed more at developing personal business interests than in consolidating the country's democratic institutions. Corruption, lack of support, and fear of the disapproval of Taylor or security forces prevent many well-meaning officials from carrying out their duties effectively. Taylor has displayed erratic behavior at times. He sacked a number of cabinet ministers and heads of public corporations in May, and reinstated them a week later.

Liberia was settled by freed American slaves in 1821 and became an independent republic in 1847. Americo-Liberians, descendants of the freed slaves, dominated the country until 1980, when army sergeant Samuel Doe led a violent coup and murdered President William Tolbert. Doe's regime concentrated power among members of his Kranh ethnic group and suppressed others. Forces led by Charles Taylor, a former government minister, and backed by Gio and Mano ethnic groups, which had been subject to severe repression, launched a guerrilla war from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire against the Doe regime on Christmas Eve 1989. In 1990, Nigeria, under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States, led an armed intervention force that prevented Taylor from seizing the capital but failed to protect Doe from being captured and tortured to death by a splinter rebel group. The last remaining peacekeepers left Liberia in October 1999.

The war claimed more than 150,000 lives and forced approximately half of Liberia's nearly three million people to flee their homes before a 14th peace accord proved successful in May 1996.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Charles Taylor and his party assumed power after 1997 elections that constituted Liberia's most genuine electoral exercise in decades. The votes for the presidency and a national assembly on the basis of proportional representation were held under provisions of the 1986 constitution. Taylor's victory reflected more of a vote for peace than for a particular personality, as many people believed that the only way to stop the war was to make him president.

Liberia's judiciary is only nominally independent and is vulnerable to corruption, influence by government officials, and intimidation by security forces. Human rights groups say security forces often ignore summonses to appear in court to explain disappearances. Among those reportedly with the most flagrant disregard of the law is Taylor's son, Charles Jr., who leads a feared security group called the Anti-Terrorism Unit. President Taylor in November 1999 asked for international help in restructuring the country's security forces, something he has previously rejected.

Numerous civil society groups, including human rights organizations such as the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Center for Democratic Empowerment (CDE), operate in the country. Their employees are subject to repeated harassment by security forces. Armed men ransacked the home of Conmany Wesseh, CDE executive director, in July 1999, and threatened his wife and children, who have since left the country. Rights workers say the atmosphere of intimidation eased after the former police director, Joe Tate, died in a plane crash. But threats and harassment continue. James Torh, executive director of Fore-Runners of Children's Universal Rights for Survival, Growth and Development, was charged with sedition and jailed in December after criticizing the government while speaking to a group of students. He could face five years in prison. Torh had recently called for a truth commission to investigate rights abuses.

In December, the government announced that it was setting up a human rights office. A similar government office had been abandoned.

Human rights groups have complained about the treatment of prisoners. Although the International Committee of the Red Cross has been able to visit a number of prisons, it has had no access to a reported detention center at the Gbatata military base, where Charles Jr.'s forces train. Former prisoners reported that they were repeatedly tortured and that Mandingos and Muslims suspected of aiding the insurgents based in Guinea were particular targets.

Liberia's independent media have survived despite years of war, assaults, and harassment at the cost of extensive self-censorship. Charles Taylor owns Kiss-FM, the only countrywide FM radio station. The Roman Catholic Church also operates a radio station, which includes extensive reporting on human rights issues. With U.S. funding, the Swiss Hironnelle Foundation's Star Radio broadcasts civic education programming and is often the target of official harassment. A ban on its short-wave broadcasts in October 1998 has not been lifted. State television stations and one private station broadcast only irregularly. Some members of the print media have received death threats and are under persistent surveillance. In December 1999, authorities arrested Sarkilay Kantan and Isaac Menyongai of the *Concord Times* and issued arrest warrants against four other journalists with the newspaper. They were accused of "criminal malevolence" after running stories about corruption in state-run companies and government. The Monrovia City Court later dismissed the charges.

Religious freedom is respected in practice, but Muslims have been targeted because many Mandingos follow Islam. Treatment of women varies by ethnic group, religion, and social status. Many women continue to suffer from physical abuse and traditional societal discrimination, despite constitutionally guaranteed equality. Several women's organizations have sought to assist the estimated 25,000 women raped during the civil war. Union activity is permitted by law, but was greatly curtailed during the war.

Corruption is a major obstacle to economic growth, and much of the output of the country's diamond mines is smuggled untaxed from the country. Limited financial aid has resumed. The Liberian shipping registry, one of the largest in the world, underwent substantial change when the government replaced the U.S. company that had managed it with a Liberian company. The move allows Liberia to retain more of the registry's profits, but many businessmen fear this will come at a cost to the shipping industry, and ultimately Liberia, if the registry's reputation for professionalism is not maintained.

Libya

Polity: One-party
dictatorship

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 5,000,000

PPP: \$6,697

Life Expectancy: 75

Ethnic Groups: Arab-Berber (97 percent), other, including Greek, Italian, Maltese, Egyptian, Pakistani, Turkish, Indian, Tunisian (3 percent)

Capital: Tripoli

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Colonel Mu'ammr al-Qadhafi celebrated 30 years in power with lavish celebrations that took on extra significance in light of great diplomatic successes in 1999. In an apparent effort to improve his international standing, he demonstrated a decline in support for terrorism, along with increased support for peace in Africa and the Middle East. His efforts paid off with a suspension of UN sanctions, improved relations with Africa and the West, and an influx of potential investors.

After centuries of Ottoman rule, Libya was conquered by Italy in 1912, then occupied by British and French forces during World War II. In accordance with agreements made by Britain and the UN, Libya gained independence under the staunchly pro-Western King Idris I in 1951. Qadhafi seized power in 1969 amid growing anti-Western sentiment regarding foreign-controlled oil companies and military bases on Libyan soil.

Qadhafi's hostility toward the West and sponsorship of terrorism have earned Libya pariah status. Clashes with regional neighbors, including Chad over the Aozou strip and Egypt over their common border, have led to costly military failures. Libyan involvement in the 1988 bombing of PanAm Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and its refusal to surrender two Libyan nationals suspected of planting the bomb, prompted the UN to impose sanctions including embargoes on air traffic and the import of arms and oil production equipment in 1992.

In a turnaround attributed by some observers to "maturity," Qadhafi made several constructive changes in his foreign policy in 1999. In April, he surrendered the two Lockerbie suspects in a deal allowing them to stand trial in a neutral country, the Netherlands. He also agreed to pay \$31 million by order of a French court to compensate the families of 170 people killed in the 1989 bombing of a French airliner in Niger. In July, Qadhafi accepted responsibility for the 1984 killing of British policewoman Yvonne Fletcher by shots fired from the Libyan embassy in London. An unspecified amount of compensation was paid to Fletcher's family in November. In addition, Qadhafi expelled the Abu Nidal Organization, a militant Palestinian organization responsible for numerous terrorist attacks, from Libya and expressed support for Yassir Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The U.S. State Department praised this move as a "strong signal of support" for the Middle East peace process.

The UN suspended sanctions in April, but stopped short of lifting them perma-

nently because Libya has not explicitly renounced terrorism. For the same reason, the United States has maintained its own unilateral sanctions, including a comprehensive trade embargo, but eased them in July to allow U.S. companies to sell food, medicine, and medical equipment to Libya. In July, Britain responded to Libya's admission of responsibility in the Fletcher case by announcing that it would restore full diplomatic ties with Libya for the first time in 15 years. In September, the European Union lifted its sanctions, but maintained an arms embargo. Libya's opening brought scores of business delegations from Europe, Asia, and the Arab world to explore the potential for investment in Libya's lucrative oil industry.

In recent years, Qadhafi has sought to ease Libya's isolation through vigorous international diplomacy focused on sub-Saharan Africa. Resentful of the lack of Arab support for Libya in the wake of Lockerbie, he turned away from his vision of pan-Arabism and began promoting a new cause—a united Africa. Presenting himself as a peace broker, he has undertaken several peacemaking missions in Africa. The numerous armed conflicts there present an opportunity for Qadhafi to promote Libyan strategic and economic interests across the continent.

African leaders accepted Qadhafi's invitation to an extraordinary summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Syrte. Timed to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Libya's revolution in September, the summit was attended by some 44 African heads of state. In addition to traditional revolutionary celebrations including parades and broadcasts of past Qadhafi speeches, African leaders were treated to a massive military parade including troops from 12 African countries. The summit produced a vague declaration in support of African unity.

While enjoying improved international stature, Qadhafi has become increasingly isolated domestically, even within his own Qadhadhifa clan. Ethnic rivalries among senior junta officials have been reported, while corruption, mismanagement, and unemployment have eroded support for the regime. Disaffected Libyans will expect improvements now that the government can no longer use sanctions as an excuse for its failure to tackle domestic problems. International observers say that change must begin with reforms to deregulate and privatize the mostly state-run economy, and to diversify away from dependence on oil revenue, which accounts for some 95 percent of export income.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Libyans cannot change their government democratically. Qadhafi rules by decree, with almost no accountability or transparency. Libya has no formal constitution; a mixture of Islamic belief, nationalism, and socialist theory in Qadhafi's *Green Book* provides principles and structures of governance, but the document lacks legal status. Libya is officially known as a Jamahiriyah, or state of the masses, conceived as a system of direct government through popular organs at all levels of society. In reality, an elaborate structure of revolutionary committees and people's committees serves as a tool of repression. Real power rests with Qadhafi and a small group of close associates that appoints civil and military officials at every level.

The judiciary is not independent. It includes summary courts for petty offenses, courts of first instance for more serious offenses, courts of appeal, and a supreme court. Revolutionary courts were established in 1980 to try political offenses, but were replaced in 1988 by a people's court after reportedly assuming responsibility for up to 90 percent of prosecutions. Political trials are often held in secret, with no due process

considerations. Arbitrary arrest and torture are reportedly commonplace. Amnesty International estimates that there are at least 1,000 political prisoners in Libya. The death penalty applies to a number of political offenses and "economic" crimes. In 1996, foreign currency speculation and drug- or alcohol-related crimes became capital offenses. Libya actively abducts and kills political dissidents in exile.

Limited public debate occurs within government bodies, but free expression and free media do not exist in Libya. The state owns and controls all media and thus controls reporting of domestic and international issues. Foreign programming is censored. However, foreign journalists in Libya during the September revolutionary celebrations reported that they traveled freely throughout the country, and though they were encouraged to follow an official program, they encountered no interference from security officials.

Independent political parties and civic associations are illegal; only associations affiliated with the regime are tolerated. Political activity considered treasonous is punishable by death. Public assembly must support and be approved by the government. Instances of public unrest are rare.

Some 98 percent of Libyans are Sunni Muslim. Islamic groups whose beliefs and practices differ from the state-approved teaching of Islam are banned. According to the U.S. State Department, small communities of Christians worship openly. The largely Berber and Tuareg minorities face discrimination, and Qadhafi reportedly manipulates, bribes, and incites infighting among tribes in order to maintain power.

Women's access to education and employment have improved under the current regime. However, tradition dictates discrimination in family and civil matters. A woman must have her husband's permission to travel abroad. As Qadhafi seeks to placate fundamentalist Islamists by more strictly imposing Sharia (Islamic law), women may find their rights threatened.

Independent trade unions and professional organizations do not exist. The only federation is the government-controlled National Trade Unions Federation. There is no collective bargaining, and workers have no legal right to strike.

Liechtenstein

Polity: Principality and parliamentary democracy **Political Rights:** 1
Civil Liberties: 1

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Status:** Free

Population: 30,000

PPP:na

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Alemannic (88 percent), other, including Italian and Turkish (12 percent)

Capital: Vaduz



Overview: Liechtenstein's Prince Hans Adam II, one of the last European monarchs whose powers are not merely ceremonial, is facing a constitutional crisis after the European Court of Human Rights reprimanded him for abusing his subjects' freedom of speech. In a de-

cision handed down in October, 1999, the court fined the prince for refusing to reappoint a judge he had dismissed for suggesting that the supreme court, and not the prince, should have the last word in constitutional matters.

Prince Hans Adam has warned that he would rather abandon the country than be forced to accept limitations on his sweeping powers. The prince, who has ruled the principality since 1989, has ignored the legislature on several occasions, most notably when he had the country join the European Economic Area (EEA) despite deputies' doubts.

Since 1997, the Patriotic Union (VU) led by Prime Minister Mario Frick has held 13 seats in the 25-seat unicameral Landtag (legislature). The Progressive Citizens' Party (FBPL), which later voted to end its long-standing coalition with VU, holds 10 parliamentary seats, and the Free Voters' List holds two seats.

Liechtenstein's economy is closely intertwined with Switzerland's, and Liechtenstein uses the Swiss national currency, the franc. To reduce the country's economic dependence on Switzerland, Prince Hans Adam led the principality into membership not only in the EEA but also in the United Nations, the European Free Trade Association, the World Trade Organization, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Liechtenstein was established in its present form in 1719 after being purchased by Austria's Liechtenstein family. Native residents of the state are primarily descendants of the Germanic Alemanni tribe, and the local language is a German dialect.

From 1938 until 1997, the principality was governed by an FBPL-VU coalition. The FBPL was the senior partner for most of this period. Liechtenstein's constitution, adopted in 1921, has been amended several times.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Liechtensteiners can change their government democratically. The prince exercises legislative powers jointly with the Landtag. He appoints his prime minister from the Landtag's majority party or coalition, and the deputy chief of the five-member government from the minority. Parties with at least eight percent of the vote receive representation in the parliament, which is directly elected for four years on the basis of proportional representation. The sovereign possesses power to veto legislation and to dissolve the Landtag. Participation in elections and referenda is compulsory.

The government respects freedom of speech. Two daily newspapers are published, each representing the interests of one of the two major political parties, as is one weekly newsmagazine. There are a state and a private television station and one private radio station, but residents freely receive radio and television broadcasts from neighboring countries.

In 1998 and 1999, Liechtenstein received a high number of asylum seekers who were given temporary protection. The number of asylum seekers reaches almost two percent of the total population of Liechtenstein. A strict policy prevents significant numbers of second- and third-generation residents from acquiring citizenship.

Although Roman Catholicism is the state religion, other faiths are practiced freely. Roman Catholic or Protestant religious education is compulsory in all schools, but exemptions are routinely granted.

Liechtensteiners enjoy freedom of association. The principality has one small trade union. Workers have the right to strike, but have not done so in more than 25 years. The prosperous economy includes private and state enterprises. Citizens enjoy a very high standard of living. Unemployment was only 1.5 percent in 1999.

The independent judiciary subject to the prince's appointment power is headed by a supreme court that includes civil and criminal courts, as well as an administrative court of appeals and a state court to address questions of constitutionality.

Although only narrowly endorsed by male voters, the electoral enfranchisement of women at the national level was unanimously approved in the legislature in 1984 after defeats in referenda in 1971 and 1973. By 1986, universal adult suffrage at the local level had passed in all 11 communities. In the 1989 general elections, a woman won a Landtag seat for the first time. Three years later, a constitutional amendment guaranteed legal equality.

Lithuania

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 3,700,000

PPP: \$4,220

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Lithuanian (80 percent), Russian (9 percent), Polish (7 percent), Belorussian (2 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Vilnius

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

The controversial sale of a controlling stake in Lithuania's state-owned oil complex to a U.S. energy company in October led to serious political fallout, including the resignation of Prime Minister Rolandas Paksas in protest over financial terms he called unfavorable to Lithuania. The move pitted Paksas against members of his own Homeland Union/Conservative Party (HU/LC) and President Valdas Adamkus, who supported the widely disliked plan. Paksas' resignation followed that of Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius just five months earlier, stemming from Vagnorius' ongoing feud with the extremely popular Adamkus.

Lithuania merged with Poland in the sixteenth century and was subsequently absorbed by Russia in the eighteenth century. After gaining its independence at the end of World War I, Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 under a secret protocol of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact. The country regained its independence with the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

In 1992 parliamentary elections, the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDDP), the successor to the Communist Party, won 79 of 141 seats. Algirdas Brazauskas, a former head of the Communist Party, became the country's first directly elected president in 1993. With two LDDP-led governments tainted by financial scandal in the wake of a banking crisis, the HU/LC secured the most votes in parliamentary elections in 1996, followed by the Christian Democrats. The two parties formed a center-right coalition government, and Gediminas Vagnorius of the HU/LC was named prime minister. Vytautas Landsbergis, co-chair with Vagnorius of the HU/LC and a leading figure of the Lithuanian independence movement, was chosen parliamentary chairman.

On January 4, 1998, Lithuanian-American and independent candidate Valdas Adamkus was narrowly elected president in a second round of balloting with 50.4 percent over former Prosecutor General Arturas Palauskas. Adamkus nominated incumbent Prime Minister Vagnorius of the HU/LC, a party with which Adamkus agreed on a number of issues, to serve a second term. Parliament approved his nomination on March 10 by a wide margin.

Following months of growing personal and political tensions between Adamkus and Vagnorius, Adamkus called on Vagnorius in mid-April to resign. The high-profile feud was the result of personal enmities as well as disagreements over issues including the handling of privatization projects, allegations of corruption, and the extent of the president's authority relative to the government. Although the ruling coalition subsequently adopted a nonbinding resolution supporting the Vagnorius government, the president's overwhelming public approval rating of 80 to 90 percent, compared to less than 20 percent for the prime minister, provided Adamkus with considerable political leverage. On April 30, Vagnorius announced his resignation, officially stepping down on May 3. By a vote of 105 to 1, Vilnius Mayor and HU/LC member Rolandas Paksas was chosen prime minister on May 18 to form a new HU/LC-led government.

The political impact of plans for a major privatization deal reached its climax on October 18, when Prime Minister Paksas made a surprise announcement that he would not sign a deal to allow the U.S. energy company Williams International to purchase 33 percent of the state-owned Mazeikiai Oil complex for \$150 million, with an option to buy a majority stake in the future. The announcement represented a reversal of Paksas' previous support for the plan, which had been under negotiation between Williams and the Lithuanian government for 18 months. Paksas said his primary objection was a clause requiring Lithuania to spend about \$350 million in long-term loans to refinance Mazeikiai's debts, placing a serious burden on the country's struggling economy. Paksas resigned as prime minister on October 27 in protest over the sale, which was strongly backed by Paksas' own HU/LC and President Adamkus, but enjoyed little public or opposition political support.

On October 29, President Adamkus nominated HU/LC member and Parliamentary First Deputy Chairman Andrius Kubilius as prime minister, the same day on which the Williams deal was formally concluded. On November 2, parliament approved Kubilius by a vote of 82 to 20, making him the country's tenth prime minister since Lithuania's declaration of independence in 1990.

In April, parliament passed amendments recommended by the constitutional court to a lustration law adopted in July 1998. The amendments prohibited former KGB officers from holding government office and certain private sector jobs for ten years. Adamkus had vetoed the original legislation and sent it to the constitutional court for a ruling on its constitutionality. On June 8, parliament passed a law banning organizations and businesses established as fronts for foreign intelligence services. In November, parliament adopted another lustration law, signed by Adamkus in December, which would require all former KGB collaborators to register with a special state commission. The government would reveal the names kept in a secret database only if the collaborators are or become high-ranking government officials.

After lengthy and intense debate, parliament in October approved a plan to shut down the first unit of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant by 2005, contingent upon foreign financial assistance. A decision regarding the fate of the second unit is not ex-

pected to be made before 2004. The plant, regarded as one of the most dangerous nuclear installations in the world, provides about 80 percent of the country's energy needs. The setting of a timetable for Ignalina's partial closing, widely viewed as a precondition for starting European Union (EU) membership negotiations, helped to pave the way for the EU's invitation to Lithuania in December to begin formal accession talks.

Following numerous delays which had provoked criticism from the U.S. government and Jewish groups, the trial of accused Nazi war criminal Aleksandras Lileikis was suspended again in early 1999 because of the defendant's poor health. A Lithuanian court ruled in September that the trial will not restart unless the 92-year-old Lileikis's medical condition improves.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Lithuanians can change their government democratically. The 1992 constitution established a 141-member parliament (Seimas), in which 71 seats are directly elected and 70 seats are chosen by proportional representation, all for four-year terms. The president is directly elected for a five-year term. The 1996 national legislative elections and the 1997-1998 presidential vote were declared free and fair by international observers.

The government generally respects freedom of speech and the press. There is a wide variety of privately owned newspapers, and several independent, as well as state-run, television and radio stations broadcast throughout the country. However, in mid-December, parliament approved new amendments to the law on media, which eliminate the compensation ceiling for libel and slander. Critics of the law argue that it could increase the number of frivolous lawsuits and jeopardize press freedom and investigative reporting. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by law and enjoyed in practice in this largely Roman Catholic country.

Freedom of assembly and association are generally respected in practice. Although the Communist Party of Lithuania continues to be banned, a secessionist faction was formed in 1990 as the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDDP). Workers have the right to form and join trade unions, to strike, and to engage in collective bargaining. However, ongoing problems include inadequate or employer-biased legislation, management discrimination against union members, and the court system's lack of expertise in labor-related issues.

While the judiciary is largely independent from the executive branch, there is a severe lack of qualified judges, who consequently suffer from excessive workloads. There have been credible reports of police brutality, and prisons remain overcrowded and poorly maintained. A shortage of capable and well-trained lawyers has resulted in inadequate protection of the rights of many detainees, many of whom are held in pre-trial detention without clear legal grounds for their incarceration. In June, parliament ratified the Sixth Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights banning capital punishment. This decision followed a ruling by the constitutional court in December 1998 that the death penalty is unconstitutional and the subsequent removal of the death penalty from the country's criminal code.

The rights of the country's ethnic minorities are protected. In 1992, Lithuania extended citizenship to all those born within its borders, and over 90 percent of nonethnic Lithuanians, mostly Russians and Poles, became citizens.

Citizens and permanent residents enjoy freedom of movement within the country and abroad. Women face discrimination in educational institutions and the workplace,

including underrepresentation in upper-level management positions and lower average wages compared to men.

Luxembourg

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 400,000
PPP: \$30,863
Life Expectancy: 77
Ethnic Groups: Luxembourger (70 percent), other European (30 percent)
Capital: Luxembourg

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

In June, Luxembourg's ruling coalition, headed by Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker's Christian Social Party (PCS), won reelection to another five-year term. In recent years, the country has been ruled by coalition governments led by the PCS or the Democratic Party in alliance with each other or with the Socialist Workers' Party.

Luxembourg's multiparty electoral system is based on proportional representation. Executive authority is exercised by the prime minister and the cabinet on behalf of Jean, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. The government is appointed by the sovereign, but is responsible to the legislature. Luxembourg's current constitution, adopted in 1868, has been revised several times.

After centuries of domination and occupation by foreign powers, the small landlocked Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was recognized as an autonomous, neutral state in 1867. After occupation by Germany in both world wars, Luxembourg abandoned its neutrality and became a vocal proponent of European integration.

Luxembourg joined NATO in 1949, the Benelux Economic Union (with Belgium and the Netherlands) in 1948, the European Economic Community (later the European Union) in 1957, and the European Monetary Union in 1999.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Luxembourgers can change their government democratically. Voting is compulsory for citizens, and foreigners may register to vote after five years of residence. The prime minister is the leader of the dominant party in the 60-member, unicameral chamber of deputies (parliament), for which popular elections are held every five years. The grand duke appoints the 21 members of the council of state, which serves as an advisory body to the chamber.

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press. Print media are privately owned, and all media are free of censorship. The government issues licenses to private radio stations. Radio and television broadcasts from neighboring countries are freely available.

Although foreigners constitute more than 30 percent of the population, antiforeigner incidents are infrequent. European Union citizens who reside in Luxembourg

enjoy the right to vote and to run in municipal elections. Minimum residency requirements are 6 years for voters and 12 years for candidates.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion in this predominantly Roman Catholic country. There is no state religion but the state pays the salaries of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish clergy, and several local governments subsidize sectarian religious facilities.

All workers have the right to associate freely and to choose their representatives. About 65 percent of the labor force is unionized. Unions operate free of government interference. The two largest labor federations are linked to, but organized independently of, the Socialist Workers' and Christian Social parties. The right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed. The law mandates a maximum workweek of 40 hours. All workers receive at least five weeks of paid vacation yearly, in addition to paid holidays.

The independent judiciary is headed by the supreme court, whose members are appointed for life by the grand duke. Defendants are presumed innocent. They have the right to public trials and are free to cross-examine witnesses and to present evidence in court.

Women constitute 38 percent of the workforce. The law mandates equal pay for equal work and encourages equal treatment of women. According to government reports, however, women are paid from 9 to 25 percent less than men for comparable work, depending on the profession. The differences are least in the highest paid professions and more substantial at lower salary levels. To date, there have been no work-related discrimination lawsuits in the courts.

↓ Macedonia

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)

Population: 2,000,000

PPP: \$3,210

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Macedonian (66 percent), Albanian (23 percent), Turkish (4 percent), Gypsy (3 percent), Serb (2 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Skopje

Trend Arrow: Macedonia receives a downward trend arrow due to widespread voting irregularities and increased tensions between Macedonian and Albanian political parties.

Overview:

In 1999, Macedonia experienced its most dramatic year since voting for independence in September 1991. The Kosovo conflict sent hundreds of thousands of Albanian refugees into the country, putting tremendous strains on Macedonia's resources and infrastructure and bringing the fragile Macedonian-Albanian coalition government to the breaking point. This was also the year that the "father of his country," Kiro Gligorov, who had



kept Macedonia out of the "wars of the Yugoslav succession," stepped down, leaving Macedonia to be guided by a new generation of political leaders.

With the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, a land-locked country of two million people, is the most fragile of the states to emerge from the breakup of Yugoslavia. Macedonia's most important internal problem is the relationship between the Macedonian Slavic majority and the ethnic Albanian minority, which makes up 23 percent of the country's population and is geographically concentrated in northern and western Macedonia, adjacent to Kosovo and Albania proper. If current demographic trends continue, Albanians will constitute a majority of Macedonia's population by 2025.

Macedonia also confronts difficult external problems as well. Yugoslavia has outstanding border issues with it, and Bulgaria denies the existence of a separate Macedonian language (claiming that Macedonian is merely a dialect of Bulgarian). Greece for several years refused to recognize the state because of a dispute over its right to use the name of Macedonia, leading to a four-year-long trade embargo on the country. Consequently, in international fora the country is officially titled the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Despite these difficulties, under Gligorov's tenure Macedonia avoided the violence that engulfed the other states of the former Yugoslavia and began to normalize its relations with its neighbors. Greek-Macedonian relations have noticeably improved since the mid-1990s, and Greek enterprises have shown a strong interest in developing economic ties with the country, despite political problems.

On Macedonia's domestic scene, in the fall of 1998, a coalition of parties composed of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) led by Ljupco Georgievski, together with a bloc of Albanian parties—the Democratic Alternative (DA) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA)—won the fall 1998 elections to the Macedonian parliament, the Sobranje. After the new government was formed, an amnesty law was passed by the new parliament, and several ethnic Albanian politicians were released from prison in early 1999. In the western Macedonian town of Tetovo, which has a large Albanian population, the position of chief of police was filled by an ethnic Albanian, and the formal opening of an Albanian-language Tetovo University was being discussed.

Despite such progress, the Kosovo war was a significant setback for Macedonia. The influx of some 260,000 Kosovo Albanians placed severe strains on the country's infrastructure and resources, and exacerbated tensions between the Slavic and Albanian members of Macedonia's coalition government. Worries about a possible spillover of the conflict increased on April 17, 1999, when Macedonian authorities discovered a Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) weapons cache on Macedonian territory. The KLA also ran recruitment videos on local Albanian television stations, which increased fears that the KLA would eventually turn its attention to Macedonia as well. DPA leader Arben Xhabferi claimed in May 1999 that the ruling coalition was on the brink of collapse and that the only thing keeping Albanians in the government was strong international pressure and the belief that if Albanians left the government, conditions for refugees would be even worse. Many analysts feared that only the deployment of more than 6,000 NATO troops to Macedonia prevented even more severe eruptions of inter-ethnic tension.

The Kosovo conflict also severely affected Macedonia's economy. Prior to the war, Macedonia was expected to enjoy modest economic growth. In the aftermath of

the Kosovo war, Macedonia's gross domestic product was expected to shrink by ten percent as a result of the war and the loss of trade with Yugoslavia, Macedonia's main trading partner and export market, and a vital source of Macedonia's raw materials. State coffers were emptied as a result of the expense of the Kosovo conflict, with no money left to pay unemployment benefits, pensions, health care provisions, or public service salaries. According to some reports, unemployment may have reached 40 to 50 percent after the Kosovo conflict. All these things increased social unrest and interethnic tensions. Although an International Donor's Conference pledged \$252 million worth of aid to Macedonia on May 6, 1999, several months later Macedonian officials were complaining that the aid still had not arrived.

After the end of the Kosovo conflict, political energies in Macedonia turned to the post-Gligorov succession. The Macedonian presidency is a largely ceremonial post, but Gligorov's personal authority endowed it with significant symbolic authority. The Macedonian elections were held in two rounds and included six candidates. After the first round (on October 31) two main contenders emerged: Boris Trajkovski of the VMRO-DPMNE ruling coalition, and Tito Petkovski of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM). This made the support of the ethnic Albanian population the key to winning the presidential race. The second round runoff took place on November 14, with initial forecasts claiming that the government's candidate, Trajkovski, had won a close vote in which there was a 70 percent voter turnout countrywide. But the opposition SDSM immediately charged that voting irregularities had taken place in Albanian-populated areas. An Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring mission concurred, and on November 27, Macedonia's supreme court accepted the opposition complaints. Consequently, the state electoral commission ordered that the vote be repeated on December 5 in 230 polling stations. Voting irregularities in Albanian villages were again the norm (one prominent elections observer claimed that the voting fraud and intimidation in Albanian villages was the worst he had witnessed in monitoring over 50 elections in postcommunist countries), but nevertheless, Trajkovski was officially declared the winner and inaugurated on December 15.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The judiciary in Macedonia is considered independent for the most part, although the court system is sometimes slow and inefficient. The most sensitive civil liberties issues in Macedonia usually involve complaints by ethnic Albanians. Albanian leaders in Macedonia are pushing for the right to a university education in Albanian, more participation in political institutions, and changes in the constitution to declare Albanians an official constituent group of the country. Some call for a federalization of Macedonia. Albanian leaders also claim discrimination in education and access to public sector jobs.

The media in Macedonia are generally free. The constitution prohibits censorship, and freedom of speech and access to information are guaranteed. State TV is the most influential and is able to reach all parts of the country, on various channels. Private networks are, however, growing rapidly and are seen as more reliable sources of information than State TV. A March 1998 decision by Macedonia's state Broadcasting Council, a body whose members are chosen by the Sobranje, approved almost all applications for radio and television licenses, but many in the media complain about unfair competition because illegal broadcasters have not been taken off the air. Print media

are numerous and available in both Macedonian and Albanian, although the state controls the newspaper distribution system.

Macedonia is home to three main religious faiths: Roman Catholicism, Islam, and Orthodox Christianity. Macedonian citizens generally enjoy full freedom of religion, although in the past various Protestant sects have complained that the government obstructed their ability to register their churches or carry out proselytizing activities. Because of a jurisdictional dispute between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the as yet unrecognized Macedonian Orthodox Church, Serbs in Macedonia have claimed that their right to freedom of worship has been limited.

There are no significant restrictions on freedom of assembly, and numerous groups such as independent trade unions exist. However, disturbances and violence have occasionally occurred between police and ethnic Albanians. During the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, large-scale riots protesting the NATO attacks erupted in Skopje and smaller towns in Macedonia.

Madagascar

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed statist
Population: 14,400,000
PPP: \$930
Life Expectancy: 52
Ethnic Groups: Malayo-Indonesian tribes [Merina (26 percent)], Arab, African, Indian, French
Capital: Antananarivo

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Madagascar in 1999 continued its hesitant process of consolidating democratic institutions. Public policy debates about constitutional reform took place. Local elections favoring independent candidates occurred. A weak party system complicated efforts at governance. Regional elections in the year 2000 gained increasing attention.

Madagascar, the world's fourth-largest island, lies 220 miles off Africa's southeastern coast. After 70 years of French colonial rule and episodes of severe repression, Madagascar gained independence in 1960. A leftist military junta seized power from President Philbert Tsiranana in 1972. A member of the junta, Admiral Didier Ratsiraka, emerged as leader in 1975 and maintained power until his increasingly authoritarian regime bowed to social unrest and nonviolent mass demonstrations in 1991. Under a new 1992 constitution, opposition leader Albert Zafy won the presidency with more than 65 percent of the vote.

President Zafy failed to win reelection after being impeached by the supreme court in 1996. Ratsiraka won a narrow victory in a December 1996 presidential runoff election that was deemed mostly free and fair by international observers. His campaign pledges of commitment to the democratic rule of law have been honored indifferently.

A number of institutions mandated by the new, democratic constitution have still not been established, and political influence appears to have undermined the independence of the judiciary. A decentralization plan was narrowly approved in a 1998 referendum that was boycotted by the country's increasingly fractious opposition. A long history of irregular financial dealings continued as the International Monetary Fund refused to release scheduled aid.

Legislative elections in May 1998 were viewed as more problematic than preceding polls since Madagascar's transition to multiparty politics in 1992. The Christian Churches Council and several political groups, for example, noted that the elections had been marred by fraud and other abuses. Ratsiraka's party, the Association for Madagascar's Renaissance (AREMA) won 63 of 150 parliamentary seats and emerged as the leading force in a coalition government. A new party led by Norbert Ratsirahonana, a former prime minister, fared well in and around the capital of Antananarivo.

Race and ethnicity are important factors in Madagascar's politics. Its mostly very poor population is divided between highland Merina people of Malay origin and coastal peoples mostly of Black African origin. A referendum on a new constitution held on March 15, 1998, resulted in a narrow victory for the changes proposed by President Ratsiraka, which increased the power of the presidency.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The people's rights to select a president and parliament through elections are exercised in Madagascar, albeit imperfectly due especially to logistical and administrative shortcomings. The president is directly elected by universal adult suffrage. The legislature is to be bicameral, but the upper house has not yet been created. Legislative power is vested in the 138-member national assembly, elected for four years by proportional representation. A constitutional referendum gave the president the power to appoint or dismiss the prime minister; formerly the national assembly had this power.

In November 1999, local elections resulted in overall success for independents who did not have close identification with particular party affiliations. Approximately 150 parties are registered amid a welter of shifting political alliances. Opposition parties exist and are active. They tend to suffer from internal divisions (as does AREMA) and a lack of resources.

Political and civic organizations exercise their right to affect the public policy process. In 1999, for example, opposition leaders and the Madagascar Council of Christian Churches undertook a public information campaign to revise the constitution to limit the powers of the president.

The judiciary is, in general, demonstrating increasing autonomy, despite the supreme court's clearly unconstitutional decision to allow the postponement of elections in 1997. Lack of training, resources, and personnel hampers the courts' effectiveness. Case backlogs are prodigious. Most of the 20,000 people held in the country's prison are pretrial detainees who suffer extremely harsh conditions. In many rural areas, customary law courts that follow neither due process nor standardized judicial procedure often issue summary and severe punishments.

Several daily and weekly newspapers publish material sharply critical of the government and other parties and politicians. The state monopoly of radio and television has been abolished. Radio-Television-Antenne 2 Malagasy (RTM) and Radio Madagasikara broadcast in Malagasy and French. In addition to state radio and televi-

sion, at least ten private radio stations are now broadcasting, and rebroadcasts of Radio France International are available throughout the country.

Approximately 45 percent of the workforce is female. Malagasy women hold significantly more governmental and managerial positions than women in continental African countries. At the same time, they still face societal discrimination and enjoy fewer opportunities than men for higher education and official employment.

The right to free association is respected, and hundreds of nongovernmental organizations, including lawyers' and human rights groups, are active. The government does not interfere with religious rights. More than half of the population adheres to traditional Malagasy religions and coexists with Christians and Muslims. In 1997, the Rally for Madagascar's Muslim Democrats was registered as the country's first Islamic political party.

More than 70 percent of the population live in poverty. The agricultural sector dominates the economy. It contributed 41 percent to the gross national product in 1996 and employed 75 percent of the working population. The IMF and World Bank negotiated a policy framework program with Madagascar for 1997 to 1999. The economic reform measures are having a slow effect.

Workers' rights to join unions and to strike are exercised frequently. Some of the country's free labor organizations are affiliated with political groups. More than four-fifths of the labor force is employed in agriculture, fishing, and forestry at subsistence wages.

Malawi

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 3*
Civil Liberties: 3
Economy: Capitalist
Status: Partly Free
Population: 10,000,000
PPP: \$710
Life Expectancy: 36
Ethnic Groups: Chewa, Nyanja, Lomwe, Ngonde, Tumbuku, Yao, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Asian, European
Capital: Lilongwe



Ratings Change: Malawi's political rights rating changed from 2 to 3, and its status from Free to Partly Free, due to violence against suspected ruling party supporters and Muslims following presidential and parliamentary elections in June.

Overview: Violence erupted in opposition strongholds of northern Malawi after presidential and parliamentary election results from the June 1999 elections indicated wins for the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF). Angry supporters of the opposition alliance of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) looted and burned shops and homes of suspected UDF backers. At least two people were killed, hundreds of others sought refuge in police stations, and ten mosques were razed. Mobs targeted

followers of Islam because President Bakili Muluzi is a Muslim. He defeated the MCP-AFORD candidate, Gwanda Chakuamba, for a second five-year term, although opposition leaders claimed fraud and sought redress in Malawi courts.

Malawi is 75 percent Christian and about 20 percent Muslim, but the broader conflict hinges more on political and regional alliances and is not based on religion or ethnicity. Muluzi's southern-based UDF found some new support through patronage. The former ruling MCP, with its strong base in central Malawi, is the main opposition party. AFORD is almost entirely confined to the north.

President (later "President for Life") Hastings Kamuzu Banda ruled Malawi for nearly three decades after the country gained independence from Britain in 1963. Banda exercised dictatorial and often eccentric rule through the MCP and its paramilitary youth wing, the Malawi Young Pioneers. Facing a domestic economic crisis and strong international pressure, he accepted a referendum approving multiparty rule in 1993.

In 1994, Muluzi won the presidency in an election beset by irregularities, but seen as largely free and fair. The army's violent December 1993 dispersal of the Young Pioneers helped clear the way for the polls. Allegations of governmental corruption persist, and crime is on the rise.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: In May 1994, the president and national assembly members won five-year terms in Malawi's first generally free and fair multiparty elections. Suffrage is universal except for serving members of the military. In elections for the national assembly in 1999 the ruling party managed to retain a narrow majority, winning 97 seats compared to 94 for the opposition MCP-AFORD alliance. Local elections are scheduled for September 2000.

The May 1995 constitution provides strong protection for fundamental freedoms, but critics argue that it allows excessive presidential power and does not sufficiently safeguard women's and children's rights. Rights of free expression and free assembly are generally respected, but police continue to use unprovoked violence to disperse strikers. Many human rights and other nongovernmental organizations operate openly and without interference. Religious freedom is respected.

The judiciary has demonstrated broad independence in its decisions, but due process is not always respected by an overburdened court system that lacks resources and training. A legal resource center has been established under the Law Society of Malawi with assistance from the British government. Thousands of impoverished Malawians cannot afford legal services and are eligible to receive help free of charge.

Three presidential contenders sued the electoral commission in July 1999 for allegedly illegally declaring Muluzi the winner on the basis of how many votes he received. The argument is partially based on a conflict between what the constitution and the electoral laws say. The candidates accused the ruling party of conniving with the electoral commission to supply fewer voter materials in opposition strongholds while oversupplying the southern region, where Muluzi has much of his support. In November Malawi's supreme court ruled in favor of the opposition alliance's demand to inspect voting materials in 15 of the country's 27 districts. The Lilongwe high court had initially dismissed the candidates' application to annul the election results.

There are no reported political prisoners in Malawi, but arrests or suits on apparently political grounds have increased. Police brutality is still said to be common. Appalling prison conditions lead to many deaths, including among pretrial detainees.

Overcrowding is a problem, and a number of prisoners have suffocated to death. The Prison Reform Committee has recommended that some petty thieves be given community work rather than be sent to prison.

Malawi's broadcast media remain largely under state control and government influence. Repression of the independent print media eased somewhat in 1999. The state-owned Malawi Broadcasting Corporation controls television and most radio service, which reaches a larger audience than print media do. The few licensed private radio stations are owned by allies of the government or restricted to religious broadcasting, although a few development-oriented community radio stations have been authorized. The independent FM 101 Power radio station has extended its coverage from outside Blantyre to the central region of the country, which includes the capital Lilongwe. It began broadcasting in September 1998. The government has used libel and other laws to harass journalists. At least four senior radio employees at Malawi Broadcasting were fired in June, reportedly for political reasons.

Despite equal protection of the law under the 1995 constitution, customary practices maintain de facto discrimination against women in education, employment, and business. Women, however, were recruited into the military for the first time in 1999. Traditional rural structures deny women inheritance and property rights, and violence against women is reportedly routine. Women perform 70 percent of all work on small farms.

The right to form unions is constitutionally guaranteed. The right to strike is legally protected, with notice and mediation requirements for workers in essential services. Unions are active but face harassment and occasional violence during strikes, and there have been reports of union employees being fired for their political views. Collective bargaining is widely practiced, but not specifically protected by law.

Malawi's economy is dependent on tobacco and grew by 4.4 percent in 1999, an improvement from the previous average 3.3 percent annual growth. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have provided funding, and privatization programs are underway.

Malaysia

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 5
Economy: Capitalist **Civil Liberties:** 5
Population: 22,700,000 **Status:** Partly Free
PPP: \$8,140
Life Expectancy: 72
Ethnic Groups: Malay and other indigenous (58 percent),
Chinese (26 percent), Indian (7 percent), other (9 percent)
Capital: Kuala Lumpur



Overview: Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's ruling National Front coalition retained its two-thirds majority in parliament in Malaysia's November 29, 1999 elections. However, many ethnic Malay voters shifted their support to the main Islamic opposition party, Parti

Islam SeMalaysia (Pas), which nearly quadrupled its parliamentary seats and won two state assembly elections.

Malaysia was established in 1963 through a merger of independent, ex-British Malaya with the British colonies of Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore (Singapore withdrew in 1965). The constitution provides for a house of representatives (193 seats in the 1999 elections), which is directly elected for a five-year term, and a 58-member senate. Executive power is vested in a prime minister and cabinet. The king serves as a largely ceremonial head of state, but can delay legislation for 30 days.

The 14-party National Front coalition has captured at least a two-thirds majority in the lower house in ten straight general elections since 1957. The Front is composed of several race-based parties, led by the conservative United Malays National Organization (UMNO), an ethnic Malay-based party. The government has gained considerable legitimacy by presiding over rapid increases in per capita income, but continues to use the judiciary and other instruments of state power to limit dissent.

In 1969, anti-Chinese rioting occurred in the context of mounting Malay frustration over the economic success of the ethnic Chinese minority. In 1971, the government responded with still-existing minimum quotas for Malays in education, the civil service, and business affairs.

The current prime minister and UMNO leader, Mahathir Mohamad, took office in 1981. In 1988, a breakaway UMNO faction formed Semangat '46 (Spirit of '46, the year UMNO was founded in Malaya). In 1989, Semangat '46 joined the country's first Malay-led opposition coalition, but it failed to unseat the Front in the 1990 national elections.

In the 1995 parliamentary elections, the National Front took 162 seats, led by UMNO with 88; the remainder went to four opposition parties, including Semangat '46. In 1996, Semangat '46 members folded the party into UMNO.

By 1997, a decade of excessive corporate borrowing and high government spending on prestige infrastructure projects had contributed to a large domestic debt and a high current-account deficit. With the economy headed into recession, in spring 1998, long-simmering leadership tensions between Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim, the deputy prime minister and Mahathir's presumed successor, flared openly over financial policy. Anwar favored higher interest rates and lower spending, while Mahathir supported expansionary policies. On September 2, Mahathir sacked Anwar on charges of sexual misconduct, and on September 20 police arrested Anwar under the Internal Security Act. In the ensuing weeks, police forcibly dispersed antigovernment demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur and several towns.

On April 14, 1999, a court found Anwar guilty on four counts of corruption following a seven-month trial that fell short of international standards, and sentenced him to six years in prison. Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Ismail, responded by founding the National Justice Party (keADILan), which subsequently helped form a four-party, opposition coalition called the Alternative Front. Other Alternative Front members included Pas, the main Malay-based opposition party; the ethnic Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP); and the Tamil-based Malaysian People's Party.

Anwar's arrest and trial, which included revelations of torture and allegations of police intimidation of witnesses, also sharpened a generational divide within the ethnic Malay majority. Thousands of students and other youths joined unprecedented pro-reform demonstrations that called for Mahathir's resignation.

Final results from the November 29 election gave the National Front 148 seats,

led by UMNO with 72; the Alternative Front, 42 (Pas, 27; DAP, 10; keADILan, 5); and Bersatu Sabah, an opposition party based in Sabah state, 3. The National Front's share of the popular vote fell to 56 percent from 65 percent in 1995. On December 8, the Alternative Front named Pas president Fadzil Noor to replace the DAP's Lim Kit Siang, who lost his seat, as parliamentary opposition leader. On December 10, Mahathir announced that he was beginning what would be his last term, and appointed a cabinet that included Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, his presumed successor.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Malaysians have a limited ability to change their government through elections. The government uses the state-run media to partisan advantage and relies on numerous security laws to restrict freedoms of expression and association. Nevertheless, in the 1999 elections, the opposition Pas retained control of the state of Kelantan and captured oil-rich Terengganu for the first time.

The timing of the 1999 general elections, and the lengthy voter registration process, meant that some 600,000 voters who had signed up during the last registration drive in April and May 1999 were not yet eligible to vote. The opposition alleged that Mahathir had timed the vote to prevent these new voters from participating. The Bangkok-based Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) monitored the 1999 elections and said it found evidence of irregularities in the voter registration process and of ineligible voters, particularly foreigners, casting ballots. ANFREL also said that the short, eight-day campaign period and the government's monopoly of the major media raised questions about the fairness of the elections. A local monitoring group, Permantau, also reported irregularities. Following UMNO's victory in the March 1999 Sabah state elections, the opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah and human rights groups accused the ruling National Front of bribing and intimidating voters, and of mobilizing illegal immigrants to vote, charges the Front denied.

The government influences the judiciary in sensitive political and commercial cases. Mahathir, as home affairs minister, controls key judicial appointments. In September and October 1999, the Canadian journalist Murray Hiebert served a four-week jail term after becoming the first journalist imprisoned for contempt of court in a Commonwealth country in 50 years. Hiebert had written a 1997 article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that noted that a civil suit brought by the wife of an appeals court judge appeared to have moved unusually quickly through the judicial system. Amnesty International (AI) expressed concern over several aspects of Anwar Ibrahim's trial, including threatened or actual contempt of court proceedings against Anwar's defense team. In April, a Royal Commission of Inquiry confirmed that the former head of the Royal Malaysia Police had seriously assaulted Anwar in prison in October 1998. AI noted that it had also received credible reports of the use of torture and other abuse to force confessions in other cases.

Sharia (Islamic law) courts have authority over family and property matters in the Muslim community. Nine states in Malaysia have traditional sultans, and the sultans are at the apex of the Islamic religious establishment in each of these states. The king, who is elected by and from among the nine sultans, supervises Islamic affairs in the four remaining states. Mahathir has angered many conservative Malays by advocating a progressive practice of Islam, criticizing the *ulama* (religious scholars) who head the Sharia courts for discrimination against women, and supporting the unification of the

state Islamic laws under a federal system. Authorities in Kelantan have imposed some religion-based dress, dietary, and cultural restrictions on Muslims. Successive governments have used security laws to detain alleged Communists, religious extremists, Vietnamese boat people, and, occasionally, opposition figures. The exact number of people presently detained is not known. The 1960 Internal Security Act and the 1969 Emergency Ordinance both permit detention of suspects for up to two years. The 1970 Sedition Act amendments effectively prohibit discussion of the privileges granted to Malays and other sensitive issues.

In August 1999, authorities released Lim Guan Eng, the deputy leader of the opposition Democratic Action Party, after he had served two-thirds of an 18-month sentence under the Sedition Act and the 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA), for having publicly criticized the government's handling of statutory rape allegations against a former state chief minister in 1994. As a result of his conviction, Lim is barred from parliament and from practicing his accounting profession. In September, police arrested more than 20 opposition supporters following a large antigovernment protest in Kuala Lumpur. During the year, the social activist Irene Fernandez continued to stand trial after being accused in 1996 of "malicious publication of false news" after her organization, Tenaganita, issued a report in 1995 detailing the alleged abuse and torture of migrant workers at detention camps.

The PPPA, as amended in 1987, bars the publication of "malicious" news, permits the government to ban or restrict allegedly "subversive" publications, requires newspapers to renew their publication licenses annually, and prohibits publications from challenging such actions in court. The government used the law to close three newspapers in 1987, and journalists reportedly practice self-censorship. Most major newspapers are owned by individuals and companies close to the ruling National Front, and give the opposition minimal coverage. State-run Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) generally provides only token coverage of the opposition. In July 1999, the information minister placed an unprecedented ban on opposition access to RTM during the upcoming election campaign.

The 1967 Police Act requires permits for all public assemblies. Following the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998, and continuing into 1999, police forcibly broke up numerous peaceful opposition rallies, mainly in Kuala Lumpur but also in rural towns. Since 1969, authorities have banned political rallies and have only permitted indoor "discussion sessions." The 1966 Societies Act requires any association (including political parties) of more than six members to register with the government, and authorities have deregistered some opposition organizations. Nongovernmental organizations operate openly but face some harassment. In February 1999, the University of Malaya dismissed Chandra Muzaffar, a prominent academic and supporter of Anwar Ibrahim, ostensibly on financial grounds.

Official policy discriminates against Chinese, Tamils, and other minorities in education, employment, and business affairs. Some 60 percent of Malaysians are Muslim, and Islam is the official religion, although non-Muslims worship freely in this secular country.

There are considerable restrictions on worker's rights to organize and hold strikes. The law permits each union and labor federation to represent only one trade. In the export-oriented electronics industry, the government permits only "in-house" unions rather than a nationwide union. The government must certify all unions and can deregister them.

Maldives

Polity: Nonparty, presidential-legislative (elite-clan dominated)
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 300,000
PPP: \$3,690
Life Expectancy: 69
Ethnic Groups: Sinhalese, Dravidian, Arab, African
Capital: Male

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The Maldives, a 500-mile-long string of 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean, achieved independence in 1965 after 78 years as a British protectorate. A 1968 referendum ended the ad-Din sultanate's 815-year rule and established a republic.

The 1968 constitution vested broad executive powers in a president, who must be a male Sunni Muslim. The *Majlis* (parliament) has 40 seats directly elected for a five-year term, along with eight members appointed by the president. Every five years the *Majlis* chooses a sole presidential candidate who is voted on by citizens in a yes-or-no referendum. A 1998 constitutional amendment permitted candidates to nominate themselves for the presidency, with the *Majlis* still choosing the final candidate.

In 1988, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom called in Indian commandos to crush a coup attempt by a disgruntled businessman reportedly backed by Sri Lankan mercenaries. In the aftermath, the autocratic Gayoom strengthened the National Security Service and named several relatives to top government posts.

Gayoom won the August 1993 parliamentary nomination for the presidential referendum, although some members of parliament expressed their preference for Ilyas Ibrahim, a government minister. Ilyas fled the country after the government investigated him for corruption. In the October 1993 presidential referendum, Gayoom easily secured a fourth term. Prior to the 1994 *Majlis* elections, authorities heavily restricted campaigning and detained five candidates. In 1996, Gayoom allowed Ilyas to return to the country under house arrest, and in 1997 the president freed his adversary.

In September 1998, the *Majlis* nominated Gayoom for reelection from among five candidates who had submitted nominations. On October 16, 1998, Gayoom won a fifth term with the reported approval of 90.9 percent of participating voters in the presidential referendum. Only non-party candidates competed in the November 19, 1999 parliamentary elections.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Maldivians cannot change their government. President Gayoom heads a small hereditary elite that holds decisive power. The government discourages the formation of political parties, and none exists. Authorities restrict political gatherings during campaigns to small, private meetings. In September 1998, Amnesty International (AI) reported that preparations for the forthcoming presidential elections were "taking place in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation." AI noted that authorities have kept Ismail Saadiq,

a political dissident, in detention or under house arrest since July 1996. Gayoom heavily influences the Majlis, although in recent years it has rejected some government legislation and has become a forum for critical debate.

According to AI, in recent years authorities have held dozens of dissidents under house arrest or in detention centers for prolonged periods without trial. According to the U.S. Department of State, in 1998 the government amended the 1990 Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) to place some limits on indefinite detention, although judges can authorize continued detention on a monthly basis even if legal proceedings have not been initiated.

Gayoom influences the judiciary, which is not independent. The president appoints and can remove judges, although this latter power is rarely used, and can review high court decisions. Civil law is subordinate to *Sharia* (Islamic law), although civil law is generally used in criminal and civil cases. Under *Sharia*, the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man in finance and inheritance matters. Trials fall short of international standards.

Freedom of expression is restricted. The broadly drawn penal code prohibits speech or actions that could "arouse people against the government." A 1968 law prohibits speech considered inimical to Islam, a threat to national security, or libelous. In 1994, a court sentenced a Maldivian under this law to six months in prison for making allegedly false statements about the government.

Authorities used the PTA to imprison several journalists in 1990. The last was released in 1993. The journalist Mohamed Nasheed spent nearly nine months in prison and under house arrest in 1996 and 1997 on defamation charges over a 1994 article criticizing election procedures.

The government can shut newspapers and sanction journalists for articles allegedly containing unfounded criticism. Two outspoken publications that had their licenses revoked in 1990 remain closed. Regulations make editors responsible for the content of published material. Journalists reportedly practice self-censorship, although the 60-odd private periodicals carry some criticism of the government. The state-run Voice of the Maldives radio service and a small state-run television service are the only broadcast media; both carry criticism of government performance, but not true opposition views. Foreign broadcasts are available.

There are no nongovernmental human rights groups. Traditional norms limit educational opportunities for girls and career choices for women. Under *Sharia*, men have an easier time gaining divorce than do women, and inheritance laws favor men.

Islam is the state religion, and all citizens must be Muslim. Practice of other religions is prohibited. According to the U.S. Department of State, in summer 1998, authorities expelled 24 foreigners for alleged Christian proselytization, and detained two women for three months for allegedly converting to Christianity. There are no legal rights to form trade unions, stage strikes, or bargain collectively, and in practice there is no organized labor activity. Most workers are employed outside the formal sector. The country's high-end tourism industry is the main foreign exchange earner.

Mali

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 3

Economy: Mixed statist
Civil Liberties: 3

Population: 11,000,000
Status: Free

PPP: \$740

Life Expectancy: 46

Ethnic Groups: Mande [Bambara, Malinke, Sarakole] (50 percent), Peul (17 percent), Voltaic (12 percent), Tuareg and Moor (10 percent), Songhai (6 percent), other (5 percent)

Capital: Bamako



Overview:

Mali moved to further consolidate its democratic institutions and decentralize power by holding local government elections in May and June 1999. The central government in the capital, Bamako, will no longer administer land use, schools, health centers, transport systems, and other services. Localities, in theory, will be able to borrow money and seek international aid to help fund locally designed development projects. The local elections indicate that after eight years in power, President Alpha Oumar Konaré and his Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) may feel sufficiently secure to allow further openings in the country's civil society.

Financial constraints prevented voting in the 682 new towns created after Mali's decentralization from being held at the same time. The ruling ADEMA party won 61.6 percent of the localities while moderate opposition groups won most of the remainder. Radical opposition groups boycotted the polls, as they did in earlier presidential and parliamentary elections. One group, however, broke ranks and won ten localities. Poorly run legislative elections in 1997 caused a split between the ruling party and a bloc of opposition groups. The umbrella Collective of Opposition Political Parties still refuses to accept the results of the 1997 elections, which, in its view, were rigged and poorly administered. It rejects the government's legitimacy and largely boycotted 1998 municipal polls. Many foreign donors, however, agree with Konaré that opposition failures are more the result of their own shortcomings than of presidential manipulation.

After achieving independence from France in 1960, Mali was ruled by military or one-party dictators for more than 30 years. After soldiers killed more than 100 demonstrators demanding a multiparty system in 1991, President Moussa Traore was overthrown by his own military. After the 1991 coup, a national conference organized open elections that most observers judged as free and fair. Konaré won the presidency in April 1992.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Mali's people first chose their government freely and fairly in presidential and legislative elections in 1992. In 1997, little more than a quarter of registered voters participated as Konaré was overwhelmingly reelected against a weak candidate who alone broke an opposition boycott of the presidential contest. The first round of legislative elections in April 1998 was voided by the constitutional court, although international observers saw incompetence rather than fraud as the principal problem. Opposition supporters claimed

that the Independent National Election Commission was independent in name only, while many analysts held that Konaré and ADEMA, running on a record of tolerance, peacemaking, and economic growth, would have easily won against a fractious opposition even in fully competitive polls. ADEMA took 127 of 147 national assembly seats, and five opposition parties shared the remaining 18 seats. Konaré's 22-member cabinet includes opposition members and four civil society representatives.

Since the end of military rule, Mali's domestic political debate has been open and extensive. Its highlight is a nationally broadcast annual "open forum" with top leaders each December. Nearly 50 political parties are officially registered, and many offer scathing criticism of government policies.

The judiciary is not independent of the executive, but has shown considerable autonomy in rendering antiadministration decisions, which Konaré has in turn respected. Former president, Moussa Traoré and his wife, Mariam, were sentenced to death in January for embezzlement. Traoré had received the death sentence in 1993 as well, for ordering troops to fire on demonstrating students, which resulted in hundreds of deaths. Both sentences have been commuted to life imprisonment.

Mali's generally good human rights record was again marred by instances of police brutality and reports of systematic torture by security forces against labor activists and opposition supporters. Thousands of students protested in March 1999 to press for the release of four students sentenced to five years' hard labor for their part in violent demonstrations in 1998. Riot police used tear gas to disperse the protesters.

As in previous years, a number of local and ethnic disputes broke out in Mali in 1999, leaving dozens dead. A 1995 agreement ended the brutal multisided conflict among Tuareg guerrillas, Black ethnic militias, and government troops. Former guerrilla fighters have been integrated into the national army, but fuller accommodation of the Arab Tuareg people in any political system dominated by the country's Black African majority will require genuine commitment to local autonomy and cultural rights.

Mali's media are among Africa's most open. State-run television, radio, and print media allow a diversity of views. Approximately 40 independent newspapers operate freely, and about 60 independent radio and television stations, including community stations broadcasting in regional languages, operate throughout the country. Legislation that provides harsh penalties for slander or "public injury" to public officials may threaten press freedom, but has been rarely invoked.

Mali is a predominantly Muslim, but secular state, and minority and religious rights are protected by law. Most formal legal advances in protection of women's rights have not been implemented, especially in rural areas. Female genital mutilation remains legal, although the government has conducted educational campaigns against the practice. Women hold 18 seats in the 147-member national assembly.

Labor unions played a leading role in the pro-democracy movement and remain politically active. The National Union of Workers in Mali, a major labor organization in the country, went on strike for two days in July 1999 to demand a revision of salaries and lower costs for electricity and primary commodities.

Despite steady economic growth, Mali remains desperately poor, with about 65 percent of its land area desert or semidesert. Hundreds of thousands of Malians are economic migrants across Africa and Europe. In 1999, privatization of major state enterprises continued, and increasing cotton and gold production raised export earnings. About 80 percent of the labor force is engaged in farming and fishing.

Malta

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist-statist

Population: 400,000

PPP: \$13,180

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: Maltese (mixed Arab, Sicilian, Norman, Spanish, Italian, and English)

Capital: Valletta

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Since becoming a republic in 1974, Malta has carefully maintained its neutrality, balancing its links with Europe to the north with ties to Arab nations to the south. The leading political parties, however, which have alternated in power with each other, have taken conflicting positions as to the direction in which Malta should lean: The currently ruling Nationalist party (PN) favors closer ties with Europe while the Malta Labor Party (MLP) formerly favored closer ties with Libya and Algeria, but now favors strict neutrality. The PN won its most recent electoral victory in 1998 with the election of Eddie Adami as prime minister. In 1999, the PN-dominated parliament installed Guido de Marco as president after he had served 22 years as deputy chairman of the party.

The strategically located archipelago, of which Malta is the largest island, was occupied by a long succession of foreign powers. From independence in 1964 until 1971, Malta was governed by the PN, which pursued its policy of firm alignment with the West. In 1971, however, the MLP came to power and implemented its policy on non-alignment and special friendship with leftist governments in Libya and Algeria. The PN returned to power in 1987 and filed an application for membership in the European Union (EU) in 1991. But the MLP regained power in 1996 and suspended the application. The PN returned to power in 1998, when Eddie Adami led the party to another electoral victory, this time winning the party's largest majority ever. Following that victory, Adami and his government officially renewed Malta's application for membership in the EU. Membership negotiations are expected to start in 2000 and to lead to Malta's joining the union at the EU's earliest enlargement, expected to take place in 2003.

In 1999, the prospect of membership in the EU has seemed to attract foreign investment. In June, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation purchased Mid-Med, the island's largest commercial bank. The economy, however, remained sluggish throughout the year, with unemployment fluctuating around 5 percent.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Citizens of Malta can change their government democratically. Members of the house of representatives, the country's unicameral legislature, are elected on the basis of proportional representation every five years. Parliament elects the country's president to a five-year term. Although the post is largely ceremonial, the president is charged with formally

appointing a prime minister and the cabinet of ministers. In June 1999, Guido de Marco was elected president after serving for 22 years as deputy chairman of the Nationalist Party.

Since 1992, the government has sponsored programs to diversify the media. In addition to several Maltese-language newspapers, a few English-language weeklies are published. Malta's two main political parties own television and radio stations, as well as newspapers, which promote their political views. Italian television and radio are also popular. Malta has one of the lowest rates of Internet usage in Europe, with only an estimated four percent of the population having access to the Internet.

Roman Catholicism is the state religion, and an estimated 67 percent of the population attends mass at least once a week. The government grants subsidies only to Roman Catholic schools. Students in government schools may opt to decline instruction in Roman Catholicism. Freedom of worship by religious minorities is respected.

Workers have the right to associate freely and to strike. In August, the General Workers' Union organized a strike that paralyzed the Malta International Airport at the height of the tourist season. Forty-eight union employees were arrested and accused of breaching the peace, assaulting the police, and entering restricted zones of the airport.

The judiciary is independent of the executive and legislative branches. The chief justice and nine judges are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. The constitution requires a fair public trial, and defendants have the right to counsel of their choice. In 1999, Malta abolished the death penalty for treason during wartime by members of the armed forces.

A constitutional amendment banning gender discrimination took effect in 1993. While women constitute a growing portion of the workforce, they are underrepresented in management positions and political leadership. There are no women judges, and women make up only about nine percent of the members of parliament.

Marshall Islands

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 100,000

PPP:na

Life Expectancy: 62

EthnicGroups: Micronesian

Capital: Majuro

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

On December 2, Marshall Islands voters ousted the government in a public poll and gave the opposition United Democrats Party a majority in the parliament. The party is expected to name a presidential candidate before parliament reconvenes on January 5, 2000.

Negotiations for a new economic assistance package under the Compact of Free Association with the United States began in Hawaii on October 22, 1999. The current

package will expire in 2001, but the defense and political components will remain unchanged. Compact money supports as much as 55 percent of the national budget. Talks were delayed because the U.S. demanded first an accounting of \$3 billion in funding. Financial losses pushed Air Marshall to terminate international service, which affects international links to Tuvalu and Kiribati. In late October, public dispute between the supreme court chief justice and the designated head of the country's judicial service commission gave cause for concern about the future of judicial appointments in the country. In 1999, the Marshall Islands exchanged formal diplomatic recognition with Taiwan and opened an embassy in Taipei.

The Marshall Islands, consisting of the Ralik and Ratak chains of coral atolls in the central Pacific Ocean, were purchased by Germany from Spain in 1899. Japan seized the islands in 1914, governing them under a League of Nations mandate until the United States Navy occupied them in 1945. In 1947, they became part of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under United Nations trusteeship. The Marshall Islands district drafted a constitution. On May 1, 1979, it came into effect, and the parliament chose Amata Kabua as the country's first president. He was subsequently reelected to four successive four-year terms, the last beginning in January 1996.

In 1983, the Marshall Islands signed a Compact of Free Association with the U.S. and the agreement came into force in 1986. Under the Compact, the country is fully sovereign but allows the U.S. responsibility for defense. The Compact includes an economic package, which rapidly expanded the service sector. However, many government institutions failed, spending surpassed receipts, and there was little development in the nonservice economic sectors. All this left the country saddled with foreign debt.

The end of the Cold War reduced the country's strategic importance to the United States so that a new economic package under the Compact is likely to be smaller than the current one. Hence, the government is keen to improve the country's private sector. In 1995, the government initiated an austerity program designed by the Asian Development Bank that included budget cuts and civil service layoffs.

Amata Kabua's death in December 1996 left the country bereft of leadership. The president owed his political longevity to personal loyalties within parliament and a limited pool of viable alternative candidates. On January 14, 1997, parliament elected Imata Kabua, a long-time senator and a cousin of the late president, to finish the president's term, although the constitution mandates that the speaker of the senate should serve as acting president. In October 1998, Kabua won a narrow victory in a no-confidence motion, the first in the country's history. The opposition charged that Kabua misused government funds and that his administration lacked accountability and transparency.

Amata Kabua's government had proposed to rent remote, uninhabited islands to foreign countries as nuclear waste dumps. The proposal was strongly criticized. A 1994 study indicated that the extent of the radioactive fallout from the U.S. atomic testing program over the islands in the 1940s and 1950s was greater than previously disclosed. The proposal is on hold pending an environmental impact study.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Citizens of the Marshall Islands can change their government democratically. The 1979 constitution provides for a bicameral parliament: a 33-seat house of representatives (*Nitijela*) is directly elected for a four-year term, and the lower house chooses a president, who holds executive powers as head of state and head of the government, from among its

members. The Council of Chiefs, or upper *Iroji*, has twelve traditional leaders who offer advice on customary laws. Two ad hoc parties participated in the 1991 legislative elections, but they soon dissolved afterwards. Although no legal restrictions currently exist against the formation of political parties, no formal parties exist.

The government generally respects freedom of speech and of the press. However, journalists occasionally practice self-censorship on sensitive political issues. A privately owned weekly newspaper publishes in both English and the Marshallese language. The government's *Marshall Islands Gazette*, a monthly, contains official news but avoids political coverage. There are two radio stations; one is state-owned, and both offer pluralistic views. A cable television company shows U.S. programs and occasionally covers local events. There are no restrictions on religious observance in this predominantly Christian country.

Freedom of assembly is respected in practice. The government broadly interprets constitutional guarantees of freedom of association, but no trade union has been formed. There is no formal right to strike or engage in collective bargaining, but no constraint exists in practice.

The judiciary is generally independent, and the rule of law is well established. However, the government has attempted to influence certain judicial matters in recent years. Parliament amended the Judiciary Act and passed a new legislative act to strengthen the rule of the court. The government respects the right to a fair trial. Both the national and local police honor legal civil rights protections in performing their duties.

Freedom of internal movement is unrestricted, except on Kwajalein Atoll, the site of a major U.S. military installation. Inheritance of property and traditional rank is matrilineal, and women hold a social status equal to men in most matters. However, most women working in the private sector hold low-wage jobs and women are underrepresented in politics and government. Spousal abuse is increasingly common, but traditional culture dissuades many victims of domestic violence from reporting the crime or prosecuting spouses in the court system.

Mauritania

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 2,600,000
PPP: \$1,730
Life Expectancy: 54
Ethnic Groups: Mixed Maur/black (40 percent), Maur (30 percent), black (30 percent)
Capital: Nouakchott

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The Islamic state of Mauritania appeared both to court the international community and to withdraw from its neighbors by establishing diplomatic relations with Israel and backing

out of the 16-member Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS). Analysts say the move to establish ties with Israel could prompt Western donor countries to look on Mauritania, an Islamic state that supported Iraq during the Gulf War, more favorably. No official reason was given for Mauritania's withdrawal from ECOWAS, but analysts said the country was unhappy with recent moves by members to turn the regional grouping into more of a monetary and customs union. ECOWAS wants to launch a single currency by 2004, and Mauritania could see this as undermining its economic sovereignty. Mauritania is considered one of the heavily indebted members of ECOWAS, which has largely been a political grouping aimed at defusing regional political and armed crises.

Mauritania's human rights record remains mixed. In January 1999, Ahmed Ould Daddah, a major opposition leader and 1992 presidential candidate, was detained after his Union of Democratic Forces held a rally that was broken up by security forces in the capital, Nouakchott. His arrest came two weeks after he was released from having been detained in December. His group was urging a boycott of municipal elections. In March, a court acquitted Ould Daddah of threatening public order. He had been accused of spreading reports that the government had allowed Israeli nuclear waste to be dumped in Mauritania, which authorities denied.

After nearly six decades of French colonial rule, Mauritania's borders as an independent state were formalized in 1960. Its people include the dominant "white Maurs" of Arab extraction and Arabic-speaking Muslim black Africans known as "black Maurs." Other, non-Muslim, black Africans inhabiting the country's southern frontiers along the Senegal River valley constitute approximately one-third of the population. For centuries, black Africans were subjugated and taken as slaves by both white and black Maurs. Slavery has been repeatedly outlawed, but remnants of servitude and credible allegations of chattel slavery persist.

A 1978 military coup ended a civilian one-party state. A 1984 internal purge installed Colonel Maaouya Ould Sid Ahmed Tay a as junta chairman. In 1992, Maaouya won the country's first, and deeply flawed, multiparty election. Maaouya's Social Democratic Republican Party (PRDS) ruled the country as a de facto one-party state after the main opposition parties boycotted national assembly elections in 1992. The incumbents maintained their grip on power through victories in the 1996 legislative and 1997 presidential elections. Mauritania's authoritarian regime has gradually become liberalized since 1992, but most power remains in the hands of Maaouya and a very small elite around him. Basic political divisions are sharply defined along racial and ethnic lines.

Relations with France were strained in 1999 after a Mauritanian officer in France was accused of torture. Mauritania expelled French military advisers and recalled its officers being trained in France, and reintroduced visas for French citizens. The officer was alleged to have tortured two people in a Mauritanian prison in the early 1990s.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mauritanians have never been permitted to choose their representatives or change their government in open, competitive elections. Electoral provisions in the country's 1991 French-style constitution have not been respected in practice. The absence of an independent election commission, state control of broadcasts, harassment of independent print media, and the incumbent's use of state resources to promote his candidacy devalued Ould

Taya's 1997 presidential victory. In deeply flawed 1996 legislative elections, the military-backed ruling PRDS won all but one of the 79 national assembly seats against a divided opposition. The lone opposition seat was awarded in what appears to have been a cosmetic concession by the ruling party. The umbrella Front of Opposition Parties dismissed the polls as fraudulent and boycotted the second round of the 1996 legislative polls and the 1997 presidential vote. The government in January 1999 ordered a rerun of local council elections held in the capital because of alleged fraud. The main opposition parties boycotted the election, and there was no explanation of what the alleged fraud involved.

Mauritania's judicial system is heavily influenced by the government. Many decisions are shaped by Sharia (Islamic law), especially in family and civil matters. More than 20 political parties and numerous nongovernmental organizations operate, but government registration requirements may now be used to block human rights and antislavery groups. A handful of black African activist groups and Islamist parties are banned. The banned El Hor (Free Man) Movement promotes black rights and is attempting to transform itself into a political party. As many as 100,000 blacks still live in conditions of servitude. In 1996, the U.S. Congress voted to suspend all nonhumanitarian aid to Mauritania until antislavery laws are properly enforced. Black resistance movements continue to call for armed struggle against discrimination and enforced Arabization.

Prepublication censorship, the arrest of journalists, and seizures and bans of newspapers devalue constitutional guarantees of free expression. Pressure on the independent print media, which are often critical of the government, continued in 1999. The state monopolizes nearly all broadcast media. State media forbid dissemination of allegations of continued slavery and criticism of Islam. Authorities, in August 1999, arrested Sidi Mohammed Ould Younes, editor in chief of the weekly *Rajoul al-Chari*, for publishing an article critical of the justice system. Authorities also suspended, for the third time, the independent weekly *Le Calame* from publishing for a period of three months.

Mauritania is an Islamic state in which, by statute, all citizens are Sunni Muslims who may not possess other religious texts or enter non-Muslim households. The right to worship, however, is generally tolerated. Non-Mauritanian Shiite Muslims and Christians are permitted to worship privately, and some churches operate openly.

Under Sharia, a woman's testimony is given only half of the weight of a man's. Legal protections regarding property and equality of pay are usually respected only in urban areas among the educated elite. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced.

Approximately one-fourth of Mauritania's workers serve in the small formal sector. The government-allied Union of Mauritanian Workers is the dominant labor organization. The government has forcibly ended strikes and detained or banned union activists from the capital. Mauritania is one of the world's poorest countries. Its vast and mostly arid territory has few resources.

Mauritius

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 1,200,000

PPP: \$13,294

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Indo-Mauritian (68 percent),

Creole (27 percent), Sino-Mauritian (3 percent), Franco-Mauritian (2 percent)

Capital: Port Louis

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Mauritius was wracked by its worst violence in three decades when the death of a popular reggae singer in police custody sparked rioting and looting in February 1999 that left four people dead. The death of Joseph Topize, known as Kaya, inflamed resentment among the impoverished minority Creole community, who accused the police of brutality against Creoles. Kaya died three days after he was arrested for smoking marijuana at a rally calling for decriminalization of the drug. Creoles, who are descendants of African slaves, make up 30 percent of the population. The rioting began in their neighborhoods and spread outside the capital, Port Louis. Rioters hurled firebombs at police stations, torched numerous vehicles, and erected roadblocks, prompting President Cassam Uteem to threaten to declare a state of emergency. Authorities quickly set up a commission of inquiry into the rioting and promised a judicial investigation into Kaya's death, the causes of which remain unclear. In May, further rioting broke out after a football match, leaving seven people dead.

The violence shook the country's reputation for stability and racial harmony among the mix of Asians, Europeans, and Africans who make up its population, and officials worried that it would damage the nation's tourism industry. The national assembly reacted in December by adopting the Public Security Bill, which creates new offenses related to violence, terrorism, hooliganism, and incitement of racial hatred, and provides stiff penalties.

Mauritius has achieved a stable democratic and constitutional order, and its focus on political competition rather than violent conflict demonstrates a level of political development enjoyed by few other African states. The political process is used to maintain ethnic balance and economic growth rather than dominance for any single group. In addition, political parties are not divided along the lines of the country's diverse ethnicities and religions.

The country's political stability is underpinned by steady economic growth and improvements in the island's infrastructure and standard of living. Unemployment and crime are rising, but the country's integrated multinational population has provided a capable and reliable workforce that, along with preferential European and U.S. market access for sugar and garment exports, is attracting foreign investment. Economic development has been achieved, however, at the cost of the country's native forest and fauna, nearly all of which have been destroyed.

Mauritius has no indigenous peoples and was seized and settled as a way station

for European trade to the East Indies and India. Its ethnically mixed population is primarily descended from Indian subcontinental immigrants who were brought to the island as laborers during its 360 years of Dutch, French, and British colonial administration. Since gaining independence from Britain in 1968, Mauritius has maintained one of the developing world's most successful democracies. In 1993, the island became a republic within the Commonwealth, with a largely ceremonial president as head of state.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Since independence, Mauritius has regularly chosen its representatives in free, fair, and competitive elections. The unicameral national assembly includes 62 directly elected members and the attorney-general, if he is not already an elected member. Only four of eight "best loser" seats that may be awarded to redress inadequacies in party or ethnic representation are currently assigned. Decentralized structures govern the country's island dependencies. The largest of these is Rodrigues Island, which has its own government, local councils, and two seats in the national assembly. An opposition alliance aimed at toppling the ruling Labour Party in the scheduled December 2000 general elections began to form in 1998. Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam has suggested revamping the country's election laws to provide proportional representation. The current "first-past-the-post" system of giving victory to whomever receives the most votes has led to sharp swings in power and the exclusion from government of parties that have received substantial popular support.

The generally independent judiciary is headed by a supreme court. The legal system is an amalgam of French and British traditions. Civil rights are generally well respected, although cases of police brutality have been reported. Freedom of religion is respected. There are no known political prisoners or reports of political or extrajudicial killings. The new Public Security Bill has caused concern among members of the opposition and the All Workers Conference, a leading trade union. Seven of its members were arrested in December 1999 for gathering illegally as they protested the bill, which they charge will enable the government to imprison its opponents. The bill has harsh penalties for anyone considered to be disturbing public order. Its opponents say passing the bill is tantamount to creating a permanent state of emergency and undermines fundamental human rights.

The prime minister set up the Special Action Group and the National Criminal Intelligence Unit to help curb rising crime on the island. In addition, efforts are underway to create a new police authority, which would meet four times a year in public and scrutinize the performance of police.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, but all broadcast media are state-owned and usually reflect government views. Several private daily and weekly publications, however, are often highly critical of both government and opposition politicians and their policies. Freedom of assembly and association is respected, although police occasionally refuse to issue permits for demonstrations. Numerous nongovernmental organizations operate. Nine labor federations include 300 unions.

Women constitute approximately 20 percent of the paid labor force and generally occupy a subordinate role in society. The law does not require equal pay for equal work or prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. Women are underrepresented at the national university. The country is preparing a national gender action plan with the long-

term objective of greater equality. It addresses the integration of gender issues into the mainstream of government and private sector activities and the enactment of a domestic violence act. Two women serve in the cabinet and another two are parliamentarians.

Tensions between the Hindu majority and Muslim and Creole minorities persist, despite the general respect for constitutional prohibitions against discrimination, and constitute one of the country's few potential political flashpoints.

↑ Mexico

Polity: Presidential-legislative, Dominant party (transitional)

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 99,700,000

PPP: \$8,370

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (70 percent), Indian (20 percent), European (9 percent), others

Capital: Mexico City

Trend Arrow: Mexico received a trend arrow upward for 1999 because the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) for the first time chose its presidential nominee for the 2000 elections by means of a primary election in which all party members could participate.

Political Rights: 3

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

The last year of the millennium marked the first time Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), in power for 70 years, chose its presidential candidate in primary elections in which all party members were able to cast their ballots in secret. The winner of the primary vote, former Interior Minister Francisco Labastida, was endorsed by his main party rivals and became the favorite to succeed President Ernesto Zedillo, the man who had done so much to democratize the party's once strictly hierarchical and authoritarian structure, in the August 2000 elections. At the same time efforts by opposition parties to form an anti-PRI electoral front ended in failure. But progress in improving Mexico's political system was marred by the continued hold of drug barons on large parts of the country's political, economic, and security establishments; rampant urban violence and rural lawlessness; and systematic violations of human rights by the police and the military.

Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1810 and established itself as a republic in 1822. Seven years after the Revolution of 1910, a new constitution was promulgated under which the United Mexican States became a federal republic consisting of 31 states and a federal district (Mexico City). Each state has elected governors and legislatures. The president is elected to a six-year term. A bicameral congress consists of a 128-member senate elected for six years, with at least one minority senator from each state, and a 500-member chamber of deputies elected for three years—300 directly and 200 through proportional representation.

Since its founding in 1929, the PRI has historically dominated the country by means of its corporatist, authoritarian structure maintained through co-optation, patronage, corruption, and repression. The formal business of government has taken place mostly in secret and with little legal foundation.

In 1988, PRI standard-bearer Carlos Salinas de Gortari, won the presidential elections through massive and systematic fraud. Most Mexicans believe Salinas actually lost to Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, who headed a coalition of leftist parties that later became the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

Under Salinas, corruption reached unparalleled proportions, and a top antidrug official complained Mexico had become a "narco-democracy" before fleeing to exile in the United States. Many state-owned companies privatized by Salinas were bought by drug traffickers, which further exacerbated the well-entrenched corruption of Mexican political and economic life. Salinas conceded a few gubernatorial election victories to the right-wing National Action Party (PAN), which had supported his economic policies. In return PAN dropped its demands for political reform and abandoned plans to establish a pro-democracy coalition with the PRD.

Until the outbreak of the Marxist-led Zapatista rebellion in the southern state of Chiapas on New Year's Day 1994, it was assumed that Salinas's handpicked successor, Luis Donaldo Colosio, would defeat Cardenas and PAN congressman Diego Fernandez de Cevallos in the 1994 presidential election. The Zapatistas' demands for democracy and clean elections resonated throughout Mexico. Colosio was assassinated on March 23, 1994. As the PRI stand-in, Salinas substituted Zedillo, a 42-year-old U.S.-trained economist with little political experience. Despite PRI hardliners' animosity toward the party's technocrats, they placed the government machinery—the enormous resources of the state as well as the broadcast media—firmly behind Zedillo.

On August 21, 1994, Zedillo won, with nearly 50 percent of the valid vote, and the PRI won overwhelming majorities in both houses of congress. Both the PAN and the PRD disputed the elections' legitimacy, and only PRI legislators in the chamber voted to affirm the results. The next month, the reform-minded PRI secretary-general was assassinated, his murder apparently the result of internal PRI infighting. (Salinas's brother, Raul, was convicted in 1999 for planning and ordering the assassination.)

Zedillo took office on December 1, 1994. Under Zedillo, a trend that had started with Salinas, or even before, accelerated, and Mexico became the leading supplier of illegal drugs to the United States, accounting for two-thirds of the cocaine and 20 to 30 percent of the heroin entering the country.

In 1996, opposition parties of the left and right won important municipal elections in three states. Postelectoral conflicts took place in several regions. In the southern states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Tabasco, and Chiapas—where many of Mexico's indigenous people live—political violence continued to be a fact of life. But the elections left the PRI governing just two of Mexico's 12 largest cities.

In April 1996, the main political parties, with the exception of the PAN, agreed on reforms aimed at bringing about fairer elections. The reforms introduced direct elections for the mayoralty of Mexico City and abolished government control of the federal electoral institute.

The climate in which Mexicans went to the polls several times in 1997 and 1998, which included increased public financing of political parties and guarantees of fairer access to television during elections, was substantially improved from that of past elec-

tions. For the first time, in 1997 voters chose the mayor of Mexico City—and elected PRD opposition leader Cárdenas—rather than having the municipal chief appointed by the president. That year an opposition coalition made up of the PRD, PAN, and two other parties took control over the lower house of congress following the July elections; and a consensus was reached whereby the presidencies of 61 house committees were allocated on an equitable basis. By year's end, the PAN held six governorships. Elections held in 1998 in several states for gubernatorial, legislative, and municipal posts showed an uneven ability of the opposition to build upon its successes in the state federal elections. PRI candidates were able to win in contests that were not fixed, as the party won seven of ten gubernatorial contests.

In 1999, the presidential primary win by Labastida was hailed by some as the politician's return to the helm of a party ruled during the three previous administrations by technocrats. In September the PAN nominated Vicente Fox, governor of Guanajuato state, as its presidential candidate, while Cardenas took leave of the Mexico City mayoralty and announced he would again lead the PRD's national ticket. In September a former PRI mayor and 23 other people were sentenced to 35 years in prison for their part in the December 1997 massacre of 45 Indians in Chiapas. In November the graves of eight people were discovered near the U.S. border outside Juarez, the victims of a narcotics cartel campaign against rivals and U.S. drug informants. Investigators say they believe the graves may yield up to 100 bodies.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Elections in Mexico held from 1997 to 1999 were the fairest in the country's history. The November 9, 1999, PRI presidential primary was contested by several senior party leaders, including a state governor who waged an aggressive maverick campaign against the party establishment. In general, the electoral playing field was substantially improved, including fairer press coverage and the creation of an independent federal electoral institute, although the PRI continued to hold important advantages. Zedillo ceded a significant quota of power in pursuit of democratization of the PRI when in 1998 he announced he was giving up the *dedazo*—in which the outgoing president handpicks his party's presidential nominee.

Supreme court judges are appointed by the executive and rubber-stamped by the senate. The judicial system is weak, politicized, and riddled with the corruption infecting all official bodies. In most rural areas, respect for laws by official agencies is nearly nonexistent. Lower courts and law enforcement in general are undermined by widespread bribery. In May 1999, Adán Amezcua, who U.S. antidrug officials say is the world's biggest trafficker in synthetic drugs, was released by a Mexican court on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

Constitutional guarantees regarding political and civic organizations are generally respected in the urban north and central parts of the country. However, political and civic expression is restricted throughout rural Mexico, in poor urban areas, and in poor southern states where the government frequently takes repressive measures against the left-wing PRD and peasant and indigenous groups.

Civil society has grown in recent years: human rights, pro-democracy, women's and environmental groups are active. However, government critics remain subject to forms of sophisticated intimidation that range from gentle warnings by government officials and anonymous death threats, to unwarranted detention and jailings on dubious charges.

An official human rights commission was created in 1990. However, it is barred from examining political and labor rights violations, and cannot enforce its recommendations. For more than five years the human rights situation has deteriorated, with hundreds of arbitrary detentions, widespread torture, scores of extrajudicial executions, and a number of forced disappearances reported by nongovernmental organizations. According to Amnesty International there is "compelling evidence that extrajudicial executions are carried out" by the army, police, and paramilitary groups.

Torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement agents continue despite government promises to reform the police agencies, even as Mexico's soaring crime rate and lack of effective law enforcement have begun to be viewed as serious barriers to economic development. An estimated ten percent of all extortive kidnappings carried out in Mexico, which ranks second only to Colombia in the greatest number of attacks in Latin America, were carried out by police officers.

During the outbreak of the still-simmering Chiapas rebellion, the military was responsible for widespread human rights violations. Army counterinsurgency efforts continue to cause numerous rights violations in Chiapas and in the state of Guerrero, where a shadowy Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), thought by some to be *agents provocateurs*, has provided a pretext for military action against local PRD leaders.

The growing role of the military in internal security—ostensibly to combat domestic terrorism, drug trafficking and street crime—has contributed to grave human rights problems, particularly in rural areas. The official human rights commission refuses to investigate some nearly 2,000 cases of reported human rights violations by the military. In late 1998, a small group of military officers staged a protest against the military court system and demanded the abolition of the exclusively military legal jurisdiction, which human rights groups say also exacerbates a widespread culture of impunity in rights prosecutions. In 1999 Amnesty International reported that "suspects have been detained, held in secret detention and subjected to torture—typically to extract confessions against suspected supporters of the armed opposition."

Published reports offered continuing evidence of close links between drug traffickers and the armed forces, contradicting official versions that have sought to portray the military as less prone to corruption and drug cartel influence than is civilian law enforcement.

The media, while mostly private, depend on the government for advertising revenue. Mexico's newspaper industry is considered one of Latin America's least independent and most openly corrupt. A handful of daily newspapers and weeklies are the exceptions. Mexico City's oldest daily, *El Universal*, introduced, in 1999, its first code of conduct for reporters. The ruling party dominates television, by far the country's most influential medium. Violent attacks against journalists are common, with reporters investigating police issues, narcotics trafficking, and public corruption at particular risk.

In 1992 the constitution was amended to restore the legal status of the Catholic Church and other religious institutions. Priests and nuns were allowed to vote for the first time in nearly 80 years. Nonetheless, activist priests promoting the rights of Indians and the poor, particularly in southern states, remain subject to threats and intimidation by conservative landowners and local PRI bosses.

Officially recognized labor unions operate as political instruments of the PRI, and most are grouped under the Confederation of Mexican Workers, whose leadership in

recent years has been increasingly challenged by trade union dissidents. The government does not recognize independent unions, denying them collective bargaining rights and the right to strike. The *maquiladora* regime of export-only production facilities has created substantial abuse of worker rights. Most *maquiladora* workers are young, uneducated women who accept lower pay more readily, with annual labor turnover averaging between 200 and 300 percent. They have no medical insurance, holidays, or profit sharing, and female employees are frequently targets of sexual harassment and abuse. The companies also discriminate against pregnant women in order to avoid having to give them maternity leave. The government consistently fails to enforce child labor laws.

Only 7 of Mexico's 31 states and the federal district have specific laws against domestic violence and sexual abuse, although some experts say that between five and seven of every ten Mexican women are the victims of abuse.

Independent unions and peasant organizations are subject to intimidation, black-listing, and violent crackdowns. Dozens of labor and peasant leaders have been killed in recent years in ongoing land disputes, particularly in the southern states, where Indians constitute close to half the population.

Micronesia

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 100,000
PPP:na
Life Expectancy: 66
Ethnic Groups: Micronesian, Polynesian
Capital: Palikir

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

The country held congressional elections for its single-member districts in March 1999. In May, Leo Falcam, the former vice president, was chosen to replace acting President Jacob Nena as the new president.

The Federated States of Micronesia consists of 607 islands in the archipelago of the Caroline Islands located in the north Pacific Ocean. In 1899, Germany purchased the Carolines from Spain; Japan seized the islands in 1915 and ruled them from 1920 on under a League of Nations mandate. During World War II, the United States occupied the islands, and they became a part of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific in 1947.

In 1978, four districts of the Trust Territory, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, approved a constitution to create the Federated States of Micronesia. The United States granted the islands sovereignty in 1979, upon which the constitution took effect and the country elected its first president, Tosiwo Nakayama. In 1982, the territory concluded a Compact of Free Association with the United States, which came into force in 1986. Under the terms of the Compact, the country is fully sovereign, but the United

States is responsible for defense until at least 2001. The U.S. obtains the right to maintain military installations on the islands and in exchange provides substantial financial assistance for development and other purposes. In 1990, the United Nations formally dissolved the trusteeship.

In 1991, congress elected Bailey Olter of Pohnpei state, a former vice president under Nakayama, as the country's third president. Olter was elected to a second term in 1995 over Senator Jacob Nena of Kosrae state. In July 1996, Olter suffered a stroke, and in November, congress ruled him unable to fulfill his responsibilities and installed Nena as acting president.

The economy is dependent on fishing, subsistence agriculture, tourism, and U.S. aid. In anticipation of the expiration of the current Compact in 2001, the government has been trying to bring in more foreign investment and to expand the private sector. The government is keenly concerned about the effects of global climate change on the islands. It is one of 16 countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (84 signatories as of October 1999), which urges national and international actions to control and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia can change their government democratically. The constitution provides for a unicameral, 14-senator congress. One senator is elected at-large from each of the four states for a four-year term, with the remaining ten senators elected for two-year terms from single-member districts based on population. The president and vice president are selected by congress from among its four at-large members. Although an informal rotation system for the top elected *offices* of the country is in practice, the alleged political dominance of Chuuk state, which holds nearly half of the population and a proportionate number of congressional seats, has created tensions with the three smaller states. Politics are based on state, clan, and individual loyalties. Political parties are permitted, but none has been formed.

Increased press freedom was seen in 1998. A new independent weekly newspaper, *The Island Tribune*, which was launched in December 1997, explored controversial and politically sensitive issues. This positive development contrasts with the events of 1997, when congress adopted a resolution calling for the deportation of Sherry O'Sullivan, a Canadian citizen who was the editor of the now defunct *FSM News*, which was then the country's only independent newspaper. O'Sullivan charged that the action was the result of her exposures of alleged government corruption.

Each of the four state governments and a religious organization operate radio stations, and the residents of Pohnpei have access to satellite television. The federal government publishes a biweekly information bulletin, *The National Union*, and the state governments produce their own newsletters. Other papers, including the *Pohnpei Business News* and *Micronesia Weekly*, generally avoid sensitive topics. Religious freedom is respected in this predominantly Roman Catholic country.

Freedom of assembly and association is respected, but there are few nongovernmental organizations other than churches and student organizations. Workers have the right to form or join associations, but no unions have been formed because of the small size of the wage economy. There are no laws specifically addressing collective bargaining.

The judiciary is independent, and trials are conducted fairly. The local police are under the control of the civil authorities. However, in several cases, police were found guilty of mistreating citizens and were subsequently dismissed from the force. Prison conditions meet minimum international standards.

Domestic abuse is a problem. State and societal responses are inadequate as it is commonly regarded as a private, family matter. The number of physical and sexual assault cases against women outside the family context has been increasing. Women are increasingly active in the private sector and in lower- and mid-level government positions, but they remain underrepresented at the highest levels of government. Poor treatment of ethnic minorities in Kapinga Marangi in the Pohnpei state has worsened.

Moldova

Polity: Presidential-Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist (transitional)
Population: 4,300,000
PPP: \$1,500
Life Expectancy: 67
Ethnic Groups: Moldovan/Romanian (64.5 percent), Ukrainian (14 percent), Russian (13 percent), Gagauz (3.5 percent), Bulgarian (2 percent), Jewish (1.5 percent), other (1.5 percent)
Capital: Chisinau

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Key issues during 1999 were ongoing negotiations about the status of the Transdniester region and continued economic and political instability.

Moldova, a predominantly Romanian-speaking former Soviet republic bordering Ukraine and Romania, declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1990, in response to increasing calls from Romanian-speaking Moldovans for unification with Romania, Russian-speaking Slavs in the Transdniester region proclaimed the Dniester Moldovan Republic (DMR). This was followed by the secession of the 150,000 member Gagauz, a Turkic Christian minority. The secessionists were backed by the Russian 14th Army stationed in the DMR, and a violent conflict, ended in mid-1992, has led to a stalemate since. Support for unification with Romania has since fallen to only 5 percent while 83 percent back continued state independence.

In the 1994 parliamentary elections, the Agrarian PDAM—a coalition of former Communists and moderate supporters of Moldovan statehood—won 56 of 104 seats. In 1996, Petru Lucinschi, who ran as an independent, was elected president. Ion Ciubuc was approved as prime minister by parliament in January 1997. To consolidate their activities, pro-Lucinschi forces formed the Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova.

In March 1998, capitalizing on growing popular discontent with continued economic problems, the Communists won the parliamentary elections, gaining 30 percent of the vote and 40 seats. The nationalist Democratic Convention won 19 percent and 26 seats; the Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova, 18 percent and 24 seats; and the center-right Party of Democratic Forces, won 8 percent and 11 seats. After difficult negotiations, the new government was formally approved by parliament on May 22. The 16-member cabinet consisted of leaders from the Movement for Democratic and Prosperous Moldova, the Democratic Convention, and the Party of Democratic Forces.

Economic instability is compounded by political uncertainty due to the absence of strong parties within the governing coalition. The governing center-right coalition has been unable to create a strong cabinet because of internal disputes, and economic reform has stalled. Of those who took part in the May referendum, 55.33 percent supported proposals for a change in the constitution that enables the president to appoint the prime minister and cabinet, act as head of the Supreme Security Council, and appoint the state prosecutor and judges. The proposal also increased the president's term to five years and gave the president the power to dismiss the legislature if deputies blocked approval of law for more than 60 days.

The Moldovan economy was severely hit by the Russian financial crisis in the summer of 1998. For the second consecutive year, the economy contracted. Exports declined, and the trade deficit rose. This crisis negatively affected the standard of living as the lei plummeted. Relations with international financial institutions improved after the government adopted an austere budget for 1999 and announced ambitious plans for privatization.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Moldovans outside the Transdniester region can change their government democratically under a multiparty system enshrined in the 1994 constitution. International monitoring groups, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, characterized the November 1996 presidential and the March 1998 parliamentary elections as "free and fair." The OSCE has suggested improvements in the legislative framework, voter registration, and access to the media during election campaigns.

The constitution and laws provide for freedom of speech and the press. The penal code, press law, and the law on audiovisual questions provide excessive restrictions on freedom of expression, and defamation of the "state and people" is proscribed. Most political parties publish their own newspapers, which frequently criticize government policies. Most electronic media are controlled by the state-owned Teleradio-Moldova. Independent media have complained about the inequality of access to information. Freedom of religion is generally respected, though a 1992 law on religion contains restrictions that could inhibit the activities of some religious groups as it prohibits proselytizing. In 1997, a Court of Appeal ruled that the government must recognize the Moldovan Orthodox Metropolis, which comes under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox patriarch in Moscow. In 1999 the government continued to refuse to register the Bessarabian Orthodox Church, which has subordinated itself under the Romanian Orthodox patriarch.

There are some restrictions on freedom of assembly. Under the law, rallies that slander the state or subvert the constitution are banned. There are some 50 political

parties and groupings spanning the political spectrum. Under new rules, political parties and public movements must have no fewer than 5,000 members representing at least half of Moldova's territories. Only about 10 to 12 parties meet the criteria.

Moldova has no law on trade unions, which has blocked the registration of independent unions. The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Moldova (UFSM), which replaced the Soviet-era confederation, is the largest labor organization. There are several hundred nongovernmental organizations registered in Moldova, among them women's groups, student organizations, policy institutes, and environmental groups.

The judiciary is still not fully independent; the prosecutor's office has undue influence, which undermines the presumption of innocence. Trials are generally open to the public. The constitutional court exercises judicial review and has overturned actions of parliament and the president. Prison conditions remain poor, and there are reports of detainees being mistreated. There has been little progress in legal and judicial reform, and Moldova still lacks a new penal code. In 1999 a new project aimed at "strengthening the judiciary" was launched by the UNDP, and a government center for human rights was established.

Moldova has ratified the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Ethnic Minorities. In a referendum in early 1999 the Bulgarian minority in Taraclia opposed attempts to end their autonomous status. In August President Lucinschi asked parliament to change the constitution to make Romanian the state language, a move opposed by the Communist opposition.

Freedom of movement is not restricted, though Transdnier authorities have searched incoming and outbound vehicles. The government may also deny emigration to anyone with access to "state secrets." Corruption in government and the civil service as well as the presence of organized crime hinder fair competition and equal opportunity.

Women are well represented in government, education, and the private sector, though they are disproportionately represented among the unemployed.

Monaco

Polity: Principality and legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 30,000

PPP: na

Life Expectancy: na

Ethnic Groups: French (47 percent), Italian (16 percent), Monegasque (16 percent), other (21 percent)

Capital: Monaco

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

The Principality of Monaco is an independent and sovereign state, closely associated with neighboring France, whose currency, the franc, is the legal tender in Monaco. In 1997, the royal Grimaldi family celebrated the 700th anniversary of its rule over the principality. Prince Rainier III, who in 1999 marked his own 50th anniversary of being in power,

has been responsible for Monaco's impressive economic growth. Under his direction, the economy has ended its almost exclusive dependence on gambling revenue. Rainier has also implemented urban development programs and built major sports and cultural facilities. At the same time, the principality has been strongly criticized for lax banking and tax regulations that have made Monaco an attractive place for money launderers and tax evaders.

During the six centuries of Grimaldi rule, Monaco has been intermittently controlled by various European powers. It achieved independence from France in 1861. Under a treaty ratified in 1919, France pledged to protect the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of the principality in return for a guarantee that Monegasque policy would conform to French interests.

Of 32,000 residents, Monaco is home to only 5,000 Monegasques. Only they may participate in the election of the 18-member national council (legislature).

As head of state, Prince Rainier holds executive authority, formally appoints the four-member cabinet, and proposes all legislation. Legislation proposed by the prince is drafted by the cabinet and voted upon by the council. The prince also names the minister of state (in effect, the prime minister) from a list of names proposed by the French government. The prince holds veto power over the council.

In the elections that took place in February 1998, one party, the National and Democratic Union, won all the seats in the legislature.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Monaco may change the national council and their municipal councils democratically. The council members are elected for five years by direct universal suffrage and a system of proportional representation. Electors are citizens of both sexes over 21 years of age and in possession of Monegasque nationality for more than five years. Candidates must be Monegasques over 25 years old. There are no legal barriers to women standing for election.

Freedom of expression and freedom of association is guaranteed by the constitution. Denunciations of the Grimaldi family "are prohibited by an official Monegasque penal code. Press freedom is respected. Two monthly magazines and a weekly government journal are published in the principality, and French daily newspapers are widely available. Radio and television are government operated and sell time to commercial sponsors, and all French broadcasts are freely transmitted to the principality. France maintains a controlling interest in Radio Monte Carlo, which broadcasts in several languages.

Roman Catholicism is the state religion in Monaco, but adherents of other faiths may practice freely.

The constitution distinguishes between those rights that are provided for all residents and those that apply only to Monegasques. The latter enjoy free education, financial assistance in case of unemployment or illness, and the right to vote and hold elective office. In light of its bilateral arrangements with France, the government of Monaco does not grant political asylum or refugee status unless the request also meets French criteria for such cases.

Workers are free to form unions, but fewer than ten percent of workers are unionized, and relatively few of these reside in the Principality. Trade unions are independent of both the government and the Monegasque political parties. Anti-union discrimination is prohibited. Union members can be fired only with the agreement of a commis-

sion that includes two members from the employer's association and two from the labor movement.

Under the 1962 constitution, the prince delegated his judicial powers to an independent judiciary. The law provides for a fair, public trial, and the authorities respect these provisions. The defendant has the right to be present and the right to counsel, at public expense if necessary. Arbitrary arrests are prohibited.

The rights of women are respected, and women are fairly well represented in all professions. The law governing transmission of citizenship provides for equality of treatment between men and women who are Monegasque by birth. Only men, however, may transmit Monegasque citizenship acquired by naturalization to their children; women are denied this right.

Mongolia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist (transitional)

Population: 2,400,000

PPP: \$1,310

Life Expectancy: 63

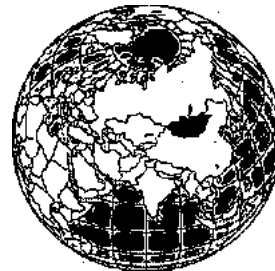
Ethnic Groups: Mongol (90 percent), Kazakh (4 percent), Chinese (2 percent), Russian (2 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Ulaanbaatar

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

In 1999, Mongolia continued to consolidate democratic gains despite a third change in government within fifteen months in July and the painful social costs of economic restructuring.

China controlled this vast Central Asian region for two centuries, until 1911, and again from 1919 until a Marxist revolt in 1921. The Soviet-backed Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) formed a single-party Communist state in 1924, and for the next 65 years Mongolia was a virtual republic of the Soviet Union.

Mongolia held its first multiparty elections in July 1990 after pro-democracy demonstrations had forced the government to strip the MPRP of its status as the sole legal party two months earlier. The MPRP easily defeated an unprepared opposition. In September 1990 parliament named the MPRP's Punsalmaagiyn Orchirbat as president.

The 1992 constitution vested some governmental powers in a president who is directly elected for a four-year term. The president must approve candidates for prime minister and can veto legislation, subject to a two-thirds parliamentary override. The constitution also created a directly elected, 76-seat Great *Hural* (parliament).

The MPRP easily won the 1992 parliamentary elections, as many voters associated the opposition with free market reforms that had contributed substantially higher prices and unemployment. In 1993, party hardliners forced Orchirbat off the MPRP ticket, but the president won reelection as the candidate of the two main opposition parties, the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

In 1994, the economy grew after four years of contraction, but the transition to a market economy continued to cause widespread hardship. In the June 1996 elections, held with a 92 percent turnout, an NDP-SDP coalition, called the Democratic Union Coalition (DUC), won 50 seats to sweep the MPRP out of power after 72 years. The MPRP won 25 seats and a minor party, 1.

New Prime Minister Mendsaihan Enksaikhan initiated a shock therapy program of spending freezes, price decontrols, pension cuts, and tariff reductions. But the reforms coincided with a sharp fall in world prices for two of Mongolia's biggest foreign revenue earners, copper and cashmere, which contributed to huge budget and trade deficits. In the May 1997 presidential elections, held with an 85 percent turnout, the MPRP's Nachagyn Bagabandy, a former parliamentary chairman who had emphasized social issues, won with 60.8 percent of the vote against Orchirbat's 29.8 percent.

The regional financial crisis that began in July 1997 curbed foreign direct investment and further hurt raw materials exporters. In April 1998, the NDP, the larger of the two main coalition partners, forced Prime Minister Enksaikhan's government to resign. In July, parliament voted out a government headed by the NDP's Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj over a controversial banking merger. In the ensuing months, President Bagabandy rejected several replacement candidates, creating a constitutional crisis over the president's role in the nomination process. On October 2, the DUC and Bagabandy reached agreement on the nomination as prime minister of Sanjaasuren Zorig, the leader of the pro-democracy movement that ended single-party rule. That same day, unknown assailants murdered Zorig in Ulaanbaatar. On December 9, 1998, parliament approved as Prime Minister Janlavin Narantsatsaralt, the Ulaanbaatar mayor.

In July 1999, Narantsatsaralt resigned after his government lost a parliamentary no-confidence vote over payment arrears for pensioners and teachers and its controversial plan to privatize a Russian-owned stake in a Mongolian copper mine. On July 30, parliament approved a new government headed by Renchinnyamiin Amarjargal, 38, a Moscow-trained economist.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mongolians can change their government democratically. The independent judiciary includes a constitutional court that has sole jurisdiction over constitutional matters.

A key human rights concern in recent years has been prison conditions. In April 1999, authorities revealed that 1,451 prisoners had died in the previous six years as a result of illness and starvation (including 242 deaths out of a prison population of 6,172 in 1998). Many inmates came into the prisons already suffering from illness or starvation because of the appalling conditions in police detention, which is often a lengthy experience. Authorities have taken remedial measures, and the number of deaths per year has been declining, but implementation is often slow in rural areas. Police and prison officials occasionally beat detainees and prisoners.

Under a law that took effect on January 1, 1999, the government must privatize all state-owned print media, and transform the state television station and radio stations into a public broadcasting service headed by an independent board of governors. The actual privatization process has proceeded slowly. The state-owned media's coverage occasionally favors the government. Mongolia has scores of private newspapers representing diverse viewpoints, although only about a dozen appear regularly. In April, an unknown assailant slashed the face of a journalist who two months earlier had written

a highly critical—and possibly unsubstantiated—article about a politician. Radio is a key source of information in the countryside, and the one independent radio station reaches most areas. There are at least two private television services, each with limited reach. Foreign satellite and cable broadcasts are available. Libel laws favor plaintiffs.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) actively promote human rights, child welfare, and other causes. Female-led NGOs have organized voter-education programs and have been increasingly active in politics.

The hardship associated with economic restructuring has frayed traditional social support systems and, along with high rates of alcohol abuse, has apparently contributed to domestic violence. Women are often better educated than men, but on average receive lower wages, hold only 8 of 76 seats in parliament, and are underrepresented at the higher levels in government, the judiciary, and the professions. There are several thousand street children in urban areas. Freedom of religion is respected in practice, and there is no official religion in this predominantly Buddhist country.

Trade unions are independent, although union membership is declining as large enterprises are shut down or privatized. Strikes and collective bargaining are legal, although in practice the country's difficult economic situation allows employers to unilaterally set wages and working conditions.

In October, a court sentenced three members of parliament from the ruling coalition to jail terms of up to five years for taking bribes from a company that won a tender for a gambling license. The case was Mongolia's first major corruption trial. In 1998, the gross domestic product grew 3.5 percent, and the inflation rate stood at 6.5 percent at year's end.

↑ Morocco

Polity: Monarchy and limited parliament

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 28,200,000

PPP: \$3,310

Life Expectancy: 69

Ethnic Groups: Arab and Berber (99 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Rabat

Trend Arrow: Morocco receives an upward trend arrow in 1999 for moves to initiate administrative and judicial reform, allow the return of exiles, and compensate victims of repression.

Political Rights: 5

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Thirty-six-year-old King Mohammad VI ascended the throne in July 1999 after the death of his father, King Hassan. A four-star general and former commander of the Royal Armed Forces, Mohammad has a reputation as a humanitarian and advocate of social change. Unlike Hassan, who relied on repression to stamp out dissent, Mohammad moved to

gain legitimacy through a more liberal political agenda. Accelerating the pace of the cautious reforms initiated by his father, he embraced former dissidents and exiles, adopted a gentler approach to Western Sahara, and set the stage for a true devolution of power from Hassan's all-powerful interior ministry.

Morocco gained independence as a hereditary monarchy in 1956 after 44 years of French rule. Upon the death of his father, Mohammad V, in 1961, Hassan II assumed the throne and began a gradual and limited evolution of democratic institutions. Nevertheless, power remained highly centralized in the hands of the king, who appoints the prime minister and may dissolve the legislature at his discretion. Constitutional amendments passed in 1996 provide for a bicameral legislature with an upper house elected indirectly from various local government bodies and professional associations, and a 325-member directly elected lower house, or house of representatives.

In March 1998, King Hassan responded to criticism of widespread fraud in the 1997 parliamentary elections by appointing a coalition government led by opposition Socialist leader and former political prisoner Abderrahmane Youssoufi. Youssoufi leads a center-left government with broad support in the house of representatives. Pledging to transform Morocco's bleak human rights record, he has pursued a reformist program emphasizing social spending and respect for human rights. However, the king retained cabinet loyalists, notably Driss Basri, the hardline interior minister who amassed vast authority in 25 years of service. Basri was believed to control the security forces, local government, and the activities of other ministries. He was also the apparent author of Hassan's repressive policy toward dissent.

Upon Hassan's death in July, Mohammad inherited a country with severe economic and social problems. Twenty percent of the population is unemployed, nearly half are illiterate, and a third live below the poverty line. The economy is overly dependent on agriculture and therefore at the mercy of rainfall. A huge government debt threatens social spending, while some 50 percent of the budget pays for public sector salaries. Foreign investment has suffered because of waning investor confidence.

Mohammad immediately began working to improve social conditions, human rights, and the rule of law through reform of the justice system. In August, authorities released nearly 8,000 prisoners, including members of outlawed opposition parties, and reduced the sentences of some 38,000 more. The government also set up a commission to compensate victims of arbitrary detention and the families of dozens of Moroccans who disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s. In October, Mohammad called for the return of Ibrahim Serfaty, one of Morocco's most prominent dissidents, and the family of Mehdi Ben Barka—an opposition figure who was kidnapped and killed in 1965—from exile in France. A television ban on a popular satirist who lampooned Basri in 1986 was lifted in October.

In an effort to promote national reconciliation, Mohammad made an 11-day visit to the Rif mountains in October. Largely ignored since Hassan suppressed a revolt there in 1959, the Berber region is one of the most marginalized and poor in Morocco. The king also met with the son of the area's former rebel leader, who returned from exile in Cairo.

Mohammad's boldest move came in November, when he sacked Driss Basri after removing the Western Sahara portfolio from the jurisdiction of the interior ministry. The decision followed the brutal suppression of Saharan demonstrators by Moroccan police, and provided the best evidence so far of the new king's intention to improve

human rights and to take a new approach to Western Sahara. Basri's removal also sets the stage for a restructuring to reduce the power of the interior ministry, regarded as the necessary first step toward fighting corruption and improving the rule of law.

Economic analysts and businessmen bemoan the government's piecemeal approach to privatization and liberalization of the economy, its lack of a coherent economic strategy, and its lagging on free market reforms. But Mohammad's focus on humanitarian issues has created great expectations of change. Many fear that failure to improve social conditions quickly could lead to unrest. Dissatisfaction with the pace of reforms has already created an upsurge of support for the Islamist opposition. In Sale, a poor city near Rabat, voters ousted a Youssoufi supporter in favor of an Islamist candidate in a May by-election. Poorer areas have seen more women veiled, films banned, and book fairs disrupted by conservative Islamists. King Hassan averted serious Islamist dissent by emphasizing his direct lineage from the prophet Mohammad. It remains to be seen whether Mohammad's image as king of the poor and neglected will win him similar success.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Moroccans' right to change their government democratically is limited. Although the house of representatives was elected in largely free balloting in 1997, its power is balanced by the 270-member upper house of parliament, the Chamber of Advisors, and limited by the legal and de facto power of the royal palace. Mohammad continues to rule under a constitution that grants him vast executive power. Constitutional changes must be approved by the king, who rules through his ministers, and no reform appears imminent. Provincial and local officials are appointed, while less powerful municipal councils are elected. Governance lacks transparency and accountability.

Arbitrary arrest and detention occur, and prosecutors may extend administrative detention for up to a year. The Moroccan Human Rights Advisory Council proposed amendments to criminal procedure law that would ensure the presumption of innocence and reduce delays in trials. In August 1999, the government set up an arbitration committee to assess compensation to detention victims and families of missing persons. Amnesty International reports that about 20 political prisoners remain detained in Morocco. The Moroccan League for the Defense of Human Rights has publicly denounced deaths and torture in police custody, poor prison conditions, and failures to investigate the disappearance of some 300 Western Saharan activists during the last decade.

The judiciary is subject to corruption and government influence. However, judicial reform has been identified as a high priority of the new government. Measures to increase its independence include investigations into alleged corruption and misconduct. Dozens of judges have been referred to disciplinary panels for punishment.

Press freedom is restricted by laws and political pressures. The official press agency is government-owned. The press code allows confiscation and censorship of publications for libel, offensive reporting, or national security violations. Both law and tradition prohibit criticism of the monarchy, Islam, and Morocco's claim to Western Sahara. While authorities generally do not abuse these provisions, many journalists practice self-censorship to avoid sanctions. According to the U.S. State Department, there are some 1,800 domestic and foreign newspapers, magazines, and journals available in Morocco, covering the full spectrum of political viewpoints.

Broadcast media are mostly government-controlled, and those that are not practice self-censorship. Satellite dishes provide access to all manner of foreign broadcasts, and the government does not restrict Internet access, although the cost of access is prohibitive to most of the population.

The interior ministry requires permits for public gatherings, and quiet protests are tolerated. Authorities continued to clash with jobless protesters throughout 1999. In June, Moroccan authorities refused to allow Amnesty International to hold its International Council Meeting in the country as scheduled in August. Numerous nongovernmental organizations, including human rights groups, operate openly, but under official scrutiny.

Although many women pursue careers in professions or in government, they face significant restrictions in advancement. Women's personal status is governed by the *moudouwana*, a code based on Islamic law that discriminates against women in divorce and inheritance matters. Women must have the permission of a male guardian to marry, and much domestic violence is said to go unreported because of social pressure. In September, King Mohammad named Aziza Bennani Morocco's representative to UNESCO, making her the first female Moroccan ambassador in 30 years.

Islam is Morocco's official religion, and some 99 percent of Moroccans are Sunni Muslims. The government closely monitors mosque activities. Christianity and Judaism are tolerated and generally practiced freely. Proselytizing by Christians is prohibited, and five U.S. citizens were detained and deported in June for distributing Christian materials on a train between Rabat and Tangier. Some 400 Bahais are forbidden to practice or to participate in communal activities.

Some 60 percent of the Moroccan population claim Berber heritage. Increasing tolerance by the government has resulted in the establishment of numerous Berber cultural associations in Morocco. Such groups criticize government policies emphasizing the use of Arabic in all aspects of life and prohibiting the teaching of the Berber language, Amazigh, in schools.

Morocco's strongly unionized formal labor sector includes 17 umbrella federations, some of which are aligned with political parties and all of which are subject to political pressure. Workers may bargain collectively and strike. Child labor is a serious problem, with more than half a million children working instead of attending school, according to government estimates.

Mozambique

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Mixed statist
Population: 19,100,000
PPP: \$740
Life Expectancy: 44
Ethnic Groups: Indigenous tribal groups, including Shangaan, Chokwe, Manyika, Sena, Makua (> 99 percent)
Capital: Maputo

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Mozambique's political scene in 1999 was dominated by preparations for presidential and legislative elections, which took place in December. The elections returned President Joaquim Chissano and the ruling Frelimo (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) to power, despite a strong showing by the opposition in the parliamentary elections. The polls were marred by logistical and administrative difficulties, but were generally viewed by Mozambicans and the international community as expressing the will of the people. These national elections, the second since Mozambique adopted a pluralist multiparty system, mark an important step in the country's democratic development.

Portuguese traders and settlers arrived in the late fifteenth century. Full-scale colonization did not begin until the seventeenth century. In 1962, Frelimo was established and launched a military campaign to drive out the Portuguese. In 1975 Mozambique gained independence. A one-party system was implemented, with Frelimo as the sole legal party and the party leader, Samora Machel, as president of the republic. Independence was followed by 16 years of civil war against the rebels of the Renamo, or the Resistencia Nacional de Mocambique (Mozambique National Resistance), a guerrilla army supported first by Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and later by South Africa.

In 1986 President Machel was killed in an airplane crash; Chissano became president. In 1989 Frelimo formally abandoned Marxism-Leninism in favor of democratic socialism and a market economy. In 1992 a ceasefire was signed, followed by a full peace agreement. Renamo recognised the government's legitimacy and agreed to begin operating as the opposition political party.

In 1994 the first multiparty elections were held. The elections attracted a 90 percent turnout and were judged a resounding success by Mozambicans and the international community despite a last-minute pre-election boycott call by Renamo, which accused Frelimo of fraud. Renamo was subsequently convinced to participate by its international sponsors, and its leader, Alfonso Dhaklama, captured 33.7 percent of the presidential vote as against 53.3 percent for the incumbent, Chissano. The parliamentary vote was much closer, although Frelimo won a narrow, but workable, majority.

Only about 15 percent of registered voters participated in local elections in 1998. The campaign and voting were seen as largely free and fair although Frelimo's sweeping victory in all 33 contests was tainted by a boycott by Renamo and the Democratic Union, the only other party represented in the parliament.

Political divisions continue to characterize the country six years after negotiations

ended 20 years of anticolonial and civil war. Frelimo maintains its dominance of government institutions. Renamo, its former guerrilla foe and now primary parliamentary opponent, complains bitterly of official manipulation of elections and international aid to secure the ruling party's position. Abuses by myriad security forces and banditry are endemic. While economic growth has continued with extensive foreign aid, widespread corruption has damaged the government's standing.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mozambicans are able to select their president and parliament through competitive electoral processes, although this freedom is particularly constrained by the social, political and economic ravages of years of civil war, in addition to a lack of familiarity with democratic practices. Democratic consolidation remains tenuous, but the presidential and parliamentary elections of December 1999, together with Mozambique's previous elections, mark an important step forward.

International assistance continues to play an important role in supporting Mozambique's democratization process. For example, more than 80 percent of those eligible registered to vote in the 1999 elections as part of a \$40 million election process funded largely by the European Union and other donors. More controversially, even some political campaigns were supported by foreign money.

Disagreements over the terms of access to public funding for political parties hindered Renamo's ability to draw on these funds for its campaign. The National Elections Commission (NCE) was criticized by opposition parties and some independent observers for alleged pro-Frelimo bias.

Parliament is active and is an important player in the political process, although its power is overshadowed by that of the executive branch. Important issues considered by parliament in 1999 included those of constitutional reform on the questions of whether greater powers are to be vested in the parliament and whether there should be further decentralization at the regional level.

Mozambicans have a choice in terms of parties, although ideological differences between Frelimo and Renamo have narrowed since the end of the civil war. Both parties are criticized for lacking compelling messages for the country's seven million voters. Renamo has been accused of maintaining groups of armed former guerrillas. It has admitted that some ex-guerrillas may still be active, but that they have yet to be incorporated into the new police force, as provided for under the 1994 peace agreement.

The independent media have enjoyed moderate growth, but publications in Maputo have little influence in the largely illiterate rural population. Criminal libel laws are another important deterrent to open expression. The constitution protects media freedom, but the state controls nearly all broadcast media and owns or influences all of the largest newspapers. There are more than a dozen licensed private radio and television stations, which also exercise some degree of self-censorship. The opposition receives inadequate coverage in government media, especially in national radio and television.

In January 1999, a watchdog commission, the Conselho Superior de Comunicacao Social (CSCS), criticized government policy towards the media. CSCS seeks a revision of the law on media concerning the right of access to government information sources and the conditions for seeking "right of reply." CSCS considers parts of the media law to be undemocratic because they, in effect, place limits on what can be printed about the president.

Nongovernmental organizations, including the Mozambican Human Rights League, are free to operate openly and issue critical reports. International human rights and humanitarian groups are also allowed to operate in the country. There is no reported interference with free religious practice.

Corruption within the legal sector remains a serious problem. A report by the Human Rights and Development Association (HRDA), in August, charged that rampant corruption within Mozambique's crumbling judicial system has robbed thousands of citizens of their right to a fair trial. The report suggested that Mozambique's constitution, which guarantees citizens the right to a speedy and fair trial with legal representation, was being undermined by the crisis. The HRDA report also criticized Mozambican jails as "massively overcrowded." The major Beira prison was built for only 120 inmates but currently holds between 600 and 700 prisoners. The overcrowding has caused burst sewers in the prison and "extremely dangerous" health conditions. According to the report, at least one prisoner dies every week at the Beira prison as a direct result of the poor conditions.

Criminal suspects are usually detained for many months before appearing in court without any formal defense. Then they are tried only in the official language, Portuguese, which many Mozambicans speak very poorly. Mozambique has only 170 judges or magistrates and an estimated 200 defense lawyers for a population of 15 million. These problems are compounded by bureaucratic red tape. Bribery of judges by lawyers is alleged to be common practice. For example, judges regularly set bail so low on serious crimes that suspects simply fled justice.

During the period of one-party rule, Frelimo tightly controlled Mozambique's labor movement. The Organization of Mozambican Workers, the country's major trade confederation, is now nominally independent. The Organization of Free and Independent Unions, a more independent group, was formed in 1994. All workers in nonessential services have the right to strike. The right to bargain collectively is legally protected.

Freedom of assembly is broadly guaranteed, but limited by notification and timing restrictions. Women suffer from both legal and societal discrimination. Domestic violence is reportedly common, despite initiatives by the government and civic groups to reduce it. Despite some economic gains, the country remains among the world's poorest and suffers from one of the world's highest infant mortality rates.

Namibia

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 1,600,000
PPP: \$5,010
Life Expectancy: 42

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free



Ethnic Groups: Ovambo (50 percent), Kavangos (9 percent), Herero (7 percent), Damara (7 percent), Nama (5 percent), Caprivian (4 percent), Bushmen (3 percent), Baster (2 percent), white (6 percent), mixed (7 percent)
Capital: Windhoek

Overview:

President Sam Nujoma was easily returned to power with 77 percent of the vote for a third five-year term in the December 1999 elections that also saw the ruling South West Africa

People's Organization (SWAPO) dominate national assembly polls. The party had succeeded in 1998 in passing a bitterly contested constitutional amendment to allow Nujoma, who is known affectionately as "old man" and was the leader of the country's struggle against apartheid, to seek another term. SWAPO fended off a challenge from the new Congress of Democrats (COD), led by a former senior SWAPO official, Ben Ulenga, to retain its two-thirds majority in the national assembly. Ulenga had protested allowing a third term for Nujoma, the country's only president since independence in 1990. The opposition had hoped to cut into the ruling party's vote and even the political landscape by tapping into voter discontent over unemployment, corruption, and Namibia's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. But the party ended up seizing votes primarily from the other main opposition group, the Turnhalle Alliance.

Opposition parties complained of irregularities, but international observers declared the voting free and fair. SWAPO used its majority in parliament to guarantee it had most of the resources during campaigning and the greatest publicity on radio and television.

Namibia's democratic credentials remain largely intact, but the apparent impunity of security force members who commit abuses remains a cause for concern, especially in the government's campaign against the separatist Caprivi Liberation Army. Fighting flared again in the Caprivi region in August 1999, a year after it had initially erupted, prompting the government to declare a temporary state of emergency. Caprivi is a finger of land poking eastwards out of northern Namibia along its borders with Angola and Botswana. Caprivi differs geographically, politically, and in its ethnic makeup from the rest of Namibia, and was used by South Africa in its operations against SWAPO guerrillas. Caprivians accuse the government of neglect in the province, which is among the country's poorest.

There have also been reports of abuses against civilians by Namibian forces and Angolan government troops on the border. Namibian forces reportedly retaliated over the border in December 1999 after fighters from the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) attacked a police station in Namibia. UNITA has been accused of supporting Caprivi insurgents.

Namibia was seized by German imperial forces in the late 1800s. Thousands of people were massacred by German troops in efforts to crush all resistance to colonial settlement and administration. The territory became a South African protectorate after German forces were expelled during World War I and was ruled under the apartheid system for 42 years after 1948. A United Nations-supervised democratic transition with free and fair elections followed 13 years of violent guerrilla war, and Namibia achieved independence in 1990. SWAPO scored a sweeping victory, and Nujoma was reelected president in the country's first postindependence elections in November 1994. SWAPO still enjoys wide support, but has demonstrated sometimes flagrant disrespect for the rule of law. Nujoma has adopted an increasingly authoritarian governing style.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Namibia's presidential and legislative elections in 1994 were free and fair. SWAPO matched Nujoma's landslide reelection victory that year by capturing 53 of 72 national assembly seats. In 1998, the electoral commission was removed from the prime minister's office and reorganized as an independent agency. While the president still appoints commission members, he does so on the advice of a board that includes representatives of civil society. The new commission increased the credibility of the electoral process. SWAPO retained its two-thirds majority in parliament in 1999, increasing its seats from 53 to 55. The COD and the Turnhalle Alliance each got 7 seats. The United Democratic Front won 2 seats and the Monitor Action group won 1 seat.

Political discussion is generally open and vigorous. Political parties can organize and operate freely. Scant funding is the greatest impediment to political party growth. The ruling party's main base is among the country's largest ethnic group, the Ovambo, whose prominence within SWAPO has evoked allegations of ethnic discrimination. Herero and Damara people are among minority ethnic groups demanding larger government allocations for development in their home areas.

Respect for human rights in Namibia has been among the best in Africa, although allegations of abuses by security forces have emerged from the Caprivi Strip, the border with Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Namibian National Society for Human Rights said up to 500 people were arrested and "subjected to acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman treatment and punishment" in Caprivi in August 1999. The government said 100 suspected rebels were arrested after an attack on an army base. It later admitted that abuses were committed in the province. Namibia rejected a request by rights groups for a truth-and-reconciliation commission, modeled on South Africa's, to look into abuses committed by South African forces who occupied Namibia until 1989 and Namibians who were fighting for independence. Namibia said it had already adopted a policy of national reconciliation. Rights groups say more than 4,000 Namibians who were in exile with SWAPO remain unaccounted for.

Public statements by senior officials against the independent press and several direct actions against journalists have raised fears of a diminution of press freedoms. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and other press watchdog groups have warned against proposed laws, such as the Diamond Bill, that would require journalists and others to reveal sources of information. The bill stipulates that individuals must reveal information or documents relevant to any inquiry undertaken by the ministry of mines.

Private radio stations and critical independent newspapers usually operate without official interference. The electronic media are controlled mostly by the state, but

the state-run Namibia Broadcasting Corporation has regularly presented views critical of the government.

In rural areas, local chiefs use traditional courts that often ignore constitutional procedures. Despite constitutional guarantees, women continue to face serious discrimination in customary law and other traditional societal practices. Violence against women is allegedly widespread. The Women's Manifesto Network, a coalition of women's groups, has called on political parties to strive to assure that 50 percent of their candidates are women. Two of the country's 21 cabinet ministers are women.

Constitutionally guaranteed union rights are respected. The two main union federations are the National Union of Namibian Workers and the Namibia People's Social Movement. Essential public sector workers do not have the right to strike. Domestic and farm laborers remain the country's most heavily exploited workers, in part because many are illiterate and do not know their rights.

Capital-intensive extractive industries such as diamond and uranium mining have drawn significant foreign investment and are the centerpiece of Namibia's economic growth. Most Namibians, however, continue to live as subsistence farmers. The country exports most of what it produces and relies heavily on essential imports, such as food.

Nauru

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist-statist

Population: 10,000

PPP:na

Life Expectancy: na

Ethnic Groups: Nauruan (58 percent), other Pacific islander (26 percent), Chinese (8 percent), European (8 percent)

Capital: Yaren

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

Nauru officially became a member of the United Nations in July 1999. China tried to block its entry because of Nauru's diplomatic relations with Taiwan, a major aid donor and investor in the island country. Nauru also became a member country of the British Commonwealth of Nations on May 1, 1999.

In April 1999, Rene Harris, a parliament member since 1977, was elected to replace President Bernard Dowiyogo, who was defeated in a vote of no-confidence. The depletion of phosphates, the country's main foreign exchange earner for nearly a century, is forcing the government to develop alternative industries, one of which is to make Nauru an offshore banking center. However, there are reports of money-laundering activities, particularly for funds resulting from criminal activities in Russia. One estimate stated that at least \$70 billion appeared to have flowed in from Russia. In December, the Group of Seven, the world's major industrialized economic powers, decided to consider sanctions against laundering activities.

Nauru, a small island 1,600 miles northeast of New Zealand in the west-central Pacific, became a German protectorate in the 1880s. Following World War I, Australia administered the island under a League of Nations mandate. The Japanese occupied Nauru during World War II, shipping 1,200 Nauru islanders to the island of Truk to work as forced laborers. In 1947, Nauru was made a United Nations Trust Territory under Australian administration. Greater autonomy was granted in 1966 with the election of a legislative council, which was responsible for all matters except defense, foreign affairs, and the local phosphate industry. The country achieved full independence in 1968, and Hammer DeRoburt, who had been head chief of Nauru since 1956, became the first president in May 1968.

Following the November 1995 general elections, parliament elected former President Lagumot Harris as president over three-term incumbent Bernard Dowiyogo in a nine-to-eight vote. Intense personal rivalries in the tiny, faction-ridden parliament led to a period of political instability. Three governments fell between November 1996 and February 1997. Following early elections on February 8, 1997, parliament named as president Kinza Clodumar, a former finance minister. In June 1998, Clodumar was deposed in a no-confidence vote and replaced by Dowiyogo.

Phosphate mining gave Nauru a high per capita income, but 90 years of phosphate mining has left 80 percent of the land uninhabitable. In 1989, Nauru sued Australia in the International Court of Justice for additional royalties for mining done during the trusteeship period, claiming that Australia had sold the phosphates domestically at below world market prices, and for compensation for the physical devastation done to the eight-square-mile island. In an out-of-court settlement reached in 1993, Australia agreed to pay \$70.4 million in compensation over 20 years.

Phosphate is to be exhausted in the next 8 to 12 years. Future generations will draw income from the government's Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust, but the trust has lost millions of dollars through failed investments, speculation in the Tokyo stock market, and international financial scams. As part of the government's fiscal austerity program, parliament adopted a dramatically reduced annual budget in October 1998. The government is also carrying out a major economic and structural adjustment program funded by the Asian Development Bank.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Nauru can change their government democratically. The 1968 republican constitution provides for an 18-member parliament, representing 14 constituencies, directly elected for a three-year term. Parliament elects the president, who serves as head of state and head of government, from among its members. An elected Nauru Island Council serves as the local government and provides public services. All changes in government have occurred peacefully and in accordance with the constitution, and multiple candidates competed in recent parliamentary elections. There have been ad hoc political parties since independence, but politics is based generally on personal loyalties and occasionally on issue-based coalitions.

The government respects freedom of speech and of the press. There is no regular independent news publication, but the government puts out an information bulletin. The state owns Radio Nauru, which carries Radio Australia and BBC broadcasts, and the local Nauru TV. Freedom of religion is respected in law and in practice.

Freedoms of assembly and association is respected. Workers have the constitu-

tional right to form independent unions, but successive governments have generally discouraged labor organizing, and no trade unions have formed. There is no legal basis for collective bargaining or holding strikes, and these activities rarely occur in practice. The private sector employs only one percent of all salaried workers.

The judiciary is independent, and the right to public trial is upheld. Many cases are settled out of court through traditional mediation procedures. The police force has fewer than 100 members and is under civilian control. Some foreign workers have alleged that they receive inferior police protection compared to Nauruan citizens.

Although citizens enjoy freedom of domestic and foreign travel, foreign workers must apply to their employers for permission to leave the country during the period of their employment contracts. If they leave without permission, they are likely to lose their jobs. A law requiring foreign workers who are fired to leave the country within 60 days has created serious hardship for many guest workers. Women legally possess the same rights as men, but they continue to face discrimination in education and employment.

Nepal

Polity: Parliamentary democracy (insurgency) **Political Rights:** 3

Economy: Capitalist **Civil Liberties:** 4

Population: 24,300,000 **Status:** Partly Free

PPP: \$1,090

Life Expectancy: 57

Ethnic Groups: Numerous Tibeto-Burman and

Indo-Aryan groups

Capital: Kathmandu



Overview:

The Nepali Congress party formed Nepal's first single-party, majority government since 1994, following its victory in the May 1999 parliamentary elections.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah unified this Himalayan land in 1769. In 1959, following two centuries of palace rule, the center-left Nepali Congress won the country's first elections. In 1960, King Mahendra dissolved parliament, banned political parties, and began ruling through a repressive *panchayat* (village council) system. In early 1990, dissidents organized pro-democracy demonstrations that drew large turnouts. Several moderate members of the palace-backed government resigned and, in April, King Birendra legalized political parties. An interim government promulgated a constitution that vested executive power in the prime minister and cabinet. The constitution also created a 205-seat house of representatives that is directly elected for a five-year term and an appointed, 60-member national council.

In Nepal's first multiparty elections in 32 years in 1991, the Nepali Congress won a majority of seats and formed a government under Giraja Prasad Koirala. Splits within the Nepali Congress forced the government to call mid-term elections in November 1994. The Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), or CPN-UML, won

88 seats; Nepali Congress, 83; the pro-monarchist National Democratic Party (RPP), 20; minor parties and independents, 14.

A CPN-UML minority government fell within a year, and Nepal entered into a period of political instability during which the RPP brokered the rise and fall of successive governments. In early 1998, hardliners within the CPN-UML broke away to form the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist), or CPN-ML, while the RPP formally split into the RPP (Chand) and RPP (Thapa), each headed by a former prime minister. In December 1998 Koirala, heading a minority Nepali Congress government, formed the country's sixth government in four years in a coalition with the CPN-UML and agreed to hold early elections in spring 1999.

Key election issues included Nepal's stagnant economic development and rampant corruption; the continued presence of a decades-old Indian security post in Kalapani in far western Nepal; and an insurgency launched in February 1996 by radical Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), or CPN (Maoist), guerrillas that has killed hundreds of civilians, rebels, and police in the midwestern and western hills. In voting held on May 3 and May 17, 1999, under an estimated 60 percent turnout, the Nepali Congress won 111 seats; CPN-UML, 71; RPP (Thapa), 11; and four smaller parties, 12. Notably, the extreme-left CPN-ML and the far-right RPP (Chand) each failed to win seats. The Nepali Congress's K. P. Bhattarai, who had headed an interim government during the democratic transition, formed a government while Koirala retained the party presidency.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nepalese citizens can change their government through elections. Voting has been marred by irregularities and violence. CPN (Maoist) rebels called for a boycott of the 1999 general elections, and guerrilla attacks and interparty clashes led to several election-related deaths and caused postponements in dozens of districts.

Under elected governments, Nepal's per capita gross domestic product, literacy rate, and health indicators have risen. However, wages have remained largely stagnant in real terms, rampant corruption and smuggling have undermined economic development, and criminal gangs have reportedly penetrated politics. Members of the Hindu upper castes largely dominate parliament and the bureaucracy. In 1999, the government banned the use of ethnic minority languages in government offices in order to encourage the use of Nepali, the official language.

Parties frequently organize demonstrations and general strikes that occasionally turn violent. Police often detain activists beforehand on the pretext of trying to prevent violence.

The supreme court is independent, but politicians reportedly manipulate lower courts. The judiciary is reportedly rife with corruption. An October 1999 report by the Kathmandu-based Institute for Legal Research and Resources alleged that corruption and the attitudes of officials largely prevent women from having recourse through the judiciary. Pretrial detention is frequently lengthy. Prison conditions are life-threatening. In July, the supreme court ordered the government to appoint the initial members of a National Human Rights Commission that had been dormant since parliament passed enabling legislation in 1996.

Human rights practices have improved considerably since the end of the absolute monarchy. However, the rule of law is weak and serious problems remain. A March 1999 Amnesty International report accused both the security forces and the CPN

(Maoist) guerrillas of committing human rights violations in the context of the insurgency. Armed guerrillas have killed, kidnapped, and tortured government officials, suspected informers, and members of mainstream political parties. The guerrillas support their activities in part through extortion and looting. Security forces have retaliated against alleged guerrillas or supporters through extrajudicial executions, disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and torture. Authorities have reportedly arrested, tortured, and raped women to extract information about male relatives whom police allege to have aided the insurgents. By mid-1999, the insurgency had officially killed 556 guerrillas, 153 civilians, and 75 police officers, and had led to violence in 27 of Nepal's 75 districts.

The Public Security Act, as amended in 1991, allows authorities to detain suspects for up to 12 months without charge; the 1970 Public Offenses Act grants the 75 chief district officers powers to detain suspects for 32 days with a court order. In recent years authorities have occasionally used these statutes to detain demonstrators and suspected insurgency sympathizers. Police frequently use excessive force in routine situations, beat suspects to extract confessions, and abuse prisoners. Few officers have been prosecuted for alleged wrongdoing.

The constitution restricts speech that could jeopardize national security, promote communal discord, or do harm in other broadly defined areas. Successive governments have restricted public discussion of China's occupation of Tibet and the disputed territory of Kashmir, which India and Pakistan both claim. The Press and Publications Act restricts reporting on the monarchy, national security affairs, and other sensitive issues. Authorities have detained several journalists on charges of having links to guerrillas, or for reporting allegations of police abuses and corruption. Nevertheless, hundreds of private newspapers and magazines representing diverse views, ranging from Maoist to monarchist, vigorously criticize government policies.

Nepal's literacy rate is only 38 percent, and many citizens depend on radio for their news. The government owns the influential Radio Nepal and the sole television station, which generally grant more favorable coverage to the ruling party. There are three private radio stations.

Women rarely receive the same educational opportunities as men. They face discrimination under property and divorce laws, and are generally underrepresented in government and the civil service. Domestic violence and rape are serious problems. According to the International Labor Organization, organized gangs traffic some 5,000 to 7,000 girls to work in Indian brothels each year. Local officials often facilitate trafficking. Most victims are from the Tamang and other minority communities. Nepal's jails hold numerous women convicted of murder for having abortions or committing infanticide, or for acts of self-defense against men. According to UNICEF, in 40 percent of marriages, the bride is under the age of 14.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate freely. However, both police and guerrillas occasionally harass human rights activists. Although the constitution describes Nepal as a Hindu kingdom, the actual numerical breakdown between Hindus and Buddhists is unknown. Low-caste Hindus, ethnic minorities, and Christians face discrimination in the civil service, courts, and government institutions. Hindu militants occasionally harass Christians and Christian-based NGOs.

Nepal hosts some 20,000 Tibetan refugees and 95,000 Bhutanese refugees. Police occasionally use excessive force against Tibetans caught crossing the border.

Nepal has upwards of five million child laborers. The Labor Act and the Children's Act are rife with vague, inadequate, and inconsistent language, and the government's enforcement record is poor. Kathmandu and other cities have hundreds of street children working as ragpickers or in other informal jobs. Illegal bonded labor is prevalent in the lowland Terai region, the western hills, and the Kathmandu Valley. Trade unions are independent, but are largely ineffective in organizing workers and bargaining collectively. More than 80 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture.

Netherlands

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 15,700,000
PPP: \$21,110
Life Expectancy: 78
Ethnic Groups: Dutch (96 percent), other (4 percent)
Capital: Amsterdam

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

In May 1999, the Netherlands' center-left coalition government collapsed during a dispute over a proposed constitutional reform to allow the public to amend or even veto laws already passed by the legislature. After the proposal was rejected by the upper house of parliament, the centrist party Democrats 66 (D 66) withdrew from its coalition with Prime Minister Wim Kok's Labor Party and the Liberal Party. The coalition had been in power since 1994, and D 66 was the junior partner. The coalition government tendered its resignation, but Prime Minister Kok withdrew the resignation after a brief meeting with Queen Beatrix.

The disagreements within the government continued throughout the year and culminated in December when the Liberal Party threatened to pull out of the coalition if the Labor Party and D 66 persisted in their demands to use tax windfalls and budget surpluses to increase government spending. The coalition held, however, and remained in power throughout the year.

Despite frictions among the coalition members, the government of Wim Kok has generally been successful. Under his leadership, the country has enjoyed four years of economic growth, prosperity, and social peace. The Dutch economy is among Europe's most robust, with unemployment in 1999 averaging four percent. In 1999, the Netherlands joined the European Monetary Union.

After the Dutch won independence from Spain in the sixteenth century, the government of the House of Orange assumed rule over the United Provinces of the Netherlands. A constitutional monarchy based on representative government emerged in the early 1800s. Queen Beatrix appoints the arbiters of executive authority (the council of ministers), and the governor of each province on the recommendation of the majority in parliament. The bicameral States General (parliament) consists of an indirectly elected First Chamber and a larger, more powerful and directly elected Second

Chamber. From the end of World War II until December 1958, the Netherlands was governed by coalitions in which the Labor and Catholic parties predominated. From 1958 until 1994, governments were formed from center-right coalitions of Christian Democrats and Liberals, with the social-democratic oriented Labor Party usually in opposition. Since 1994, the Labor Party has been a member of the governing center-left coalition.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Dutch can change their government democratically. A series of amendments to the original constitution has provided for welfare and democratic reform. Local voting rights are accorded to foreigners after five years in residence. The Netherlands is the only country in the European Union without elected mayors. Mayors are currently appointed by the government from a list of candidates submitted by the municipal council.

The press is free and independent, although journalists practice self-censorship when reporting on the royal family. All Dutch newspapers cooperate in the administration of the independent Netherlands News Agency. Radio and television broadcasters operate autonomously under the supervision and regulation of the state and offer pluralistic views. Free speech is guaranteed, with the exception of promoting racism or incitement to racism.

Freedom of religion is respected. More than half of the population is Protestant. Approximately 36 percent is Roman Catholic. The state subsidizes church-affiliated schools. The subsidies are based on the number of registered students. Muslims make up about 4 percent of the population.

Immigrant groups face some de facto discrimination in housing and employment. Concentrated in larger cities, immigrants suffer from a high rate of unemployment. The government has been working for several years with employers' groups and unions to reduce minority unemployment levels to the national average. As a result of these efforts in recent years, the rate of job creation among ethnic minorities has been higher than among the general population. The Aliens Employment Act, which takes effect in 2000, is expected to further increase employment opportunities for minority groups and asylum seekers.

A new law to tighten criteria for acceptance of refugees was implemented in 1997; nevertheless, the country's asylum policies remain generous. Refugees whose applications for asylum are denied are allowed to remain temporarily.

Membership in labor unions is open to all workers, including military, police, and civil service employees. Workers are entitled to form or join unions of their own choosing without previous government authorization, and unions are free to affiliate with national trade union federations. Currently, about 28 percent of the workforce is unionized.

A 24-member supreme court heads the country's independent judiciary, which also includes 5 courts of appeal, 19 district courts, and 62 lower courts. All judicial appointments are made by the crown on the basis of nominations by the parliament. Judges are nominally appointed for life, but retire at age 70. There is no jury system in Dutch courts.

Gender-based discrimination is prohibited. Women are well-represented in government, education, and other fields. Women make up about 36 percent of the members of parliament. Same-sex marriage, with the same pension, social security, and inheritance rights accorded to married heterosexual couples, was legalized in 1998. In 1999, a bill regulating same-sex adoptions was approved by the lower house of parliament.

New Zealand

Pol ity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 3,800,000

PPP: \$17,410

Life Expectancy: 77

Ethnic Groups: New Zealand European (74.5 percent), Maori (10 percent), other European (4.5 percent), Pacific islander (4 percent), Asian and other (7 percent)

Capital: Wellington

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In the November 27, 1999 elections, the Nationalist Party government of Prime Minister Jenny Shipley was defeated. The Labor Party and Alliance Party, which took 52 and 11 seats, respectively, in the 120-seat parliament, entered into a formal coalition on December 6. Helen Clark of the Labor Party became the new prime minister.

Shipley was first seen as a fresh face in New Zealand politics when she took office in 1998, but her popularity rapidly declined as a result of her government's controversies with the fire service, electricity reform, and public sector accountability. In January 1999, her cabinet was shuffled for the third time, and new heads were appointed for finance, education, and health. In February, Shipley was questioned on her relations with the advertising firm Saatchi and Saatchi. Her government narrowly survived a no-confidence motion only by winning a simple majority in parliament and the support of three small parties and two independent parliament members. Her minority government was once again threatened with collapse in March when a Maori backbencher parliamentarian threatened to withdraw his support and bring on an early general election.

New Zealand was active in international diplomacy. The country sent troops to East Timor, Indonesia, after severe violence broke out following the October 1999 election on the future of the disputed territory. The country hosted a meeting of the leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group. Mike Moore, a New Zealander, was selected as the new chief of the World Trade Organization, after a lengthy battle for the position. Finally, the country is promoting itself for the post of secretary general of the Commonwealth.

New Zealand achieved full self-government prior to World War II and gained full independence from Great Britain in 1947. Since 1935, political power in this parliamentary democracy has alternated between the mildly conservative National Party and the center-left Labor Party, both of which helped to develop one of the world's most progressive welfare states. In response to an increasingly competitive global trade regime, the Labor government began restructuring the economy in 1984 by cutting farm subsidies, trimming tariffs, and privatizing many industries.

The harsh effects of the economic reforms and a deep recession contributed to a National Party landslide at the 1990 parliamentary elections. However, the new government of Jim Bolger, pushed the reforms even further by slashing welfare payments,

reworking the labor law to discourage collective bargaining, and ending universal free hospital care.

With the economy showing signs of an upswing, the National Party narrowly won the 1993 elections with 50 seats. In a concurrent referendum, voters chose to replace the current "first-past-the-post" electoral system with a mixed member proportional (MMP) system. The MMP system is designed to increase the representation of smaller parties by combining geographic constituencies with proportional representation balloting.

In the October 12, 1996 elections for an expanded 120-seat parliament, the New Zealand First (NZF) Party entered into a coalition with the National Party. In 1997, the strains of merging the National Party's fiscal conservatism with NZF's populism led to policy drift. In October 1997, Transport Minister Jenny Shipley led an intraparty coup that forced Bolger to resign. As prime minister, Shipley announced a cabinet dominated by conservatives favoring further economic deregulation.

A dispute broke out in August 1998 between members of the NZF and the National Party, ostensibly over plans to sell government-owned shares of Wellington International Airport. On August 13, NZF leader Winston Peters organized an NZF walkout from a cabinet meeting. Shipley, in turn, removed him from his posts as deputy prime minister and treasurer, and the coalition collapsed. Shipley held on to power and won a narrow vote of confidence in September.

In 1998, the Asian economic crisis sent New Zealand into a recession. Asia is the first destination for 40 percent of New Zealand's exports and the source of 30 percent of its tourists. New Zealand's current account deficit soared to eight percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) by September amid falling exports. The economy also suffered from a serious drought that had hit agricultural production in the 1997-98 summer season (December to March). There were signs of recovery at the end of 1999, but analysts predicted it would be several years before the country would fully recover.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: New Zealanders can change their government democratically. New Zealand has no written constitution, but fundamental freedoms are respected in practice. The judiciary is independent. The private press is varied and vigorous. The broadcast media are both privately and publicly held and express pluralistic views. Civil society is advanced and nongovernmental organizations, trade unions, and religious groups are outspoken. Religious freedom is respected. The authorities are responsive to complaints of rape and domestic violence, and a Domestic Violence Act came into effect in July 1997.

Trade unions are independent and engage in collective bargaining. The 1991 Employment Contracts Act (ECA) has weakened unions by banning compulsory membership and other practices that made trade unions the sole, mandatory negotiators on behalf of employees. Contracts are now generally drawn up at the factory or even individual level, and wages and union membership rolls have fallen. In 1994, the International Labor Organization criticized a provision of the ECA prohibiting strikes designed to force an employer to sign on to a multicompany contract.

The Maori minority and the tiny Pacific islander population face unofficial discrimination in employment and education. The 1983 Equal Employment Opportunities Policy, designed to bring more minorities into the public sector, has been only marginally successful. The Treaty of Waitangi, an agreement reached in the nineteenth

century and codified in 1955, leases Maori land in perpetuity to the "settlers." Today, the rents received by the Maori on some 2,500 leases average far less than those received by commercial landowners. Four parliamentary seats are reserved for Maori representatives. In the 1996 elections, 15 Maori politicians won seats, proportionate to the 13 percent Maori population. Maori activists say that the Maori-language program of the state-run TVNZ television network is insufficient.

Nicaragua

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy **Political Rights:** 3*
Civil Liberties: 3

Economy: Capitalist **Status:** Partly Free

Population: 5,000,000

PPP: \$1,997

Life Expectancy: 66

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (69 percent), European (17 percent), black (9 percent), Indian (5 percent)

Capital: Managua

Ratings change: Nicaragua's political rights rating changed from 2 to 3, and its status from Free to Partly Free, due to political reforms denying a level playing field to smaller parties, and for growing indifference to corruption.



Overview:

The investigation of high-level public corruption, including rumored land deals involving President Arnaldo Alemán, sparked a major political crisis in 1999, bringing to the fore new questions about the country's "governability." The head of the government watchdog agency, an Aleman political rival, was jailed on questionable fraud charges. As a result, the international community postponed granting Nicaragua Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status, which would have meant the pardoning of 80 percent of the country's foreign debt, until 2001. A governability accord, or political non-aggression pact between the ruling party and the opposition Sandinistas, appeared to carve up the country's political system to the advantage of the two majority parties.

The Republic of Nicaragua was established in 1838, 17 years after independence from Spain. Its history has been marked by internal strife and dictatorship. The authoritarian rule of the Somoza regime was overthrown in 1979 by the Sandinistas. Subsequently, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) attempted to establish a Marxist government, which led to a civil war and indirect U.S. intervention on behalf of the Contras. The FSLN finally conceded in 1987 to a new constitution that provides for a president and a 96-member national assembly elected every six years. Shortly before the 1990 elections, hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland were turned over to peasant cooperatives under a land reform program, while Sandinista leaders confiscated the best luxury properties and businesses for themselves.

In 1990, the newspaper publisher Violeta Chamorro easily defeated the incumbent, President Daniel Ortega. Her 14-party National Opposition Union (UNO) won a legislative majority in the national assembly. Chamorro gave substantial authority to

her son-in-law and Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, who reached an agreement with Ortega's brother, Humberto, allowing him to remain head of the military.

In 1994, the MRS and the anti-Lacayo UNO factions proposed constitutional reforms to limit the powers of the president and end nepotism in presidential succession. Lacayo and Daniel Ortega opposed the measure. In February 1995, after passage of a law ensuring the military's autonomy, Humberto Ortega turned over command of the military to General Joaquin Cuadra. The army was reduced from 90,000 to 15,000 troops. Despite the apparent depoliticizing of the army, including the integration of former Contras, the leadership remained essentially the same. The armed forces continued to own a profitable network of businesses and property amassed under the Sandinistas.

Chamorro was forbidden by law to seek a second term. The 1996 elections were held under the auspices of the five-member Supreme Election Council, an independent branch of government. During the campaign, Daniel Ortega tried to portray himself as a moderate committed to national unity and reconciliation. Alemán ran on a platform that promised economic reforms, the dismantling of the Sandinista-era bureaucracy, the cleaning up of the army, and the return of property confiscated by the Sandinistas to its original owners. He defeated Ortega 51 to 38 percent, avoiding a runoff.

President-elect Alemán's top priority was to reform the army and the police. Chamorro had served as nominal minister of defense, with real power exercised by General Humberto Ortega as military commander. Alemán named the civilian Jaime Cuadra Somarriba head of a civilian-led Defense Ministry, with a new military code reinforcing his position. The size of the national police was reduced from 16,000 to 6,800, but its leadership is still made up of old Sandinista cadres.

In 1999, a governability pact was agreed to by Alemán's right-wing Liberal Constitutionalist Party government and the opposition, led by Daniel Ortega, in which a number of constitutional reforms were set in motion. Although the accord ended a 14-year congressional impasse, Nicaragua's smaller parties immediately protested that political power was being "carved up" between the two historic antagonists, including giving them greater representation on both the supreme court and the Supreme Electoral Council.

As a result of reforms, Alemán is guaranteed a seat both in the Nicaraguan parliament and in the Central American parliament (thus assuring him immunity from prosecution). After the percentage of votes needed to avoid a runoff in the presidential elections was lowered, from 45 to 40 percent, Ortega's chances of winning back the presidency were seen as greatly enhanced. The imprisonment of Comptroller-General Agustín Jarquín, whose arrest was carried out amidst an impressive police deployment seemingly disproportionate to his alleged crime, was seen as an important setback for judicial independence. A new military commander was named without incident.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nicaraguans can change their government democratically. The military, which in nine years has shrunk from 90,000 to 14,000 members, remains a political force through substantial property and monetary holdings. Political parties are allowed to organize; more than 20 candidates ran for president and nine parties or blocs are represented in the national assembly. Changes in the political system in 1999 made it increasingly difficult for smaller parties to achieve electoral representation. Political and civic activities continue to be

conditioned on occasional political violence, corruption, and drug-related crime. In March 1999, Comptroller-General Jarquín issued a report saying that Alemán's personal assets had increased 40-fold since he was elected mayor of Nicaragua in 1990.

The judiciary is independent but continues to be susceptible to political influence and corruption. In 1999, the Jarquín case created new questions about judicial independence, particularly because of the politicized nature of the charges against him. Large case backlogs, long delays in trials, and lengthy pretrial detention have caused the supreme court and national assembly to initiate comprehensive structural reforms of the judicial system. The ministry of government oversees the National Police, which is formally charged with internal security; in practice, the police share this responsibility with the army in rural areas. In 1999, the army was called out to help police confront striking transportation workers. Reflecting enhanced civilian control, the conduct of security forces continues to improve, although abuses of human rights still occur. Abuses are particularly pronounced among members of the army carrying out rural law enforcement duties, as they occasionally kill criminal suspects instead of arresting them. Forced confessions to the police remain a problem, as do cases in which security forces arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens. Prison and police holding cell conditions are poor.

The print media are varied and partisan, representing hardline and moderate Sandinista, as well as pro- and anti-government, positions. Before leaving office, the Sandinistas privatized the national radio system, mostly to Sandinista loyalists. There are five television stations, three of which carry news programming with partisan political content. A September 1996 law established a professional journalists' guild requiring journalists in the Managua area to have a bachelor's degree in journalism or five years of journalistic experience; opposition forces claimed the law was a blow to freedom of expression. In 1999, journalists who were roughed up by Alemán's bodyguard were the objects of ridicule from the president himself. In late December, a Sandinista radio station controlled by a party dissident was forcibly shut down by riot police as authorities closed the station's installations and removed equipment under a judicial order.

Discrimination against women and indigenous people is a problem, although significant progress was recorded in 1998 in Native American rights. Violence against women, including rape and domestic abuse, remains a serious problem. Indigenous peoples, about six percent of the population, live in two autonomous regions—the Northern Autonomous Atlantic Region (RAAN) and the Southern Autonomous Atlantic Region (RAAS). These are primarily Miskito, Sumo, Rama, and Garifuna peoples. In 1998, Indian parties showed significant political strength in the March regional elections, in which 45 autonomous councils were chosen.

Labor rights are complicated by the Sandinistas' use of unions as violent instruments to influence government economic policy. By means of the public sector unions, the Sandinistas have managed to gain ownership of more than three dozen privatized state enterprises. The legal rights of non-Sandinista unions are not fully guaranteed. Citizens have no effective recourse when labor laws are violated either by the government or by violent Sandinista actions. Child labor is also a problem.

Niger

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy (transitional)
Political Rights: 5*
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 10,000,000

PPP: \$850

Life Expectancy: 41

Ethnic Groups: Hausa (56 percent), Djerma (22 percent), Fula (9 percent), Tuareg (8 percent), Beri Beri (4 percent), other (1 percent)

Capital: Niamey

Ratings Change: Niger's political rights rating changed from 7 to 5, and its status from Not Free to Partly Free, due to free and fair elections in November following a military takeover in April.



Overview:

Niger experienced both violent and democratic change with the assassination in April 1999 of the military ruler General Ibrahim Bare Mainassara and the holding of presidential and legislative elections in November. Mainassara, who himself seized power in 1996 and ran an increasingly repressive state, was reportedly killed by members of his presidential guard. Authorities described the assassination as "an unfortunate accident." Major Daouda Malam Wanke, the head of the presidential guard, assumed power as president and head of the National Council for Reconciliation. In May he named a 60-member Independent National Election Commission with input from the opposition. A referendum on a new constitution was held in July with universal suffrage. It provided for power sharing between the president and prime minister and amnesty for those involved in the coups that had brought both Mainassara and Wanke to power.

The November 1999 presidential and legislative elections were hailed as free and fair by international observers. Mamadou Tandja, a former army officer, won the presidency in a second round of polling with about 60 percent of the vote. He defeated former President Mahamane Ousmane, Niger's first democratically elected head of state who had served for less than three years before Mainassara overthrew him in 1996. Originally seven candidates vied for the presidency during the first round of voting in October. The new government takes power in January 2000.

After gaining independence from France in 1960, Niger was governed for 30 years by one-party and military regimes dominated by leaders of Hausa and Djerma ethnicity. After 13 years of direct military rule, Niger was transformed into a nominally civilian one-party state in 1987 under General Ali Seibou. International pressure and pro-democracy demonstrations forced Niger's rulers to accede to the Africa-wide trend towards democratization in 1990. An all-party national conference drafted a new constitution that was adopted in a national referendum in 1992. The Alliance of Forces for Change (AFC), led by Mahamane Ousmane, took the majority of seats in 1993 legislative elections that were deemed free and fair by international observers. Ousmane then won a five-year term as the country's first democratically elected president. New elections were called for 1995 after defections cost the AFC its parliamentary majority.

Ensuing rivalry between the president and the prime minister paralyzed the government and was cited by Mainassara as a justification for his coup.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The people of Niger have had two chances, in 1993 and 1999, to change their leaders democratically. The July 1996 presidential election that followed the January 1996 military coup was held under a revised constitution and was not deemed free or fair by independent observers. Parliamentary elections in November 1996 were held in an atmosphere of intense intimidation and were boycotted by most opposition parties. In 1999, Tandja's party, the National Movement for Society in Development and its partner the Democratic and Social Convention, achieved a two-thirds majority in the national assembly by winning 55 of the 83 seats. The other coalition—the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism and the Rally for Democracy and Progress—won the other 28 seats.

The new constitution guarantees human rights protection, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. The president is "politically unprosecutable," except in the case of treason and may exercise exceptional powers in a crisis. The constitution does not allow an elected member of parliament to cross to other parties while serving. It also provides for five new bodies: the constitutional court, the council of the republic, the supreme council of defense, the economic and social council, and the supreme council of communication.

The judicial system is theoretically independent, but has retained little autonomy. The constitutional court under the new constitution will comprise two judges, one lawyer, one teacher from the law faculty, and one representative of civil society. The president and the speaker of parliament will each nominate a representative in the seven-member court. Courts have been subject to external influences and limited by scant training and resources. Thousands of pretrial detainees are imprisoned under very difficult and sometimes deadly conditions.

Constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly and association were not respected under the Mainassara government, but there were substantial improvements during the Wanke administration. The Wanke government had banned members of the former government from leaving the capital while their conduct was being investigated, and he set up a national commission to fight fraud and embezzlement of public property and money.

Freedom of religion is respected, although political parties formed on religious, ethnic, or regional bases are barred. Human rights and other nongovernmental organizations have been allowed to operate more freely since Wanke took power.

Constitutional protections for free expression were often ignored by security forces under Mainassara, but there are guarantees for greater freedom under the new constitution. However, the publisher of the weekly *Le Democrate* newspaper, Bory Sey ni, was briefly detained in December 1999 over a published interview with the widow of the late president. She called Wanke the "prime suspect in my husband's assassination."

Islamic conservatives have squelched moves to amend portions of the legal code most discriminatory against women. A number of laws and the practice of "proxy voting" by husbands for their wives appear to contradict constitutional guarantees. Women also suffer extensive societal discrimination. Family law gives women inferior status in property, inheritance, and divorce rights. Domestic violence against women is reportedly widespread. The Wanke government ratified an international convention against

discrimination against women, angering Islamic conservative groups in the country in August. One woman won a seat in the new parliament out of the 28 who contested.

Notice of intent must be given and negotiations attempted before a strike is legal, and workers can be required to provide essential services. Collective bargaining agreements are negotiated under the framework of a tripartite agreement among the government, employers, and unions.

Nigeria

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy (transitional) **Political Rights:** 4*
Civil Liberties: 3*

Economy: Capitalist **Status:** Partly Free

Population: 113,800,000

PPP: \$920

Life Expectancy: 55

Ethnic Groups: Hausa (21 percent), Yoruba (21 percent), Igbo (18 percent), Fulani (11 percent), other (29 percent)

Capital: Abuja

Ratings change: Nigeria's political rights rating changed from 6 to 4 following the holding of free and largely fair local, legislative, and presidential elections. The country's civil liberties rating changed from 4 to 3 due to an easing of repression against journalists, human rights workers, and political opponents, and the release of a number of political prisoners.



Overview:

Fifteen years of military rule ended in May 1999, when Olusegun Obasanjo assumed power as Nigeria's president. His victory in the February elections, with 63 percent of the vote, did not represent an absolute departure from military rule, however, because Obasanjo himself is a former general; he led a military regime from 1976 to 1979. Nevertheless, he is Nigeria's only military ruler to have voluntarily handed over power to civilians. Obasanjo, who spent three years in prison under former military ruler Sani Abacha, quickly moved to keep the military in check. He purged the armed forces of several hundred senior officers and then announced plans to cut the military by 30,000, down from 80,000, over a period of four years.

The military has ruled Nigeria for all but ten years since independence from Britain in 1960. Its generals and their backers argued that they were the only ones capable of keeping a lid on simmering tensions between Muslims and Christians, and among the 122 million people who constitute the country's 250 ethnic groups. The Hausa-Fulani from northern Nigeria have dominated the military and government since independence. The Yoruba and Igbo people and smaller groups of the south deeply resent this domination and what many see as exploitation of their far richer lands. The north is largely Muslim while the south is mainly Christian. With the easing of repression, ethnic and religious conflicts erupted violently in several areas of the country in 1999, leaving hundreds dead and displacing thousands. The violence could turn out to be only a spasmodic episode in a freer and more democratic society, but it could also escalate and spread if not handled properly by the new government.

Despite an escalation in social conflicts, the country's human rights situation improved dramatically. Thousands of prisoners were released from overcrowded jails, and commissions were set up to investigate rights abuses, corruption, and the judiciary. Decrees allowing detention without trial and suspension of constitutional guarantees for human rights were repealed. Abuses by security forces, including extortion, arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings, continued, however, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta region.

Nigeria initially appeared to be emerging from several years of military rule under General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993 when presidential elections were held. Moshood K. O. Abiola, a Muslim Yoruba, was widely considered the winner, but the military annulled the results. It continued to rule behind a puppet civilian administration until General Abacha, a principal architect of previous coups, took power himself in November 1993. A predominantly military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) was appointed, and all democratic structures were dissolved and political parties banned. Chief Abiola was arrested in June 1994 after declaring himself Nigeria's rightful president. He died in detention, after suffering from lack of proper medical care, just five weeks after Abacha himself died suddenly in June 1998.

The departure of the two most significant figures on Nigeria's political landscape opened possibilities for democratic change. General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the army chief of staff, emerged as the consensus choice of the military's PRC as the country's next leader and promised to oversee a transition to real civilian rule. Local, legislative, and presidential elections were held before he handed over power on May 29.

A priority of the new government is to try to rid Nigeria of the corrupt practices of the past that have bled the country of billions of dollars in revenue. Abacha alone is estimated to have spirited away \$2.2 billion. The new government began mending its ties with the international community. Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth was lifted, and the United States resumed military cooperation with the government.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Elections in Nigeria have been marred by intimidation and fraud. The recent polls were also plagued with irregularities, but there was no indication of a concerted, organized effort at manipulation. Local and international observers accepted the results. The Independent National Electoral Commission organized the voting. Several dozen human rights, pro-democracy and other nongovernmental organizations formed the Transitional Monitoring Group, which deployed more than 10,000 election observers throughout the country. Up to 600 international observers also monitored the process. During legislative and presidential polls, violations included stuffing ballot boxes, vastly inflated figures for voter turnout, intimidation and bribery of both electoral officials and voters, and alteration of results at collation centers. Irregularities were particularly serious in the Niger Delta region. Election tribunal proceedings to determine disputed results were also marked by fraud.

To meet eligibility requirements for national assembly elections, a party needed to receive five percent of votes cast in 24 of the country's 36 states in the December 1998 local elections. Members of the bicameral assembly are elected for four-year terms for the senate and house of representatives. Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party (PDP) won 59 senate seats and 206 house seats in the 1999 elections. The All People's Party (APP) won 24 seats in the senate and 74 in the house, while the Alliance for Democ-

racy (AD) won 20 senate seats and 68 house seats. Obasanjo won the presidency, which carries a four-year term, with 63 percent of the vote compared to 37 percent for the AD's Samuel Oluyemi Falae.

The constitution that came into force on May 29, 1999, was promulgated by General Abubakar only three weeks before the new government was inaugurated. Members of civil society called the adoption process illegitimate, without input from the Nigerian people, and said it failed to provide for the national human rights commission established under Abacha, which was able to carry out some useful work. The national assembly announced in September that it would undertake a constitutional review.

The minister of justice proposed reforms to the judiciary, including greater independence, and reconstitution of the Judicial Services Commission. Abubakar repealed a number of repressive military decrees, including the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree of 1984, popularly known as "decree two," which allows unchallenged detention without trial. Other laws continued to infringe on rights, including the Public Order Act and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Decree.

Freedom of assembly is respected, and numerous human rights and nongovernmental groups operate freely. For the first time since 1993, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People was allowed to organize openly. The writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni rights activists were hanged in November 1995 after a show trial on murder charges. Unrest and repression spread throughout the Delta region in 1999 as local communities and ethnic groups demanded a greater share of the oil wealth of their land. A number of armed youth groups have emerged to defend their ethnic and economic interests, including the pro-Yoruba Oodua People's Congress, the pro-Hausa-Fulani Arewa People's Congress, and Ijaw militants of the Niger Delta. Two hundred people were killed in ethnic clashes in the Delta in May, and 60 people died in a conflict between Hausa-Fulanis and Yorubas in July alone.

Obasanjo announced the appointment of a panel, chaired by a retired supreme court judge, to investigate human rights abuses since 1966 and to prevent future violations. A number of states disbanded abusive paramilitary anticrime units established under Abacha. Although the new groups did not include soldiers, they were accused of a number of rights abuses.

Before the handover to civilian rule, all remaining high-profile political prisoners were released by General Abubakar, as well as civilians linked to alleged coup plots and convicted by military tribunals in unfair trials. Several of Abacha's close associates arrested after his death remained in detention, facing charges of human rights violations and theft of government funds. In October, General Abacha's son Mohammed and his security chief appeared in court charged with the June 1996 murder of Kudirat Abiola, wife of Moshood Abiola. Incarceration remains harsh and often life-threatening. Nearly 10,000 prisoners are reported to have died of disease or other causes from 1990 to 1995. Almost 36,000 prisoners were detained awaiting trial, some for several years. The Obasanjo government appointed a national prison reform committee to advise on prison conditions.

Media freedom has improved substantially under Obasanjo. Restrictive decrees remain in force, however, and press groups are opposed to new constitutional provisions that would entrench government control over the media. Private radio and television stations have protested against high licensing fees.

Freedom of religion is respected, although there was an escalation in clashes be-

tween Muslims and Christians in 1999. Tension increased after northern Zamfara state adopted Sharia (Islamic law) in October. Other states are considering similar measures, while the southern Cross River state threatened to declare itself Christian.

Nigerian women face societal discrimination, although educational opportunities have eroded a number of barriers over the years. Marital rape is not considered a crime and women are denied equal rights to inherit property. About 60 percent of Nigerian women are subjected to female genital mutilation. Child labor and child marriages remain common, and there were continued reports of trafficking in women and girls abroad for purposes of prostitution.

Free trade union activities are resuming after being suppressed for several years. Union leaders were released from jail, and some decrees limiting trade union activity were repealed. A monopoly established by the Trade Unions Act, however, remains in place. Representatives to the National Labour Congress were elected in January to replace the administrator appointed by the Abacha government.

Corruption and fraud loom as impediments to sustained economic growth in Nigeria, but efforts were made to improve transparency. An anticorruption bill was introduced to the national assembly, and steps were taken to reduce corruption in the fuel-distribution sector, making fuel more easily available to the general population. Discussions are underway to restructure the country's oil sector, which provides 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. The government committed to an economic restructuring program monitored by the International Monetary Fund, which offered a \$1 billion standby loan. The European Union lifted remaining sanctions against Nigeria in June.

Norway

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Status: Free

Population: 4,500,000

PPP: \$24,450

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: Norwegian, Finnish, Lapp (Saami) minority

Capital: Oslo



Overview:

Since 1997 Norway has been ruled by a minority coalition of center-right parties led by the Christian People's Party. The alliance, that also includes the Liberal Party and the Center Party, commands barely a quarter of the seats in the 165-seat Storting (parliament). Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, a Lutheran clergyman, continues to head one of the weakest governments in Europe. It remains in power mostly because of Norway's economic prosperity: The price of oil, Norway's main export, has increased, and unemployment remains at a comfortable 2.5 percent level. The poor showing during the September municipal elections of Norway's traditionally dominant Labor Party reflected the party's diminishing popularity among voters and the weakened position of its leader, Thorbjorn Jagland.

Although two out of three coalition members are opposed to membership in the European Union, Norway enjoys nearly full access to the EU's single market through membership in the European Economic Area. The resignation in March of Deputy Prime Minister Anne Enger Lahnstein, the leading opponent of the EU membership, may have reflected the changing attitudes towards the issue; opinion polls in 1999 suggest that, unlike before, most Norwegians now favor joining the EU.

The Eivold Convention, Norway's current constitution, was adopted during a period of de facto independence immediately prior to the acceptance of the Swedish monarch as king of Norway in 1814. After the peaceful dissolution of its relationship with the Swedish crown, Norway chose a sovereign from a Danish royal house and began to function as a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty parliamentary structure.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Norwegians can change their government democratically. The Storting is directly elected for a four-year term by universal suffrage and proportional representation. It then selects one-quarter of its members to serve as the upper chamber (Lagting). Neither body is subject to dissolution.

Freedom of press is constitutionally guaranteed, and many newspapers are subsidized by the state in order to promote political pluralism. The majority of newspapers are privately owned and openly partisan. Norway has one of the highest rates of Internet users per capita in the world.

Since 1989, the approximately 20,000-strong Lappic (Saamic) minority has elected an autonomous, 39-member assembly that functions as an advisory body on issues such as regional control of natural resources and preservation of Saami culture. On February 10, the government established the Center for Combating Ethnic Discrimination to provide legal aid to persons exposed to discrimination on grounds of religion, race, or national or ethnic origin.

In recent years there have been some instances of xenophobic and nationalist sentiments. The leader of the far-rightist Progress Party, Carl Hagen, demanded that the number of immigrants granted asylum in Norway be reduced. Although 5.5 percent of Norway's population is of foreign origin, most foreigners come from northern Europe. Only about 10,000 asylum seekers enter the country each year. On January 15 the government introduced new, more flexible guidelines for handling applications for political asylum. In 1999, Norway was the third-largest contributor to the budget of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees, following the United States and Japan.

The state finances the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in which more than 90 percent of the population hold at least nominal membership. The law requires that the monarch and at least half of the cabinet be Lutheran. In October, some 6,000 people demonstrated in Oslo against the removal of comparative religion from the school curriculum after it was replaced with one giving greater emphasis on Christianity.

The constitution guarantees freedom of peaceful assembly and association and the right to strike. Sixty percent of the workforce belong to the unions, which are free from government control. The Norwegian federation of Trade Unions (LO), established 100 years ago, has about 850,000 members and is closely linked to the Labor Party. According to the International Labor Organization, Norwegian employees put in, on average, fewer hours than other Europeans.

The independent judiciary system is headed by a supreme court and operates at

the local and national levels. Judges are appointed by the king under advisement from the ministry of justice.

Women's rights are legally protected. In the Storting, women hold approximately 40 percent of the seats, more than in any other national assembly. Nevertheless, only one percent of the executives of Norway's 500 largest enterprises are women; in the public sector the figure is 11 percent.

Oman

Polity: Traditional monarchy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 2,500,000

PPP: \$9,960

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Arab, Baluchi, South Asian, African

Capital: Muscat

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Oman took steps in 1999 to encourage foreign investment, privatize state-owned industries, and diversify its economy to reduce dependence on oil revenue. The sultanate's program of gradual economic reform has gained importance in light of unstable oil prices and reduced Asian demand for petroleum products. Meanwhile, the sultanate's efforts to promote regional cooperation and stability resulted in improved economic, political, and cultural ties with neighboring states. Women continued to make important political advances in 1999.

Great Britain played a protective role in Oman between 1798 and 1951, when it formally recognized the sultanate's independence. The current sultan, Qabus ibn Sa'id al Sa'id, took power in 1970 by overthrowing his father in a palace coup. A five-year rebellion by left-wing guerillas opposed to the sultan's regime was crushed in 1975 with military assistance from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, and Pakistan. Since a formal ceasefire in 1976, the sultan, who rules by decree with the advice of a council of ministers, has faced little opposition.

In 1991, Sultan Qabus established a 59-seat Majlis al-Shura, or consultative council, selecting members from lists of nominees proposed by the country's 59 provinces. Membership was expanded to 80 seats in 1994 and to 82 in 1997. In October 1997, some 50,000 men and women, or about three percent of the population, were selected to vote in elections for the Majlis al-Shura. The government chose the council from among those elected. The council may comment or make recommendations on proposed government legislation, but it has no formal legislative power. In December 1997, the sultan appointed 41 members, including four women, to the new Majlis al-Dawla, or council of state. This council's functions and responsibilities are unclear. Together, the two bodies comprise the Majlis Oman, or Council of Oman.

Oman has maintained a gradual economic reform program despite difficulties re-

suiting from a recent drop in oil prices and reduced Asian demand. Some 80 percent of government revenue depends on oil exports, and efforts to diversify include plans to promote tourism and foreign investment. In June 1999, the minister of trade announced the government's intention to establish a free trade zone in the southern city of Sallalah. The government also announced that it would issue instant entry visas, valid for 79 hours, to non-Arab businessmen beginning in August. The IMF praised Oman in July for its efforts and its handling of economic shocks, but encouraged the government to enact microeconomic reforms to broaden its tax base and cut government costs, as well as to speed up privatization.

Omani social services, public utilities, health, and education are on a par with those of industrialized countries, and infant mortality rates compare well with Western Europe's. Despite economic challenges, the government resists cuts that would erode living standards or adversely affect low-income groups. In order to combat unemployment, the government has made a priority of replacing foreign workers with Omani nationals. Nearly 22,000 foreigners have been expelled in the last two years, according to the Oman News Agency. But analysts say that this effort may prove unproductive, as Omanis demand higher wages and often lack skills.

Diplomatic efforts throughout 1999 helped promote regional stability as well as economic activity. Oman signed economic and political cooperation protocols with Turkey in May and September, and a border demarcation agreement with the United Arab Emirates in May. The Omani undersecretary for tourism declared that efforts to increase tourism and foreign investment would center on the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to "minimize the negative impact of tourism on the religious, social, and cultural life of the people" in Oman.

Adding to the important gains made by women in recent years, Sultan Qabus named Khadijah bint Hassan al-Lawati ambassador to the Netherlands in September, making her the first woman ambassador from Oman. In May, a woman was appointed for the first time to the board of directors of the Omani chamber of commerce.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Omanis cannot change their government democratically. The sultan has absolute power and rules by decree. Elections to the Majlis al-Shura are neither free nor fair; Sultan Qabus chooses who is allowed to vote and who among the winners may sit on the council. There are no political parties or other formal democratic institutions. Citizens may petition the government indirectly through their local governors to redress grievances, or may appeal to the sultan directly during his annual three-week tour of the country.

The Basic Law, Oman's first de facto written constitution, was promulgated by Sultan Qabus in 1996. In theory, it provides for an independent judiciary, due process rights, freedom of the press and of assembly, and prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity, race, religion, or social class. In reality, many of the laws and regulations required to implement these provisions have not been enacted.

The judiciary is subordinate to the sultan, who appoints all judges and has the final say on all rulings. Magistrate courts handle misdemeanors and criminal cases, and Sharia (Islamic law) courts handle personal status cases involving divorce and inheritance. A state security court handles matters of national security, and criminal cases as deemed necessary by the government. Security court defendants may not have counsel present, and proceedings are not made public. The criminal code does not outline due process

rights, though defendants are presumed innocent and do in fact enjoy some procedural rights. There are no jury trials: a single judge tries misdemeanors; a panel of three judges tries felonies and security offenses. Defendants in national security or serious felony trials may not appeal. In April 1999, Oman introduced the death penalty for drug smuggling and production.

Police are not required to obtain warrants prior to making arrests and do not always respect legal procedures for pretrial detention. Security forces reportedly abuse detainees, but the practice is not widespread.

Criticism of the sultan is prohibited, although authorities do tolerate criticism of government officials and policies. The 1984 Press and Publication Law provides for censorship of all domestic and imported publications. However, journalists generally censor themselves to avoid harassment. Radio and television are government-controlled and offer only official views. Satellite dishes are widely available, giving citizens access to foreign broadcasts including al-Jazeera, a popular Qatar-based television channel that provides lively political debate and uncensored interviews with regional opposition activists. Uncensored Internet access is available to citizens and foreigners.

All public gatherings must be government-approved, though this rule is not always strictly enforced. All associations must be registered with the government, and independent political groups and human rights organizations do not exist.

Islam is the state religion. Most Omanis are Ibadhi or Sunni Muslim, but there is a Shia minority as well as small communities of Hindu and Christian citizens. Mosque sermons are monitored by the government for political content. Omani children must attend schools that provide instruction in Islam. Noncitizens, who are mainly immigrant workers from South Asia, are free to worship at churches and temples, some of which are built on land donated by the sultan. Non-Muslims may not proselytize Muslims, and non-Muslim groups may not publish religious material in the country. According to the U.S. State Department, relations between religious communities are amicable and religious discrimination is not a problem.

Despite noticeable gains in education and career opportunities, particularly for younger women, Omani women face discrimination in public and private life. According to the ministry of education, nearly 90 percent of girls eligible for elementary school enroll, and roughly half the students at Sultan Qabus University are women. Some 20 percent of civil servants are women. However, Sharia law favors men in matters of family-related law such as inheritance, and a woman must have the permission of a male relative to travel abroad. Female genital mutilation is practiced in some rural areas.

There are no trade unions and no provisions for them under law. Employers of more than 50 workers must form a body of labor and management representatives to discuss working conditions. These committees may not negotiate wages. Strikes are illegal and do not occur. Foreign workers constitute at least 50 percent of the workforce and some 80 percent of the modern-sector workforce. Child labor is not widespread.

Pakistan

Polity: Military rule **Political Rights:** 7*

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Civil Liberties:** 5

Population: 146,500,000 **Status:** Not Free

PPP: \$1,560

Life Expectancy: 58

Ethnic Groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun [Pathan], Baloch

Capital: Islamabad

Ratings Change: Pakistan's political rights rating changed from 5 to 7, and its status from Partly Free to Not Free, due to the military overthrow of the elected government and the suspension of the constitution and parliament.



Overview:

General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's army chief-of-staff, overthrew an elected government in October 1999 and pledged to reform a country wracked by corruption, economic crises, violence along religious and ethnic lines, and lawlessness, but refused to announce a timetable to return the country to civilian rule.

Pakistan achieved independence in 1947 as a Muslim homeland with the partition of the former British India. In 1971, East Pakistan achieved independence as the new state of Bangladesh after a nine-month civil war. The 1973 Pakistani constitution provides for a lower national assembly, which currently has 217 members (including ten seats reserved for non-Muslims), elected for a five-year term, and an 87-seat senate, whose members are appointed by the four provincial assemblies for six-year terms. An electoral college chooses the president for a five-year term.

The army has ruled Pakistan for 25 of its 52 years of independence. Previous military governments suspended political rights and civil liberties, flouted the rule of law, and undermined democratic institutions. In 1985, the military dictator General Zia ul-Haq amended the constitution to allow the president to dismiss elected governments. After Zia's death in 1988, successive presidents sacked elected governments headed by Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1990, Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) in 1993, and Bhutto again in 1996.

In the February 1997 elections, held with a 35 percent turnout, Sharif's PML and its allies won more than 160 seats against the PPP's 18. Over the next 20 months, Sharif used his huge parliamentary majority to undermine every institution capable of challenging him, while Pakistan slid further into bankruptcy and lawlessness. In April 1997, parliament repealed the president's constitutional power to dismiss governments. In December, Sharif won a protracted constitutional battle over supreme court appointments after a judicial panel ousted the chief justice and President Farooq Ahmed Leghari resigned. In late December, parliament and the provincial legislatures elected Rafiq Tarar, an Islamic fundamentalist and former supreme court justice, as president.

On May 28, 1998, Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in response to India's earlier tests, leading some multilateral institutions and Western governments to impose punitive economic sanctions. On October 7, Sharif took the unprecedented measure of sacking army chief of staff Jehangir Karamat after Karamat recommended the army be given

a formal policy role. On October 9, the national assembly approved a constitutional amendment making the Koran and the Sunna, the sayings of the prophet Muhammad, Pakistan's supreme law. The amendment had little chance of senate passage, but critics charged Sharif with undermining secular rule. Sharif imposed direct federal rule on Sindh province on October 30 amid escalating political violence, a move the supreme court subsequently overruled, and in November suspended civil rights in Sindh.

In April 1999, a court sentenced Bhutto, in absentia, and her jailed husband, Asif Ali Zardari, to five-year prison terms and an \$8.6 million fine on corruption charges. In May and June, Pakistani and Indian troops skirmished in Kashmir after Islamic militants backed by Pakistani troops seized strategic heights on the Indian side of the Line of Control. On July 12, Prime Minister Sharif ended the crisis by ordering the militants to withdraw. Both the army and Sharif blamed each other for the debacle, and the opposition seized upon Sharif's vulnerability by mounting a coordinated campaign of street protests.

On October 12, 1999 Sharif dismissed Musharraf, the chief of army staff, while the general was en route home from Colombo, Sri Lanka, and allegedly ordered air controllers to deny landing rights to Musharraf's commercial jetliner. The army commandeered Karachi airport, and Musharraf ousted Sharif. Musharraf declared a state of emergency, appointed himself chief executive, and suspended parliament, provincial assemblies, and the constitution (but declared that citizens still enjoyed the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution). The army arrested Sharif and several of his close associates and male relatives. There were few public protests. Musharraf subsequently placed himself at the head of a seven-member governing National Security Council, appointed a small cabinet, and vowed to remain in office until he had cracked down on corruption and reformed the economy.

In November, a court put Sharif, his brother Shahbaz Sharif, and five other senior officials on trial for treason, conspiracy to murder, and attempted murder for denying Musharraf's plane landing rights. On December 21, the judge adjourned the case until January 12 without any formal indictments being brought. As part of a crackdown on graft, in November, authorities arrested at least 35 politicians and businessmen on charges of corruption and defaulting on major bank loans, although some defaulters were released after they settled their accounts. In December, authorities arrested at least 20 politicians, senior bureaucrats, and businessmen on corruption charges. At year's end, the country remained close to default on its \$32 billion foreign debt, and the International Monetary Fund continued to withhold a \$280 million disbursement from a \$1.56 billion stabilization program.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: By the end of 1999, Pakistan's new military ruler had not announced a timetable for a return to civilian rule. The existing electoral system concentrates political power in perhaps 5,000 land-owning families that dominate both main parties. Some 70 to 80 percent of parliamentary seats represent rural areas, based on a 1981 census. However, according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, preliminary indications from a 1998 census suggest that 35 to 40 percent of the population now lives in cities. Moreover, rural power itself is highly concentrated in the two percent of landlords who, in 1990, owned 24 percent of the land. This rural elite has repeatedly defeated efforts to redistribute land, change the electoral system, implement an agricultural tax, and improve educational

opportunities for ordinary Pakistanis. Virtually every state institution is severely malfunctioning.

Pakistan has not formally annexed its Northern Areas, which form part of the disputed territory of Kashmir, in order to avoid legitimizing Kashmir's de facto partition by Islamabad, New Delhi, and Beijing. In October, the government established an assembly and high court in the Northern Areas. However, Islamabad retained financial and administrative powers, and the roughly one million residents are still not represented in the federal parliament. In the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the North-West Frontier Province, tribal leaders prevent many women from voting. According to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), some 20 million bonded laborers cannot vote. Christians and other minorities must vote on separate electoral rolls. Women are significantly underrepresented in politics.

In October 1999, the Berlin-based Transparency International rated Pakistan 88th on its corruption index with the 99th country, Cameroon, being the most corrupt. The Mahbub ul Haq Center in Islamabad estimated that since the 1980s, corruption has annually cost Pakistan's economy roughly 1.25 percent of its gross domestic product.

The judiciary consists of a supreme court, lower courts, and special courts, created under a 1997 antiterrorism law, which must conclude trials within seven days and which provide only limited procedural safeguards and rights of appeal. In January 1999, the supreme court abolished the special military courts Sharif had created in Sindh in 1998 to prosecute civilians for major offenses within three days, but not before the courts had executed two men. The supreme court is independent. Lower courts are corrupt and subject to manipulation, and government officials frequently ignore court orders. In rural areas, feudal landlords and tribal elders frequently adjudicate disputes in unsanctioned courts called *jirgas*. In January, the federal government approved the imposition of Islamic law for all civil and criminal cases in the FATA.

Under the 1997 antiterrorism law, police enjoy broad powers to use lethal force, conduct searches, and make arrests. Officers are frequently involved in crime and routinely use excessive force in ordinary situations, torture detainees, and rape female detainees and prisoners. Police are also responsible for scores of custodial deaths and commit dozens of extrajudicial executions each year. In 1999, human rights activists accused the police of having a deliberate policy of extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects in Punjab and Sindh. Successive governments have arbitrarily detained political opponents under a 1960 public order law, false criminal charges, or, more recently, the 1997 antiterrorism law.

Since the early 1990s, violence between rival factions of the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), which represents Urdu-speaking migrants from India, and between the police and the MQM, has killed several thousand people in Karachi. Sectarian violence between two relatively small extremist groups, the Sunni-based Sipah-e-Sahaba and the minority Shiite Sipah-e-Mohammed, kills scores of people each year, mainly in Punjab.

The constitution and a series of colonial and postcolonial laws, including penal code provisions authorizing criminal sanctions for seditious or antistate speech or writing, give the government the power to curb expression and press freedom. Under governments headed by Sharif and Bhutto, authorities frequently detained, threatened, and assaulted journalists, attacked newspaper offices, and interfered with newspaper distribution. In 1999, arrests and physical attacks on journalists increased markedly. Sue-

cessive governments also used their monopoly control of newsprint and threats to withhold official advertising as leverage over the press. Islamic fundamentalists also frequently harass journalists. Nevertheless, Pakistan's press is among the most outspoken in South Asia. The government owns nearly all electronic media, and news coverage favors the ruling party.

Freedom of assembly is generally respected, but police frequently detain activists prior to planned demonstrations and forcibly break up some demonstrations. The 1997 antiterrorism law authorized officials to ban groups and associations. In May 1999, the Punjab provincial government said it had banned 1,940 nongovernmental organizations, froze their bank accounts, and seized their assets, although it was not clear to what extent authorities had actually carried out these acts. Islamic fundamentalists have issued numerous death threats against the prominent human rights defender Asma Jahangir.

Section 295-C of the penal code, imposed in 1986, mandates the death sentence for defiling the prophet Muhammad. To date, appeals courts have overturned all blasphemy convictions. Nevertheless, Muslims have filed spurious blasphemy charges against Ahmadis, Christians, and Hindus to extort land and money. Human rights groups say several hundred Christians and Ahmadis are jailed for blasphemy. A 1984 ordinance prohibits Ahmadis, who are legally considered non-Muslims, from worshipping as Muslims. Christians, Ahmadis, and Hindus also face economic and social discrimination and are occasionally physically attacked by Islamists.

The 1979 Zina Ordinance introduced *Sharia* (Islamic law) into the penal code regarding sexual offenses. Courts have imprisoned numerous women for alleged extramarital sexual intercourse, often following false testimony by their husbands. Many rape victims who cannot meet the strict legal requirement to prove the crime are charged with adultery and imprisoned. Although courts have never carried out the most severe penalties, including death for adultery, the ordinance apparently deters many women from reporting rape.

Violence against women remains a serious problem. The Karachi-based Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid estimated in 1997 that, in recent years, criminal gangs have trafficked some 200,000 Bangladeshi women to Pakistan for purposes of prostitution, often with the complicity of corrupt local officials. Authorities detain some 2,000 trafficking victims under criminal charges, mainly for illegal entry or under the Zina ordinances for extramarital sex. Each year hundreds of women are reportedly killed by their relatives for seeking divorce or being involved in unsanctioned relationships. Most so-called honor killings go unpunished owing to traditional norms, laws reducing punishment for actions supposedly caused by "grave and sudden provocation," and the Qisas and Diyat law, which allows the victim's relatives to forgive the offender.

The HRCP estimates there are 11 to 12 million child laborers, including many bonded laborers. Feudal landlords reportedly forcibly hold thousands of bonded laborers, despite 1992 legislation outlawing bonded labor and canceling enslaving debts. Trade unions are independent, but several sectors cannot organize and unions are prohibited in export processing zones. In March, authorities placed tighter restrictions on freedom of movement for the 1.5 million Afghan refugees.

Palau

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 20,000
PPP: na
Life Expectancy: 67
Ethnic Groups: Polynesian, Malayan, Melanesian
Capital: Koror

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

The Republic of Palau is an archipelago of more than 300 islands and islets at the western end of the Caroline Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Purchased by Germany from Spain in 1889, Palau was seized in 1914 by Japan, which administered the islands under a League of Nations mandate from 1920. In 1944, the United States occupied the islands, which became part of the U.S. administered United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific in 1947.

In 1979, Palau adopted a constitution requiring 75 percent approval at a referendum before nuclear-related activities could occur on its territory. In 1981, Palau became self-governing, though still under U.S. control as part of the Trust Territory, and Haruo Remelik was inaugurated as the country's first president. Remelik was reelected in November 1984 to a second four-year term. He was assassinated the following year, and Alfonso Oiterong took over as the acting president. In a special election in August 1985, Lazarus Salii defeated Oiterong to become Remelik's successor. In August 1988, President Salii was found dead in his office from an apparent suicide. Ngiratkel Etpison was elected his successor in November.

Between 1983 and 1990, Palau held seven plebiscites on approving a Compact of Free Association with the United States. None managed to cross the three-fourths majority required for approval. Several factors prevented the Compact's early adoption, including disagreements over the amount of U.S. aid commitment, concerns about the requisition of land for U.S. military purposes, and incompatibilities between provisions providing facilities for U.S. nuclear forces and Palau's nuclear-free constitution.

In the 1992 presidential race, Vice President Kuniwo Nakamura defeated Johnson Toribiong (Etpison lost in the primaries). In concurrent balloting, voters amended the constitution to require a simple majority for the passage of the Compact, which voters approved in 1993 with a 64 percent majority. Under the terms of the Compact, Palau has full sovereignty, but the United States takes responsibility for defense and obtains the right to maintain military facilities. In exchange, Palau is granted U.S. financial assistance over a 15-year period under an economic aid package. In October 1994, Palau proclaimed its independence.

Modest economic gains supported by U.S. aid and East Asian investment helped President Nakamura win reelection on November 6, 1996. Considerable uncertainty exists regarding the prospect of continued U.S. funding at the end of the Compact period and over the likelihood that the government will use the Compact money for projects fostering long-term economic development.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Palau can change their government democratically. The constitution vests executive powers in a president, who is directly elected for a four-year term. The vice president is elected on a separate ticket. The bicameral parliament consists of a senate, whose 14 members are elected on a geographical basis, and a 16-seat house of representatives with one member elected from each of the 16 states. Elections are competitive and tend to revolve around personalities and issues rather than party affiliation. A 16-member Council of Chiefs advises the government on issues involving tribal laws and customs. The chiefs wield considerable traditional authority, and there are often tensions between the chiefs and political leaders.

The government respects freedom of speech and of the press. There are government and private newspapers, but the state-run radio and television broadcast services are the primary source of news and information. Two religious groups maintain independent radio stations. There is also a private cable television system with widespread coverage. Freedom of religion exists in this predominantly Roman Catholic country.

Freedom of association is respected. There are currently no active employee organizations, and laws regarding the right to strike or to bargain collectively do not exist. The wage-earning sector is very small.

The judiciary is independent and enforces the right to a fair trial in practice. There is an independent special prosecutor and independent public defender system. In late 1998, the Ministry of Justice reported that a shortage of government prosecutors has resulted in a large backlog of civil and criminal cases awaiting action. Local police are under direct civilian control, but foreign residents have reported that law enforcement officials are less thorough in their investigation of crimes against non-Palauan citizens.

Foreign nationals constitute nearly half the labor force and face discrimination in employment and education, as well as random violence. Employers occasionally coerce foreign workers, particularly domestic or unskilled laborers, into remaining at their jobs by withholding their passports. A controversial minimum-wage law, effective on January 1, 1999, applies only to Palauan citizens. Opponents of the law have predicted that the new legislation will result in foreign workers gaining an advantage in the local labor market.

Inheritance of property and traditional rank is matrilineal, which gives women a high status in society. Nevertheless, domestic violence, often linked to alcohol or drug abuse, remains a problem, and many women are reluctant to report their spouses to law enforcement authorities.

Panama

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 2,800,000

PPP: \$7,168

Life Expectancy: 74

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (70 percent), West Indian (14 percent), European (10 percent), Indian (6 percent)

Capital: Panama City

Trend arrow: Panama's political rights rating changed from 2 to 1, and its civil liberties rating from 3 to 2, due to opposition leader Mireya Moscoso being chosen president in free and fair elections, in which judicial independence and public corruption were major issues.

Political Rights: 1*

Civil Liberties: 2*

Status: Free



Overview:

The year 1999 marked the transfer of responsibility for the Panama Canal to Panamanian authorities, amid worries about their ability to assure its security and smooth operation. The fact that Panama's newly elected president, Mireya Moscoso, had recently taken control of a government increasingly mired in corruption and other lawlessness helped to assuage some concerns. Incursions into Panamanian territory by left-wing Colombian rebels, however, created a backdrop of worry about the ability of a country without an army to defend itself.

Panama was part of Colombia until 1903, when a U.S.-supported revolt resulted in the proclamation of an independent Republic of Panama. A period of weak civilian rule ended with a 1968 military coup that brought General Omar Torrijos to power.

After the signing of the 1977 canal treaties with the United States, Torrijos promised democratization. The 1972 constitution was revised to provide for the direct election of a president and a legislative assembly for five-year terms. After Torrijos's death in 1981, General Manuel Noriega emerged as Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) chief and rigged the 1984 election that brought to power the PRD, then the political arm of the PDF.

The Democratic Alliance of Civic Opposition (ADOC) won the 1989 election, but Noriega annulled the vote and declared himself head of state. He was removed during a U.S. military invasion, and ADOC's Guillermo Endara became president.

In 1994, the PRD capitalized on the Endara government's record of ineptness, and Ernesto Perez Balladares, a 47-year-old millionaire and former banker, won the presidency with 33.3 percent of the vote. The PRD won 32 of 71 seats in the legislative assembly and, with the support of allied parties that won 6 seats, achieved an effective majority.

Perez Balladares kept a campaign promise by choosing for his cabinet technocrats and politicians from across the ideological spectrum. But his orthodox free market economic policies led to widespread protests in 1995 by labor unions and students. The president's popularity declined when the government met protests with harsh crack-downs.

During the 1994 campaign, Perez Balladares pledged to rid the country of drug influence. However, the PRD was accused of involvement in drug trafficking in the aftermath of the collapse of the Agro-Industrial and Commercial Bank of Panama (BANAICO) in January 1996. An investigation by the Banking Commission found accounts empty and \$50 million unaccounted for, as well as evidence that the bank was a central money-laundering facility. BANAICO was named in several U.S. drug investigations, including one into Jose Castrillon Henao, a Colombian who was arrested in April 1996 as the reputed organizer of the Cali cartel's seagoing cocaine shipments to the United States. Alfredo Aleman, a board member of BANAICO, was a friend and top advisor to Perez Balladares and was a major contributor to the party's 1994 campaign. Perez Balladares himself was forced to admit that his campaign unknowingly accepted a contribution from Castrillon Henao, who was in May 1998 extradited to Florida to stand trial for money laundering. The Perez Balladares administration further damaged its popularity when it restored government jobs and awarded a reported \$35 million in back pay to former members of the Dignity Battalions, who had been Noriega's paramilitary enforcers.

In 1997, the son of a prominent PRD politician and two other Panamanians were found innocent of killing an unarmed U.S. soldier in 1992 in a trial plagued by political pressure and other irregularities. In August 1998, voters rejected by an almost two-to-one margin a referendum on a proposed constitutional amendment that would have enabled Perez Balladares, whose government was mired in censorship, corruption, and an increasingly tenuous claim to fidelity to the rule of law, to stand for reelection.

In May 1999, Moscoso, the widow of three-time president Arnulfo Arias, and herself an unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1994, won 44.8 percent of the votes, more than 7 percent above the amount garnered by her rival, Martin Torrijos, as the head of a PRD-led coalition. Moscoso's coalition, the Union for Panama, won just 24 congressional seats as compared to the PRD's 38. However, she was able to forge a deal with a group of small parties to give her coalition a working majority.

The Moscoso government moved quickly to overturn an attempt by Perez Balladares to pack the judiciary before he left office. It also sought to increase joint antinarcotics efforts with the United States, a partnership which had faltered under Perez Balladares. Repeated incursions into Panamanian territory by Colombian guerrillas fostered increasing concern around the region over the spillover effects of Colombia's civil war.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Panama's citizens can change their government democratically. The 1999 national elections were considered free and fair by international observers. The constitution guarantees freedom of political and civic organization. In early 1999, Panama's largest political parties agreed to ban anonymous campaign contributions in an effort to stem the infiltration of drug money into the political process. Following the May elections, 5 of the 12 political parties that had taken part were dissolved after they failed to win the five percent minimum required by the electoral law.

The judicial system, headed by a supreme court, was revamped in 1990. It remains overworked, however, and its administration is inefficient, politicized, and prone to corruption. An unwieldy criminal code and a surge in cases, many against former soldiers and officials of the military period, complicate the judicial process. In February 1998 the supreme court declared unconstitutional the provisions that authorize the

ombudsman's office to investigate the administration of justice, claiming that the watchdog agency's role violates the principle of judicial independence. In the final days of Perez Balladares's presidency, a new three-person section of the Supreme Court was created. Pdre Balladares said the new branch was needed to speed up the process; opponents accused him of trying to pack the court so as to shield himself from corruption investigations.

The PDF was dismantled after 1989, and the military was formally abolished in 1994. But the civilian-run Public Force (national police) that replaced the PDF is poorly disciplined and corrupt. Like the country's prison guards, officers frequently use "excessive force." It has been ineffectual against the drug trade, as Panama remains a major transshipment point for both cocaine and illicit arms, as well as a money-laundering hub. In 1999, the discovery of human remains thought to be those of an antimilitary regime cleric who disappeared in 1971 revived demands for a reopening of dozens of cases of disappearances that occurred during 21 years of military rule.

The penal system is marked by violent disturbances in decrepit facilities packed with up to eight times their intended capacity. About two-thirds of prisoners face delays of about 18 months in having their cases heard.

Panama also continues to be a major transshipment point for illegal aliens seeking to enter the United States, including large numbers from Ecuador.

Panama's media are a raucous assortment of radio and television stations, daily newspapers, and weekly publications. Restrictive media laws dating back to the Noriega regime remain on the books, however. The law permits officials to jail without trial anyone who defames the government. Legal codes establish government control of work permits for journalists, strict defamation and libel rules, and a clause that permits reporters to be punished for "damaging the nation's economy" or national security.

Labor unions are well organized. However, labor rights were diluted in 1995 when Pdre Balladares pushed labor code revisions through congress. When 49 unions initiated peaceful protests, the government cracked down in a series of violent clashes that resulted in four deaths and hundreds of arrests.

Since 1993, indigenous groups have protested the encroachment of illegal settlers on Indian lands and delays by the government in formally demarcating the boundaries of those lands. Indian communities do enjoy, however, a large degree of autonomy and self-government.

Papua New Guinea

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 4,700,000
PPP: \$2,654
Life Expectancy: 56
Ethnic Groups: Papuan, Melanesian, Negrito, Micronesian, Polynesian
Capital: Port Moresby

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free



Overview: Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta took office in July 1999 following a no-confidence vote against his predecessor, and pledged to curb the corruption and economic mismanagement that have contributed to declining economic and social conditions in this resource-rich country.

This South Pacific country, consisting of the eastern half of New Guinea and some 600 smaller islands, achieved independence from Australia in 1975 under Prime Minister Michael Somare. The 1975 constitution vests executive power in a prime minister and a cabinet. Parliament has 89 at-large members and 20 members representing the 19 provinces and Port Moresby, all elected for five-year terms. A governor-general serves as head of state and represents the British monarchy.

In late 1988 miners and landowners on Bougainville Island, 560 miles northeast of the capital, began guerrilla attacks against an Australian-owned mine to demand compensation and profit-sharing. Within months the rebels transformed their long-standing grievances into a low-grade secessionist struggle under the newly formed Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA).

In 1995, Prime Minister Julius Chan's government took advantage of a ceasefire to swear in a Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) on the island. The ceasefire broke down in 1996, and in October gunmen assassinated Theodore Miriung, the head of the BTG.

The February 1997 revelation that Chan's government had signed a \$27 million contract with London-based Sandline International to provide mercenaries to aid the army on Bougainville attracted widespread anger. In March, Chan sacked Brigadier General Jerry Singirok after the armed forces chief called for the prime minister's resignation. Chan resigned after several days of antigovernment demonstrations during which many soldiers and ordinary citizens expressed support for Singirok.

The June 1997 elections swept Chan and several other senior politicians out of parliament. Many voters complained that official corruption and rising crime were keeping the country impoverished despite its considerable mineral wealth. In July, Bill Skate, a former opposition leader, formed a coalition government that included his Papua New Guinea First Party and the incumbent parties.

In April 1998, a ceasefire brokered by Australia and New Zealand and buttressed by an Australian-led Peace Monitoring Group took effect on Bougainville. In November, Skate reinstated Singirok as armed forces chief even though a commission of inquiry into the Sandline affair had accused Singirok of accepting bribes from a military contractor.

Skate's government, like its predecessors, faced widespread allegations of corruption, bribery, sex scandals, mismanagement, and nepotism. In early July 1999, Skate resigned two weeks before an expected no-confidence vote. On July 14 an unprecedented 99 of the 105 members of parliament elected Sir Mekere Morauta, the head of the People's Democratic Movement and a former governor of the reserve bank, as prime minister. Morauta formed a multiparty government and pledged to stabilize the *kina*, review the outgoing government's decision to grant diplomatic recognition to Taiwan, and restore relations, which had collapsed in 1998, with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

In October, the government made an unprecedented offer of autonomy to Bougainville. In December, authorities swore in John Momis, the member of parliament for Bougainville, as provincial governor in the first step toward establishing a Bougainville provincial government as a confidence-building measure. However, the government and several rival Bougainville factions still faced hard bargaining over outstanding issues including disarmament and the actual details of any autonomy plan.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Papua New Guinea can change their government democratically. Elections are generally marred by some irregularities and sporadic violence. The parliamentary system is characterized by unstable, shifting coalitions, and since independence no prime minister has served a full five-year term. Parties are centered around personalities rather than issues.

Democratic consolidation has also been hampered by fiscal pressures, rampant official corruption, a severe violent crime problem, and the challenge of nation-building in a country with extreme socioeconomic disparities between the cities and isolated highlands, where some 700 tribes speak their own distinct languages. The judiciary is independent. However, boundaries between tribal law and the formal legal system are still being defined.

The army, army-backed paramilitary groups, and the BRA committed torture, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and extrajudicial executions against civilians and combatants during the Bougainville conflict. By some estimates, the war killed at least 20,000 combatants and civilians, with most of the deaths reportedly due to the lack of medical treatment and supplies.

A 1998 Australian National University survey reported that Papua New Guinea's crime problem is among the most severe in the world. In urban areas, violent gang members known as "rascals" have caused a severe law and order crisis. The 1993 Internal Security Act gave police expanded powers to conduct searches without warrants. Police frequently use excessive force against suspects, causing several deaths in recent years, and continue to abuse detainees and prisoners. In the highlands, police occasionally burn homes to punish communities suspected of harboring criminals or of participating in tribal warfare, which has killed dozens of people in recent years, or to punish crimes committed by individuals.

The private press vigorously reports on corruption and other sensitive matters. The state-run radio's news coverage is generally balanced. There is a private television station. Nongovernmental organizations are active and outspoken.

In rural areas foreign logging companies frequently swindle villagers and often renege on promises to build schools and hospitals. Women face significant, unofficial

discrimination in education and employment opportunities. Rape and domestic violence are serious problems. In the mid-1980s, some 4,000 refugees from West Papua (Irian Jaya) settled at a camp at East Awin. Many refugees have accepted a 1998 government offer of permanent residency.

Unions are independent, and workers can and do bargain collectively and stage strikes. The International Labor Organization has criticized a law allowing the government to invalidate arbitration agreements or wage awards not considered in the national interest.

Paraguay

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 5,200,000

PPP: \$3,980

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (95 percent), Indian and European (5 percent)

Capital: Asuncion

Political Rights: 4

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

The March 1999 assassination of Paraguay's vice president, Luis Maria Argana, allegedly at the hands of a hit squad loyal to General Lino Oviedo, a putative presidential candidate and former head of the army who had led a 1996 coup attempt, resulted in the overthrow of the president, Raul Cubas. A shaky multiparty coalition headed by the president of the senate took office following a short-lived but violent popular revolt against Cubas, who, together with Oviedo and dozens of other supporters, fled into exile in neighboring countries. By year's end, the new government was wracked by internal divisions, labor unrest, and restlessness from within the ranks of the military, where pro-Oviedo factions appeared to be preparing another chapter in the struggle for power. In December, Oviedo fled from exile in southern Argentina, where he was protected by the government of Carlos Menem, and his whereabouts remain a mystery.

In 1989 a coup ended the 35-year dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner. Oviedo himself stormed into the bunker of Latin America's oldest surviving dictator with a pistol in one hand and a grenade in the other and demanded that Stroessner surrender. General Andrés Rodríguez took over Stroessner's Colorado Party and engineered his own election to finish Stroessner's last presidential term.

The Colorado Party won a majority in a vote for a constituent assembly, which produced the 1992 constitution. It provides for a president, a vice president, and a bicameral congress consisting of a 45-member senate and an 80-member chamber of deputies elected for five-year terms. The president is elected by a simple majority, and reelection is prohibited. The constitution bans the active military from engaging in politics.

In the 1992 Colorado Party primary election, Argana, an old-style machine politi-

cian, apparently defeated the construction tycoon Juan Carlos Wasmosy. Rodriguez and Oviedo engineered a highly dubious recount that made Wasmosy the winner.

The 1993 candidates were Wasmosy, Domingo Laino of the center-left Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA), and Guillermo Caballero Vargas, a wealthy businessman who founded the National Encounter Alliance. Wasmosy promised to modernize the economy. Laino played on his decades of resistance to Stroessner. Caballero Vargas campaigned as a centrist, free of the politics of the past.

Every poll showed Wasmosy trailing, until three weeks before the election, when Oviedo personally took the direction of the campaign—in spite of the fact that he was an active military officer—and threatened a coup if the Colorado Party lost. Fear of a coup proved decisive, as Wasmosy won with 40.3 percent of the vote. Laino took 32 percent, and Caballero Vargas, 23.5.

Oviedo was then appointed army commander, and Wasmosy allowed him to eliminate rivals in the military through forced retirement. The partnership came to a bitter end when Wasmosy moved to reduce the influence of the drug-tainted military in government and it became increasingly obvious that Oviedo and a hardline Colorado Party faction planned to use Wasmosy as a stepping stone for the general's own accession to the presidency.

Wasmosy ordered Oviedo's resignation on April 22, 1996. The general in turn threatened a coup and mobilized the troops. Wasmosy took refuge in the U.S. embassy and prepared his resignation. International pressure and mass protests in Paraguay allowed Wasmosy to outmaneuver his rival, who then vowed to return as a presidential candidate in 1998.

Wasmosy's government was shaken by number of corruption scandals. These included money laundering in the banking system by financial racketeers from neighboring countries and by drug traffickers, as well as two bank collapses provoked by the theft of assets by bank managers. In 1997, Oviedo won the Colorado Party presidential nomination by besting Argana by 10,000 votes. Argana's supporters claimed fraud, despite the fact that they controlled the party electoral tribunal, and demanded that 50,000 of the votes cast be reviewed.

Cubas, a civil engineer and originally Oviedo's vice presidential choice, was elected in May 1998, after Oviedo was jailed in March by a military tribunal for his 1996 attempted putsch and subsequently banned from standing for election. Despite the deep divisions within the Colorado Party, Cubas not only bested Laino 54 to 42 percent, but also led the party to majority status in both chambers of congress for the first time since 1989. One of Cubas's first acts was to free Oviedo, in a maneuver widely described as a "constitutional coup."

In early March 1999, an armed forces spokesman warned that the military would be obliged to defend Cubas if congress tried to remove him for failing to carry out a judicial order to send Oviedo back to jail. The murder of Argana, a bitter Oviedo foe, ended the fiction of a truce in the long-ruling Colorado Party. After Cubas's impeachment by congress, President Luis Gonzalez Macchi appointed a "national unity" government, including members of the two main opposition parties—the PLRA and the National Encounter Party. More than 100 army officers, including several generals, believed to be Oviedo supporters were forced into retirement. Oviedo, who received asylum from his long-time friend, Argentine president Menem, vowed to return to Paraguay as the head of a popular rebellion. The Paraguayan senate voted to lift the parliamentary

immunity of Wasmosy, who is now senator-for-life, so that he could face trial on corruption charges.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The 1992 constitution provides for regular elections. More than 80 percent of eligible voters participated in the 1998 elections. Although the presidential campaign was marred by the political proscription of Oviedo and threats against the national electoral tribunal, voter fraud was held to a minimum through the work of the tribunal, coverage by the media, and the willingness of the military to stand firm in favor of the process.

The constitution guarantees free political and civic organization and religious expression. However, political rights and civil liberties are undermined by the government's tolerance of threats of intimidation and use of force, including imprisonment, by its supporters against those Oviedo followers who remain in the country.

The judiciary, under the influence of the ruling party and the military, is susceptible to the corruption pervading all public and governmental institutions. Corruption cases languish for years in the courts, and most end up without resolution. The courts are generally unresponsive to human rights groups that present cases of rights violations committed either before or after the overthrow of Stroessner. Allegations include illegal detention by police and torture during incarceration, particularly in rural areas. Colombian drug traffickers continue to expand operations in Paraguay, and accusations of high official involvement in drug trafficking date back to the 1980s. In 1997, the commander of the national police was dismissed following a newspaper expose about his force's involvement in car theft, corruption, and bribery. In November 1999, the congress began impeachment proceedings against Paraguay's top anticorruption official, who is accused of bribery and extortion. Transparency International ranks Paraguay as 92nd out of 99 nations rated for public corruption.

Overcrowding, unsanitary living conditions, and mistreatment are serious problems in Paraguayan prisons. More than 95 percent of the prisoners held are pending trial, many for months or years after arrest. The constitution permits detention without trial until the accused completes the minimum sentence for the alleged crime.

In Paraguay, there is only one state-owned medium, the Radio Nacional, which has a limited listenership. A number of private television and radio stations exist, as do a number of independent newspapers. However, journalists investigating corruption or covering strikes and protests are often the victims of intimidation and violent attack by security forces. Free expression is also threatened by vague, potentially restrictive laws that mandate "responsible" behavior by journalists and media owners.

Peasant and Indian organizations demanding or illegally occupying land often meet with police crackdowns, death threats, detentions, and forced evictions by vigilante groups in the employ of landowners. Peasants have been killed in the ongoing disputes. Activist priests who support land reform are frequent targets of intimidation. The government's promise of land reform remains largely unfilled, as nearly 90 percent of agricultural land remains in the hands of foreign companies and a few hundred Paraguayan families. A program financed by the European Union to restore traditional lands to Native Americans in the eastern Chaco region has been riddled with fraud. According to official statistics, 39 percent of Paraguayans speak only Guarani, 49 percent are bilingual, and 12 percent speak only Spanish.

There are numerous trade unions and two major union federations. The 1992 con-

stitution gives public-sector workers the rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike, and nearly all these workers belong to the ruling Colorado Party. A new labor code designed to protect worker rights was passed in October 1993.

Peru

Polity: Presidential-authoritarian

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 26,600,000

PPP: \$4,680

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Indian (45 percent), mestizo (37 percent), European (15 percent), black, Asian

Capital: Lima

Political Rights: 5

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

President Alberto Fujimori's assault on the few remaining independent sources of state power in Peru, such as the National Magistrates Council and the National Electoral Board, reaped dividends in 1999, as the two-term incumbent appeared poised to seek and win a third term in the April 2000 elections. In May, the Committee to Protect Journalists named Fujimori one of the world's ten enemies of the free press.

Since independence in 1821, Peru has seen alternating periods of civilian and military rule. Civilian rule was restored in 1980 after 12 years of dictatorship. That same year the Maoist Shining Path terrorist group launched a guerrilla war that killed 30,000 people over the next 13 years.

- Fujimori, a university rector and engineer, defeated the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa in the 1990 election. In 1992 Fujimori, backed by the military, suspended the constitution and dissolved congress. The move was popular because of people's disdain for Peru's corrupt, elitist political establishment and their fear of the Shining Path.

Fujimori held a state-controlled election for an 80-member constituent assembly to replace the congress. The assembly drafted a constitution that established a unicameral congress more closely under presidential control. The constitution was approved in a state-controlled referendum following the capture of the Shining Path leader, Abimael Guzman.

Fujimori's principal opponent in the 1995 election was former United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who vowed to end Fujimori's "dictatorship." Fujimori crushed his opponent with a massive public spending and propaganda campaign that utilized state resources. The National Intelligence Service, under defacto head Vladimiro Montesinos, a Fujimori ally and one-time legal counsel to drug kingpins, was employed to spy on and discredit Perez de Cuellar and other opposition candidates. On April 9, 1995 Fujimori won an easy victory, besting Perez de Cuellar by about three to one, while Fujimori's loose coalition of allies won a majority in the new 120-seat congress.

In August 1996 congress passed a law allowing Fujimori to run for a third term,

despite a constitutional provision limiting the president to two terms. The law evaded this restriction by defining Fujimori's current term as his first under the 1993 constitution.

On April 22, 1997, the seizure of the Japanese ambassador's residence came to a violent end when a commando raid liberated all but one of the 72 hostages and killed all 14 of the insurgents. That May, the president of the seven-person Tribunal of Constitutional Guarantees—the body that assesses the constitutional legality of national legislation—resigned with the words "the rule of law has broken down in Peru." His action came after congress dismissed three other tribunal members who had ruled, at the end of 1996, that legislation designed to enable Fujimori to stand for reelection in the year 2000 was not applicable. In March 1998 the National Magistrates Council resigned en masse four months after Fujimori's congress altered the National Elections Commission so as to give the president increased influence.

In response to criticism about "faceless" military judges presiding at trials of accused terrorists, in July 1999 Peru announced it was withdrawing from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, a move that boosted Fujimori's flagging popularity in public opinion polls. A new element in the government's autocratic arsenal appeared to be the abuse of power by Sunat, the government's internal revenue service, with credible reports of several cases of harassment by Sunat agents of Fujimori opponents, including, in one case, the searching of their offices. In late 1999, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution criticizing Fujimori for interfering with the judiciary, harassing the press, and manipulating Peruvian institutions in order to stay in power.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: In the past, the Fujimori government has been termed a presidential-military regime with the trappings of a formal democracy. In 1998, however, Fujimori was able to turn the tables on a restless army high command and reestablish his primacy over the generals, forcing the commander of the armed forces, General Nicolas de Bad Hermoza, into retirement. In early 1999, a number of military leaders were discharged, an effort that analysts said consolidated the power of Fujimori allies and helped ensure armed forces support for a presidential reelection bid.

Although Fujimori had considerable popular support, the 1995 election was not fair by international standards because of the massive use of state resources and military and state intelligence during the campaign. Electoral laws require any party that failed to obtain five percent of the popular vote in 1995 to obtain 400,000 signatures to re-register; few parties have managed to do so. Given the marginalization of political parties, the lack of an independent judiciary, and the relative weakness of trade unions and other elements of civil society, few independent power centers exist outside of the president and his allies in the military high command.

Under the December 1993 constitution, the president can rule virtually by decree. Fujimori can dissolve congress in the event of a "grave conflict" between the executive and legislature, as he did in 1992. The constitution overturned Peru's tradition of no reelection.

In 1994, there were judicial reforms, and a new supreme court was named. However, the Peruvian judiciary remains inefficient, often corrupt, and among the least independent in Latin America. In August 1996 congress installed a Tribunal of Constitutional Guarantees, as called for under the 1993 constitution, with powers of judicial

review. However, parliament also passed a law requiring the votes of six of the seven members of the Tribunal to declare a law or government action unconstitutional. The first real test of the Tribunal's mandate—the ruling on Fujimori's eligibility for reelection to a third consecutive term—also proved to be the institution's undoing. In August 1998, a vote by congress appeared to clear the way for Fujimori to run again in the year **2000**.

Public safety, particularly in Lima, is threatened by vicious warfare among opposing gangs—some of whom use body armor and high-powered weapons—and violent crime. Police estimate that there are more than 1,000 criminal gangs in the capital alone. Torture remains routine in police detention centers, and conditions remain deplorable in prisons for common criminals.

The press is largely privately owned. Radio and television are both privately and publicly owned. State-owned media are blatantly pro-government, and the opposition complains that while Fujimori receives uncritical coverage by official media, members of the opposition cannot even put paid ads on television. Since 1992, many in the media, especially television and print journalists, have been pressured into self-censorship or exile by a broad government campaign of intimidation—abductions, death threats, libel suits, the withholding of advertising, police harassment, arbitrary detention, physical mistreatment, or imprisonment on charges of "apology for terrorism."

In September 1997, a government-controlled court stripped Baruch Ivcher, an Israeli emigre and the owner of the Channel 2 television station, of control of his media business and his Peruvian citizenship after the station aired reports linking the military to torture and corruption, as well as an expose of a telephone espionage ring run by intelligence agents to spy on opposition politicians and journalists. In 1999, government intelligence agents continued to orchestrate a defamation campaign in the tabloid press against independent publishers and journalists. In June, the armed forces high command invited regional military commanders to a meeting to evaluate the media under their territorial jurisdiction and to discuss strategies for neutralizing the opposition press in the country's interior.

Racism against Peru's large Indian population is prevalent among the middle and upper classes, although the Fujimori government has made some effort to combat it. The provisions of the 1993 constitution and subsequent implementing legislation regarding the treatment of native lands are less explicit about the inalienability and unmarketability of these lands than earlier constitutional and statutory protections were. The Shining Path guerrillas continue to practice intimidation and forced recruitment of indigenous peoples, which frequently result in their territorial displacement.

In 1996 the International Labor Organization criticized the labor code for failing to protect workers from anti-union discrimination and for restricting collective bargaining rights. Forced labor, including child labor, is prevalent in the gold-mining region of the Amazon.

Philippines

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy (insurgencies) **Political Rights:** 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 74,700,000

PPP: \$3,520

Life Expectancy: 67

Ethnic Groups: Christian Malay (91.5 percent), Muslim Malay (4 percent), Chinese (1.5 percent), other (3 percent)

Capital: Manila



Overview:

In 1999, critics accused President Joseph Estrada of cronyism, undermining press freedom, and showing a lack of direction in implementing economic reforms, while supporters pointed to new anti-poverty programs and stable economic indicators.

The Philippines achieved independence in 1946 after 43 years under U.S. rule and occupation by the Japanese during World War II. Ferdinand Marcos, first elected president in 1965, declared martial law in 1972 to circumvent a constitutional two-term limit. The 1986 "People Power" street protests and a split in the armed forces following a blatantly rigged election ended Marcos's dictatorial rule. His opponent in the election, Corazon Aquino, took office. The 1987 constitution vests executive power in a president who is directly elected for a single six-year term. The congress consists of a senate with 24 directly elected members and a house of representatives with 201 directly elected members and up to 50 more appointed by the president.

Aquino consolidated some democratic gains, but faced at least six coup attempts by reactionary army factions and other opponents. Under her successor, former army chief of staff Fidel Ramos, the government ended power shortages and weakened somewhat the considerable political and economic power of large, family-owned business monopolies. Economic reforms raised gross domestic product growth but widened income disparities. In 1997, massive street protests forced Ramos to disavow his supporters' efforts to amend the constitution to allow the president to run for reelection. The protesters argued that the one-term limit provided a necessary check on executive power.

The longtime front-runner for the May 11, 1998, presidential elections was Vice President Joseph Estrada, a former movie actor whom his opponents denounced as a hard-drinking philanderer with close ties to Marcos-era tycoons. Under an estimated 80 percent turnout, Estrada won 46.4 percent of the vote on a pro-poor platform to defeat seven other candidates. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a senator and economist, won the separate vice presidential balloting. In concurrent house elections, Estrada's Struggle for a Democratic Philippines party won 110 seats, with the LAKAS-National Union of Christian Democrats coming in second with 50.

In 1999, the administration established several anti-poverty programs targeted toward Estrada's lower-class constituency. In August and September, churches, unions, and other groups organized large urban protests against Estrada's proposal to amend the constitution to further open the economy to foreign investment. Estrada pledged to

leave intact the single-term limit on the presidency, but opponents argued that congress, if convened as a constituent assembly to amend the constitution, might seek to ease the term limits for congressmen and senators. In the fall, polls showed the president's popularity slipping. Critics charged Estrada with cronyism in the granting of lucrative gambling licenses without bidding contracts and other alleged insider deals, although they cited no actual wrongdoing, and faulted the administration for neither confronting the problem of high levels of nonperforming loans in the banking system nor pushing Congress to pass a series of economic reform bills.

Since 1992, the government has held negotiations over a permanent peace settlement with leaders of the Communist National Democratic Front (NDF) insurgency that began in the late 1960s. A hardline NDF splinter group remains active in Negros Occidental province. In 1996, the government signed a peace agreement with the separatist Moro National Liberation Front, which had waged a 24-year insurgency on southern Mindanao Island. Two smaller groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf, continue to wage low-grade insurgencies on Mindanao for an independent Islamic state.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Filipinos can change their government democratically. Elections are increasingly peaceful and transparent. Nevertheless, some fraud and intimidation, and at least 47 election-related deaths, marred the 1998 national and local elections. Corruption, cronyism, nepotism, and influence-peddling are widespread in business and government. Throughout the country, local clans and landowners hold considerable power.

The insurgencies in Mindanao occur in the context of complaints by the Moros, or Muslims who live primarily in Mindanao, of economic and social discrimination by the country's Christian majority. Skirmishes between the army and the MILF in Mindanao and nearby Basilan Island annually displace tens of thousands of civilians. Residents occasionally accuse the army of indiscriminate shelling and other abuses during counterinsurgency operations. The MILF and other groups often forcibly evacuate villagers from their homes. Insurgent groups and criminal gangs operate protection rackets and kidnapping syndicates that mainly target ethnic Chinese businessmen and their families in Manila and Mindanao.

Each year, police, soldiers, and local civilian militias are accused of committing several extrajudicial killings and disappearances and are implicated in the torture and arbitrary arrest and detention of suspects. Security forces are also accused of involvement in extortion schemes, the drug trade, illicit logging, and other illegal private activities. Civilian militias often guard private commercial interests in the countryside and violate the rights of local residents with near impunity. In recent years, Communist insurgents and the MILF have been implicated in several cases of extrajudicial execution and arbitrary arrest and detention.

The judiciary is independent. However, courts are understaffed, heavily backlogged, and rife with corruption. The courts frequently ignore due process safeguards including the right to an attorney. In practice, poor people often have little recourse under the law. In February 1999, the Philippines carried out its first execution in 23 years. Prison conditions are poor and dangerous.

The private press is vigorous, though often prone to innuendo in its political coverage. Outside Manila, illegal logging outfits, drug traffickers, and other criminal groups

harass and intimidate journalists. Gunmen have killed several journalists in recent years. In March 1999, the president sued the *Manila Times* for libel over an article that called Estrada an "unwilling godfather" to an allegedly improper government contract. Estrada dropped the suit after the paper issued a limited apology. The family that owned the *Manila Times* sold the newspaper in July, and in November, the London-based *Financial Times* reported that relatives and associates of an Estrada associate had bought a 60 percent stake in the newspaper from the new owner. In July, Estrada accused the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a major newspaper that had run articles on alleged government corruption, of being biased against him. Several major companies withdrew advertising from the paper, although the administration denied that it had instigated a boycott.

Nongovernmental human rights organizations are active. Freedom of religion is respected in this predominantly Roman Catholic country. A 1998 Asian Development Bank survey reported that Muslim provinces in Mindanao lag behind the rest of Mindanao on most development indicators. Indigenous peoples constitute 18 percent of the population and face occasional reprisal attacks during army counterinsurgency operations and displacement from ancestral lands by commercial projects.

Domestic violence, rape, violence in the context of domestic prostitution, and trafficking of Filipino women abroad for the purpose of prostitution continue to be major problems. Women have made gains in educational opportunities, but still face private sector employment discrimination. There are more than 100,000 street children and tens of thousands of child prostitutes.

Unions are independent but have brought relatively few workers under collective bargaining agreements. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has criticized labor laws providing for compulsory arbitration of disputes in "essential" industries, penalties for strikes deemed illegal, and restrictions on the right of government workers to strike and bargain collectively. Private sector employers often physically harass and intimidate union organizers and try to forcibly break strikes, particularly in export processing zones. Employers frequently violate minimum wage standards. According to UNICEF and the ILO, more than two million children work in hazardous conditions.

Poland

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 38,700,000

PPP: \$6,520

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Polish (98 percent), German (1 percent), Ukrainian and Belorussian (1 percent)

Capital: Warsaw

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Two events that seemed unlikely in Poland ten years ago occurred in 1999: Poland joined NATO, and Pope John Paul

He visited in June to help his country celebrate the tenth anniversary of communism's demise. Yet ten years of democracy, free markets, and integration with Europe was matched in 1999 by economic slowdown, budget cuts, and bungled reforms that made the coalition government of Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek increasingly unpopular.

Poland was partitioned by Prussia, Russia, and Austria in the eighteenth century and reemerged as an independent republic after World War I. In 1939, it was invaded and divided by Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, coming under full German control after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. After the war, its eastern territories remained part of Ukraine, but it acquired large tracts of eastern Prussia. The Communists gained control after fraudulent elections in 1947.

Roundtable discussions between the Communist regime and the opposition, led by the Solidarity Trade Union, ended Communist rule in 1989. In 1990 Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity leader, was directly elected president. A highly fragmented parliament and a powerful president led to a series of failed governments while market reforms steadily improved economic conditions.

In 1993, voters swept the former Communists back into power, and the reformed Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) governed with the support of the Peasant Party (PSL). In March 1995, Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak, of the PSL, was replaced by Jozef Oleksy after a three-month crisis during which opposition groups called for a caretaker nonparty government of national unity. Later that year, Alexander Kwasniewski of the SLD defeated Walesa in a runoff for the presidency. In 1997, the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) coalition ousted the ruling SLD in parliamentary elections. Buzek, a veteran Solidarity activist, was named to lead a coalition government with the pro-market Freedom Union (UW).

Poland joined NATO on March 12, 1999. Reforms and agricultural policies to make the country ready for European Union (EU) membership by the year 2003 sparked protests by farmers, and June polls showed that public support for EU membership dropped from 64 percent in 1998 to 55 percent in 1999. Public concerns about reform were further heightened by the botched privatization of the country's health care system. The economy slowed in 1999, marked by 12 percent unemployment, 6 percent inflation, falling foreign investment, and lower exports. The gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to decrease, from 4.8 percent in 1998 to 3.6 in 1999. The government's popularity sank to an all-time low in September, but Buzek defused calls to step down with a cabinet shuffle in October.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Poles have the means to change their government democratically under a multiparty system. In 1997, Polish citizens approved a new constitution by referendum. The document confirmed civil and political rights and weakened some of the appointive powers of the president. It also allowed a presidential veto to be overridden by a three-fifths parliamentary vote. In May, the lower house followed up on 1997 constitutional provision, allowing for citizen-initiated referendums on issues not related to the constitution, the budget, or the public debt.

The constitution guarantees freedom of the press and of expression, though there are laws proscribing publicly insulting or deriding the nation and its political system. More than 85 percent of the media have been privatized. There are more than 300 newspapers, 119 commercial radio stations (six national stations, five of which are state-

owned), as well as ten commercial television stations. In August 1999, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland began plans for a national commercial television station. Private broadcasters face stiff competition from state media, but most are partly owned by well-financed foreign media companies. Major newspapers also have foreign investors, and the print media are restricted to no more than 33 percent foreign ownership. PAP, the national wire service, was privatized in 1997. The National TV and Radio Council is ostensibly independent of the government, but since its nine members are nominated by parliament, the senate, and the president's office, politics play a role in its composition. In September, the director of the state Television Information Agency resigned, claiming that council members sympathetic towards the Polish Peasants' Party were pressuring journalists and editors to give the party disproportionate coverage.

Religious freedom is guaranteed in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. Tensions exist between the Roman Catholic majority and the Ukrainian Catholic minority in parts of the country with a sizable Ukrainian population. In August, a Jewish community center was vandalized. During the last year, the Roman Catholic church established Radio Plus as a more moderate and tolerant alternative to Radio Maryja, a popular national station owned by the Redemptionist fathers, which has aired anti-Semitic views by listeners and programs critical of the EU and foreign investment.

The law provides for freedom of assembly, and the government generally respects this right in practice.

Poland has a wide range of political parties estimated to total more than 200, but most are small or exist mainly on paper. Poland has about 25,000 NGOs, ranging from professional associations and think tanks to civil society organizations and youth groups.

The constitution allows for the formation of independent trade unions. The principal union federations are the former Communist National Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ) and the Independent Self-governing Trade Union Solidarity (NSZZ). In September, more than 30,000 farmers, miners, and industrial workers protested in Warsaw over government budget cuts, low wages, and EU reforms that lowered or eliminated subsidies. Doctors, nurses, and civil servants also protested over low pay and poor work conditions in 1999. The lack of reforms in the deteriorating agriculture sector, which employs more than 20 percent of Poland's work-force, contributed to the farmers' activism and to the growing prominence of the nationalist farm union leader Andrzej Lepper.

The criminal justice system has been dramatically restructured over the last eight years. Judges rule fairly in criminal and civil cases, but the courts are plagued by poor administration and financial problems. In 1999 the government expedited the process of investigating and removing nonelected officials who had been involved with the previous Communist regime. In March, three prosecutors and the deputy minister of the economy resigned because they had not disclosed their involvement with the Communist-era secret services. In October, Burzek dismissed Deputy Prime Minister Janusz Tomaszewski, a long-time Solidarity activist, for supposedly cooperating with Communist security services. Although September 1999 surveys indicated that 79 percent of Poles supported the investigations, the resignations and dismissals renewed criticism that the process had become a destabilizing witch-hunt.

Freedom of movement is not restricted, and Poles can choose their place of residence and employment. Property rights are secure under law, though registries of land, companies, and property liens are not fully developed. In July 1999, the government

initiated laws, to take effect by the end of the year, that would increase copyright protection and ease restrictions on foreigners owning land.

The constitution guarantees equality of the sexes. Women are represented in government, business, and educational institutions. There are scores of women's organizations and advocacy groups concerned with issues ranging from domestic violence to women's rights.

Portugal

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 10,000,000
PPP: \$14,270
Life Expectancy: 75
Ethnic Groups: Portuguese, African minority
Capital: Lisbon

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

Prime Minister Antonio Guterres's minority Socialist government has ruled Portugal since 1995. When his party narrowly missed winning a majority in national elections in October 1999, the prime minister pledged to continue governing Portugal with a minority government. The Communist Party gained two parliamentary seats in the elections, bringing its total to 17 in the 230-seat legislature. Despite opposition from small left- and right-wing groups, the ruling Socialists and opposition Social Democrats both supported the country's entry into the European Monetary Union in 1999.

After ruling Macau for 442 years, Portugal divested itself of its last remaining colony by handing it over to Chinese rule on December 20. After Portugal and Indonesia resumed ties in December, President Jorge Sampaio visited East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, later in the month. The visit underscored Portugal's commitment to helping rebuild the territory.

Formerly a great maritime and colonial empire, Portugal ended its monarchy in a bloodless revolution in 1910. The republic, plagued by chronic instability and violence, ended in a military revolt in 1926. A Fascist dictatorship under Antonio Salazar lasted from 1932 to 1968. In 1968, the dying Salazar was replaced by his lieutenant, Marcello Caetano. During what is now termed the "Marcello spring," repression and censorship were relaxed somewhat and a liberal wing developed inside the one-party National Assembly. In 1974, Caetano was overthrown in a bloodless coup by the Armed Forces Movement, which opposed the ongoing colonial wars in Mozambique and Angola. A transition to democracy then began with the election of a constitutional assembly that adopted a democratic constitution in 1976. The constitution was revised in 1982 to bring the military under civilian control, curb the president's powers, and abolish an unelected "Revolutionary Council." In 1989, a second revision of the constitution provided for further privatization of nationalized industries and state-owned media.

The election of the Socialist Party's Jorge Sampaio as president in 1996 marked the end of a conservative era in which Portugal benefited economically, but failed to satisfy its voters' eagerness for social change. In his ten years as prime minister, Social Democrat Anibal Cavaco Silva led the country into the European Union, launched an ambitious privatization program, and channeled massive funding into the country's infrastructure. Sampaio has vowed to continue economic reforms, but he won popularity by adding a social dimension to his agenda. In the minds of constituents, issues such as education, health, housing, and the environment have assumed greater importance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Portuguese can change their government democratically. In direct, competitive elections, voters, including a large number of Portuguese living abroad, select both the president and members of parliament. The president, who also commands the country's armed forces, is elected to a five-year term. The president receives advice from the Council of State, which includes six senior civilian officials, former presidents, five members chosen by the legislature, and five chosen by the president. The country's unicameral legislature includes up to 235 deputies.

With the exception of Fascist organizations, political association is unrestricted. Members of small, extreme-right groups, however, have run candidates for public office without interference. In 1997, the constitution was amended to allow immigrants to vote in presidential elections.

Portuguese courts are autonomous and operate only under the restraints of established law and the constitution. They include a constitutional court, a supreme court of justice, and judicial courts of the first and second instance. Separate administrative courts address administrative and tax disputes. They are generally noted for their adherence to traditional principles of independent jurisprudence, but inefficient bureaucratic organization has created an enormous backlog of cases in the system.

Freedoms of speech and assembly are respected with few exceptions. Although the law forbids insults directed at the government or the armed forces and those intended to undermine the rule of law, the state has never prosecuted cases under this provision. Human rights organizations have repeatedly criticized Portugal for the occasional beating of prisoners and other detainees. In general, prison conditions are poor.

The print media, which are owned by political parties and private publishers, are free and competitive. Until 1990, all television and radio media, with the exception of the Roman Catholic radio station, were state-owned. Although television broadcasting is dominated by the state-owned Radiotelevisão Portuguesa, two independent stations have operated in recent years.

Workers have the right to strike and are represented by competing Communist and non-Communist organizations. In recent years, the two principal labor federations, the General Union of Workers and the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers Intersindical, have charged "clandestine" companies with exploiting child labor in the impoverished north.

The status of women has improved with economic modernization. Concentrated in agriculture and domestic service, women workers now constitute 37 percent of the official labor force. Despite a few prominent exceptions, female representation in government and politics averages less than ten percent. Sexual harassment is only illegal if committed by a superior in the workplace.

Qatar

Polity: Traditional monarchy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 500,000

PPP: \$20,987

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Arab (40 percent), Pakistani (18 percent), Indian (18 percent), Iranian (10 percent), other (14 percent)

Capital: Doha

Ratings Change: Qatar's political rights rating changed from 7 to 6 because of free and fair municipal elections held on March 8.

Political Rights: 6*

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Qatar held its first election on March 8, 1999, for a 29-member advisory council on municipal affairs. Although the council is limited to issuing opinions on a narrow scope of issues, its election is regarded as a watershed in a region where rulers traditionally resist sharing power with their constituents. By allowing women to vote and to stand as candidates, Qatar became the first Persian Gulf state to hold a direct election on the basis of universal suffrage. Six women were among the 248 candidates, but none won a council seat.

Qatar became a British protectorate in 1919 and gained independence when Great Britain withdrew from the Persian Gulf in 1971. Under the 1970 Basic Law, an emir is chosen from among the adult males of the al-Thani family. The Basic Law also provides for a council of ministers and a partially-elected Majlis al-Shura, or advisory council. In practice, the 35-member Majlis is fully appointed.

In 1995, Crown Prince Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, long recognized as the real power in the country, deposed his father in a palace coup while the emir vacationed in Switzerland. Since then, Sheikh Hamad has taken steps to introduce greater political openness. Press censorship was formally lifted with the dissolution of the information ministry in 1995, and in 1998 the emirate held direct elections to the board of the powerful chamber of commerce and industry. In July 1999, Hamad appointed a committee to draw up a permanent constitution over three years with a provision for a directly elected parliament with legislative power. The committee is to report to the government on its progress every six months.

Analysts note that Sheikh Hamad's commitment to democratic reform appears to outweigh that of his subjects. Unlike other countries in the region, Qatar has come under virtually no popular pressure to reform. Only 55 percent of eligible Qataris registered to vote in the March municipal elections despite an extension of the registration deadline. *The Economist* attributed the lack of enthusiasm to the strong conservative nature of Qatari society. Indeed, women candidates admitted to facing criticism of their decision to stand. And surprisingly, Qatar's leading families did not field candidates for the election. So Hamad's motives for promoting political openness remain unclear. One explanation is that he regards gradual democratization as conducive to long-term eco-

conomic development. Another is that by boosting the legitimacy of his government, he might forestall the type of violent civil unrest plaguing other Arab states, such as neighboring Bahrain.

In late July, authorities announced the arrest of Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Hamad al-Thani, cousin of the emir and prime suspect in a failed 1996 coup attempt. Accused of masterminding a plot to restore the emir's father to the throne, Hamad went on trial in September and faces a possible death sentence if convicted. More than 120 people, mostly former military and police officials, have been tried since 1997 for involvement in the attempted coup, 36 in absentia. On October 28, Doha's higher criminal court announced the end of the trials. Verdicts are expected in February 2000.

In June, Qatar and Saudi Arabia ended over 30 years of dispute over their common border by signing a map defining a border acceptable to both. A long-standing dispute with Bahrain over two Gulf islands with reported oil reserves continues.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Qataris cannot change their government democratically. Political parties are illegal, and there are no organized opposition groups. The emir holds absolute power, though he consults with leading members of society on policy issues and works to reach consensus with the appointed Majlis. Citizens have the right to appeal government decisions by petitioning the emir. Qatar's first elections, for a municipal advisory council, were held in March and were considered by international observers to be free and fair. Participation was surprisingly low; of 40,000 eligible voters, only 22,000 registered. But the vibrant campaign included televised debates, posters, and informal gatherings to discuss matters of municipal policy. The elected council plays an advisory role on issues such as road maintenance and food safety. It reports to the minister of municipal affairs, who is not required to heed its advice and may dissolve it at will. In July, the emir initiated work on a new constitution that will provide for a directly elected parliament.

The civilian security force under the interior ministry includes the general police force; the investigatory police, or mubahathat, which handles sedition and espionage cases; the special state security investigative unit, or mubahith, which handles internal security and intelligence gathering; and the independent civilian intelligence service, or mukhabarat. Suspects in security cases may be detained indefinitely while under investigation and are generally denied access to counsel, though long-term detention occurs infrequently. Torture is reportedly not a problem.

The judiciary is not independent. Most judges are foreign nationals whose residence permits may be revoked at any time. However, courts have been known to summon senior officials and members of the ruling family as witnesses. Civil courts have jurisdiction in civil and commercial disputes, while Sharia (Islamic) courts handle family, civil, and criminal cases. Sharia court trials are closed to the general public, and lawyers are not permitted in the courtroom. While corporal punishment is practiced in accord with Shari'a, amputation is prohibited. In October 1999, the Qatari higher criminal court heard the last of the cases of more than 120 defendants charged in connection with the 1996 failed coup. Verdicts are expected in February 2000.

The media in Qatar have been virtually free of government interference since the lifting of censorship in 1995, but self-censorship is still pervasive because of real or imagined social and political pressures. State-run television, radio, and newspapers generally avoid taboo subjects such as Islam and the royal family, but in June they took

the unprecedented step of criticizing state funding of Qatar's royal family. The satellite television channel Al-Jazeera operates freely. Owned and operated by a member of the ruling family, the all-news channel presents interviews with dissidents and exiles throughout the region, lively debates that include opposition views, commentary on human rights issues, and even discussions of the role of religion in Arab culture. Its controversial coverage captivates Middle Eastern viewers while drawing furious protest from regional leaders.

Freedom of association is limited to private social, sports, trade, professional, and cultural societies registered with the government. Political parties do not exist, and political demonstrations are prohibited.

Foreign nationals employed as domestic workers face sexual harassment and physical abuse. Although the authorities have investigated and punished several employers, most women apparently do not report abuse for fear of losing their residence permits. Some 25,000 Egyptian nationals live in Qatar, but hiring Egyptians was banned in 1996 when Qatari authorities accused Egypt of involvement in the failed 1996 coup.

Women have made important gains in recent years. Although the number of women in the workforce is still very small, women have begun to find jobs in education, medicine, and the news media. According to one study, the number of Qatari women in government jobs increased by 61 percent between 1991 and 1997. Women participated as candidates and as voters in the March municipal election, and constituted 44 percent of registered voters. The government increasingly awards scholarships to women wishing to study abroad. Still, in this socially conservative country, society places restrictions on women even where the law does not. Although women may legally travel abroad alone, most travel with male escorts. Legal discrimination still exists in family matters such as divorce and inheritance.

The Wahhabi order of Sunni Islam is the state religion. While public worship by non-Muslims is officially prohibited, services conducted privately with prior notification of authorities are tolerated, and a large foreign population practices discreetly. There is a small number of Shiite mosques. Public schools provide compulsory instruction in Islam. Since Sharia courts handle most civil claims, non-Muslims, who cannot bring suit in Sharia courts, are at a disadvantage. The U.S. State Department notes an upward trend in religious freedom for Christians, including promised provision of land on which to build churches.

Workers may not form unions or bargain collectively. They may belong to joint consultative committees of worker and management representatives that discuss such issues as working conditions and work schedules, but not wages. The government's Labor Conciliation Board mediates disputes. Workers, excepting those in government or domestic employment, may strike if mediation fails. Employers sometimes exercise leverage over foreign workers by refusing to grant mandatory exit permits.

Romania

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)
Population: 22,500,000
PPP: \$4,310
Life Expectancy: 69

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free

Ethnic Groups: Romanian (89 percent), Hungarian (9 percent), other, including German, Ukrainian, Serb, Croat, Russian, Turkish, Gypsy (2 percent)

Capital: Bucharest

Overview:

Romania was plagued by slow economic reforms, debilitating strikes, endemic poverty, corruption, and political squabbling in 1999. Despite these negative trends, Romania demonstrated its support to NATO and the European Union through the Kosovo conflict, thus increasing its chances of entry into both organizations.

In January 1999, miners from the Jiu Valley went on strike and threatened to march on Bucharest if their demands, including a 35 percent wage increase and greater job security, were not met. The miners were protesting the closings of two unprofitable state mines, which were part of an economic reform package critical to Romania's attempt to gain financial help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The miners clashed with police, provoking social unrest and threatening political stability and economic progress in an already fragile country. Although the strike did pose a threat, the authorities were able to maintain control and an agreement to reopen the two mines and to increase wages was supposedly established.

Romania became independent following the 1878 Berlin Congress. It gained territory after World War I, but lost some to the Soviet Union and Bulgaria in 1940. When Soviet troops entered the country in 1944, King Michael dismissed the pro-German regime and backed the Allies. In 1945, he was forced to accept a Communist-led coalition government. The autarkic economics and repressive governance of Communist strongman Nicolae Ceausescu devastated Romania during his rule from 1965 to 1989. On December 25, 1989, Ceausescu was tried and executed following a popular uprising and palace coup by disgruntled Communists. A provisional government was formed under President Ion Iliescu, a high-ranking Communist and leader of the National Salvation Front (NSF). The 1992 parliamentary elections saw the NSF split between neo-Communist and more reformist members.

In November 1996, the reformer, Emil Constantinescu, of the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR), defeated Iliescu with 54.41 percent of the votes while Ion Iliescu scored 45.59 percent in the presidential elections. The CDR won 122 seats in the chamber of deputies (lower house) and 53 seats in the senate. Iliescu's Party of Social Democracy of Romania (PDSR) won 91 seats in the lower house and 41 seats in the senate. Victor Ciorbea, a lawyer, former labor leader, and ex-mayor of Bucharest, was chosen prime minister to lead the coalition government. In March 1998 Ciorbea resigned and Radu Vasile, secretary general of the National Peasant Party Christian

Democratic became prime minister.

Romania's frustration about its economic position has created a lack of confidence and support for Constantinescu's coalition government (CDR), which is comprised of National Peasant Party Christian Democrats (PNTCD), Social Democrats (USD), Liberals (PNL), and ethnic Hungarians (UDMR). In December, Constantinescu dismissed Prime Minister Vasile after ten of the seventeen cabinet members had resigned. Vasile was accused of failing to speed up economic reforms and improve living conditions. The head of the Central Bank of Romania (BNR), Mugur Isarescu, replaced Vasile as prime minister. The latest opinion poll in December shows Iliescu leading with 40 percent and Constantinescu trailing at 23 percent.

The economy is in its third consecutive year of contraction, having suffered severe weather conditions and trade losses resulting from blocked shipping on the Danube due to the Kosovo war. The IMF also had posed strict conditions for the disbursement of a loan of US\$547 million this year, including adopting a budget with a deficit of no more than 2.5 percent of gross domestic product and obtaining US\$350 million in private loans before signing the deal. The government met another demand; the absorption by Banca Comerciala Romana of the state Bancorex bank. The IMF loan enabled Romania to receive US\$325 million in World Bank loans and US\$207 million in credits from the EU, all of which helped to avoid default on Romania's external debt of US\$2.2 billion and the restructuring of Romania's privatization program.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Romanians can change their government democratically under a multiparty system enshrined in a 1991 post-Communist constitution. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) judged the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections "free and generally fair," citing such problems as incomplete voter registration rolls and irregularities in registering candidates.

The 1991 constitution enshrines freedom of expression and the press, but it limits the boundaries of free expression by prohibiting "defamation of the country." Under Law No. 40 of the 1996 Romanian penal code, journalists face up to two years' imprisonment for libel and up to five years for disseminating false information that affects Romania's international relations and national security. Two journalists were sentenced to one-year prison terms and fined for slander. In January 1999 Constantinescu pardoned another journalist who was sentenced in 1998 for libel. There were also reports of attacks on journalists who were writing stories on illicit business deals.

Religious freedom is generally respected although newer religious organizations have not been allowed to register with the state secretary of religions, which had denied their right to freely exercise their religious beliefs and prevented them from building places of worship, cemeteries, etc. The pope visited Romania in 1999 hoping to begin a dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Greek Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite joined with the pope to seek recovery of numerous properties seized by the Communists in 1948.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly, and the government respects this right. Workers have the right to form unions and strike. The economic and political transition has affected the Romanian population as various sectors such as trade unions and rail workers have gone on strike and demanded higher salaries, better working conditions, and job security.

Romania's justice system is divided into four courts: the Courts of First Instance, the Tribunals, the Courts of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of Justice. All are independent of other government branches but subject to influence by the executive branch. Under the law, judges are appointed, promoted, and transferred by the 15-member Higher Council of the Judiciary, which is elected for four-year terms by the two chambers of parliament. To diminish the politicization of the process, a 1997 revision of the law called for the members of the Higher Council to be appointed by the justice minister, not by parliament.

There are no significant changes in the 1996 Penal Code that replaced the Communist-era criminal code. It includes Article 200, which punishes displays of public homosexuality. Helsinki Watch of Romania reported police brutality and beatings. The Roma (Gypsy) population is still subject to human rights abuses. There are cases of police brutality directed at the Roma and their complaints are less frequently registered or investigated than those by the general population. May 1999 saw the adoption of a civil service law requiring civil servants whose duties involve direct contact with the public, in areas where an ethnic minority constitutes 20 percent or more of the population, to be able to speak the minority's language. In July 1999, the government agreed to establish university departments offering courses in minority languages.

Corruption is endemic in the government bureaucracy, civil service, and business. Property rights are secure, though the ability of citizens to start businesses continues to be encumbered by red tape, corruption, and organized crime.

There are no restrictions on travel within the country, and citizens who want to change their place of residence do not face any official barriers. Women have equal rights with men, though violence against women, including rape, continues to be a serious problem.

Russia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5*
Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)
Status: Partly Free

Population: 146,500,000

PPP: \$4,570

Life Expectancy: 67

Ethnic Groups: Russian (82 percent), Tatar (4 percent), Ukrainian (3 percent), others (11 percent)

Capital: Moscow

Ratings change: Russia's civil liberties rating changed from 4 to 5 due to growing harassment of ethnic Chechens in the wake of several deadly bombings in August, and increased political interference in the media during the Chechnya crisis and preceding the parliamentary elections.



Overview:

The last day of 1999 signaled the end of an era in Russian politics, as President Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned on

December 31, six months ahead of scheduled presidential elections. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who had been Yeltsin's choice to succeed him, became acting head of state pending presidential elections rescheduled from June 2000 to March 2001. In September, Russia launched its second war in Chechnya during the 1990s, with Putin as one of its key backers. Following a series of deadly bomb blasts in Moscow and other cities in August, which the government blamed on Chechen rebels, the campaign in Chechnya quickly gained overwhelming public support.

The year was also marked by the Kremlin's various political maneuverings, including the dismissal of two prime ministers, preceding parliamentary elections in December. The pro-Kremlin Unity bloc, created to counter the influence of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, made a strong showing in the legislative poll, coming in a close second to the Communist Party. The success of Unity was largely attributed to its endorsement by Putin, whose own popularity had increased dramatically as the result of his close association with the military campaign in Chechnya.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, Russia reemerged as a separate, independent state for the first time since 1921 under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin, who had been elected president in June 1991. Yeltsin was challenged by a hostile anti-reform legislature in 1992, as parliament replaced acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, a principal architect of reforms, with Viktor Chernomyrdin, a Soviet-era manager of the giant natural gas monopoly, Gazprom. The following year, Yeltsin put down an attempted coup by hardliners in parliament, and a new constitution was approved creating a bicameral national legislature, the Federal Assembly. The December 1995 parliamentary elections, in which 43 parties competed, saw the victory of Communists and nationalist forces, as the Communist Party won 157 seats; Our Home is Russia, 55; Liberal Democrats, 51; and Yabloko, 45. Independent candidates and other smaller parties captured the remaining seats.

In presidential elections in 1996, Yeltsin, who was openly supported by the country's most influential media and business elites, easily defeated Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov with 54 percent of the vote to 40 percent in a runoff in July. The signing of a peace agreement in August 1996 with authorities in the republic of Chechnya put an end to a nearly two-year war with the breakaway territory, in which Russia suffered a humiliating defeat and Chechnya's formal economy and infrastructure were largely destroyed. However, a final decision on the region's status was officially deferred until 2001.

In March 1998, Yeltsin dismissed Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and his entire government, citing the failure of economic reforms, and replaced him with the little-known Energy Minister Sergei Kiriyenko. As the country's economic situation continued to worsen, the ruble collapsed in August, forcing a devaluation of the currency and precipitating the collapse of Russia's financial markets. In response, Yeltsin fired Kiriyenko, appointing Chernomyrdin as acting prime minister. However, after parliament twice rejected Chernomyrdin's candidacy, Yeltsin nominated Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who was approved by the legislature in September. The new government, which did not include any well-known reformers, signaled a return to greater spending and increased state control.

The first several months of 1999 were marked by an impending political crisis, as the Duma decided in March to begin impeachment debates in the near future against

Yeltsin over five charges, including starting the 1994-1996 war in Chechnya. On May 12, Yeltsin fired Prime Minister Primakov, replacing him with his longtime loyal ally Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin. Many analysts concluded that the decision was a tactic to avoid impeachment, as the constitution stipulates that the president may dissolve parliament if he appoints a prime minister who fails to win confirmation in three parliamentary votes. In addition, Primakov's moves to establish an independent power base by consolidating various political forces was viewed as a growing threat to Yeltsin and his inner circle. After three days of debate, the impeachment vote failed on May 15, and parliament approved Stepashin as prime minister by a wide margin of 301 to 55 on May 19.

In a development which threatened to destabilize the northern Caucasus region, a group of over 1,000 Chechen guerillas led by the warlord Shamil Basayev crossed into the neighboring republic of Dagestan in early August, seizing several towns and declaring their intention to unite Chechnya and Dagestan as an independent Islamic state. Russian troops, which responded with a major offensive, recaptured the villages and claimed to have driven the guerillas back into bases in Chechnya by late September. On August 4, a political coalition between Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov's Fatherland group and the All Russia bloc of regional governors was formed to contest December's parliamentary vote. Former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov was chosen to lead the new alliance, which brought together the influential Luzhkov and Primakov with many of the nation's most powerful regional bosses. Poised to become a major contender in the upcoming elections, Fatherland-All Russia was viewed as a threat to the political ambitions of Kremlin supporters and Boris Yeltsin, with whom Luzhkov had been feuding publicly for months.

Just five days later, Yeltsin fired Prime Minister Stepashin and his entire cabinet on August 9. Some analysts speculated that Stepashin's recent admission that he could support certain forces within Fatherland-All Russia may have helped trigger his dismissal. Vladimir Putin, a career intelligence officer and the head of the Federal Security Service, was subsequently named as Stepashin's replacement. Yeltsin, whose term would expire in 2000 and who was ineligible to run for a third term, immediately suggested that Putin was his preferred successor in presidential elections scheduled for the following year.

During a two-week period in August and September, a string of deadly bombings in Moscow and two other Russian cities killed nearly 300 people. Although the Kremlin blamed the attacks on Chechen militants, both the Chechen government and rebel groups denied any involvement. Subsequently, Moscow police launched "operation whirlwind," a massive security sweep justified as a necessary measure in response to the bombings, in which reportedly 20,000 people were detained for identity checks and alleged violations of Moscow residency permits. According to Human Rights Watch, the authorities forced non-Muscovites to reregister with police and housing authorities, expelling from the city thousands who lacked registration documents. The authorities almost exclusively targeted darker-skinned people, particularly ethnic Chechens or others from the Caucasus region, and refused to reregister Chechens. Many of those detained alleged that they were forced to pay bribes and had been stopped by police numerous times to have their documents checked. In late December, eight people were arrested in connection with the bombings, while nine other suspects were being sought.

In what was described by Moscow as an operation to destroy the Islamic militants

who invaded Dagestan and who were blamed for the bombings in Russia, the Kremlin ordered air strikes on key Chechen military installations and economic targets, and the subsequent deployment of ground troops in Chechnya. Russian troops advanced rapidly over the largely flat terrain in the northern third of the republic, which Chechen fighters surrendered with little opposition. However, their progress slowed considerably as they neared the heavily-defended city of Grozny, the key focus of their military campaign. After entering the city in mid-December, where they met their most intense resistance from experienced and motivated rebels, they still had not gained control of the center of the city by year's end.

As Russia's assault increasingly included deliberate and indiscriminate bomb attacks on civilian targets, over 200,000 people fled Chechnya, most to the tiny neighboring republic of Ingushetia. In Grozny, tens of thousands of residents, mostly the elderly and infirm, remained trapped in basements during the deadly air and artillery strikes. While Western governments and international organizations expressed growing condemnation of the attacks, the campaign enjoyed broad popular support in Russia, fueled by the media's one-sided reporting favoring the official government line and the public's fear of further bomb attacks.

During the months preceding parliamentary elections on December 19, Prime Minister Putin saw his public approval ratings rise from single digits to close to 80 percent, according to some polls. His meteoric rise was largely the result of his close association with the popular military campaign in Chechnya, of which he was a key backer, and the perception of his being a vigorous and disciplined leader in contrast to the ailing Boris Yeltsin. Putin subsequently lent his endorsement to the Unity bloc, a diverse grouping of political figures led by Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu. The coalition had been created in late September by the Kremlin to ensure support for the government in the legislative poll. While lacking a political program, Unity appealed to voters on the basis of its image as a champion of the restoration of order and tough leadership, as embodied by Putin.

Although somewhat overshadowed by the war in Chechnya, media coverage of the pre-election campaign was marked by an intense battle of often unsubstantiated allegations between supporters of Kremlin-backed forces on the one hand and defenders of the Fatherland-All Russia bloc, led by Yevgeny Primakov and Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, on the other. Most of the comments by the candidates and their media sponsors were characterized by personal attacks rather than any serious ideological debate. Although initially regarded as an unbeatable opposition candidate, Primakov, along with Luzhkov, saw his support decline in the face of both Putin's rise in popularity and the success of relentless attacks by the pro-Kremlin ORT television network.

Of the 28 parties which competed for the 225 seats decided on the basis of party lists, the Communist Party secured the largest number of votes, at 24.3 percent (67 seats), followed closely by Unity with 23.3 percent (64 seats). Other parties which crossed the five percent threshold to enter parliament were Fatherland-All Russia with 13.3 percent (37 seats); the Union of Right Forces, led by former Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov and former Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko, with 8.5 percent (24 seats); the ultra-nationalist Zhirinovskiy bloc, with 6 percent (17 seats); and the reformist Yabloko, headed by Grigory Yavlinsky, with 5.9 percent (16 seats). Of the remaining 225 seats chosen in single-mandate constituency races, 100 went to candidates officially declared as independents.

While the Communists formed the single largest bloc, the results were seen by many as a surprising and important victory for pro-government forces. However, most analysts regarded the parliamentary race's real significance as a test for the presidential elections in 2000. In a surprise move, President Yeltsin announced his resignation on December 31, turning over the reins of power to Vladimir Putin. Many observers agreed that his departure was linked to Putin's signing of a guarantee of immunity from prosecution for Yeltsin, who recently had been at the center of several corruption scandals. His resignation served to move up the presidential poll by three months, from June to March 2000, allowing Putin's popularity less time to wane before the election. Yeltsin's worsening health problems, including a hospitalization in November for suspected pneumonia, may also have contributed to his decision to retire.

Throughout the year, relations between Russia and the West became increasingly strained over a number of developments, including NATO's enlargement into Eastern Europe; the alliance's bombing of the traditional Russian ally of Serbia; a money laundering scandal surrounding the Bank of New York; the U.S. plan to build a national missile defense system; mutual charges of espionage; and the West's increasingly harsh criticism of the war in Chechnya. Despite strong support from President Bill Clinton, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in October, saying it would undermine strategic stability. On December 13, the Duma rejected the START-2 nuclear arms reduction treaty, signed nearly seven years ago and already approved by the United States.

Russia's economy in 1999 began to show some signs of recovery after the previous year's negative growth in the wake of the August ruble crisis. Nevertheless, the positive developments of rising oil prices, a record-level trade surplus, and increased tax collection were not enough to offset the effects of rampant corruption, massive capital flight, and the expenses of the war in Chechnya. In December, the IMF announced that it would delay disbursement of further loans to Russia over failures to implement agreed-upon structural reforms, though analysts speculated that future loans would not be approved while Russia continued its assault on Chechnya. Russia suffered setbacks regarding energy transit routes during the year, with several Western-backed completed or planned oil and gas pipelines bypassing Russian territory. In early 1999, the Russian oil pipeline monopoly Transneft was forced to close its main line running across Chechnya from Azerbaijan to the port of Novorossiisk, after it effectively lost control of the line to Chechen rebels.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Russians can change their government democratically. The 1993 constitution established a strong president, who has the power to appoint, pending parliamentary confirmation, and dismiss the prime minister. The bicameral legislature consists of a 450-member lower chamber (Duma), in which half of the members are elected in single-mandate constituencies and the other half by party lists, and an upper chamber (Federation Council), composed of 178 regional leaders. Though marred by irregularities, the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections were deemed generally free and fair by international observers. Among the problems cited in the 1999 vote were the use of strict electoral laws to disqualify candidates, sometimes unjustly, and the biased media coverage of the election campaign.

While the constitution provides for freedom of speech and the press, the govern-

ment continued to exert pressure on the media, particularly regarding corruption issues and criticism of the authorities. Russia's powerful financial groups have increasingly acquired control of or fund most major media outlets, which in turn receive some government sponsorship or have connections to the government or other political figures. This close relationship between political forces and the media has served to compromise the latter's editorial independence. The campaign period preceding December's parliamentary elections was characterized by an unprecedented "media war" of smear campaigns and propaganda reports between two media groups led by Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky. ORT television, of which the government owns 51 percent and oligarch and Kremlin insider Berezovsky, reportedly, the other 49 percent, is the nation's leading television station and the only network broadcasting throughout the country. The station's controversial news anchor Sergei Dorenko actively criticized Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, a leader of the Fatherland-All Russia coalition and a staunch critic of Yeltsin. Berezovsky also controls the newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and the business daily *Kommersant*. The Media-MOST empire, run by Gusinsky, includes NTV television, the *Ekho Moskvy* radio station, and the daily newspaper *Segodnya*. Media-MOST's outlets, which have in turn sided with Fatherland-All Russia, were harshly critical of Berezovsky and the presidential administration. At the regional level, authorities reportedly increased their use of political pressure and threats against journalists and broadcasters in their struggles for power.

In July, President Yeltsin established a new press ministry led by Kremlin insider Mikhail Lesin, who immediately declared his intentions to "protect" the state against the media. In November, the Central Election Commission (CEC) announced plans to establish rules against "agitation," under which journalists would not be permitted to portray candidates in either a positive or negative light. While the CEC called the move an attempt to ensure free and fair elections in light of the pre-election campaign mudslinging, critics complained that it would effectively impose limits on freedom of the press.

In contrast to the 1994-1996 war in Chechnya, when Russian journalists spearheaded opposition to the conflict, the media were largely supportive of the 1999 campaign. The military severely restricted journalists' access to the war zone, issuing accreditation primarily to those of proven loyalty to the government. In addition, fears of kidnapping kept many media outlets away from the region for the last few years.

While freedom of religion is generally respected in this primarily Russian Orthodox country, a controversial 1997 law on religion favors established religions with national organizations which have existed for more than 15 years, and regional authorities continued to harass nontraditional groups. However, in a test case involving the Jehovah's Witnesses, the constitutional court in November eased some restrictions on religious worship. Under the verdict, local religious organizations registered before 1997 do not need to reregister, and local branches of "centralized" organizations do not have to prove their 15-year status and should be registered automatically. Attacks on synagogues and other anti-Semitic actions increased during the year, including the July stabbing of a prominent Jewish leader by a neo-Nazi. In November, nearly 100 Jewish organizations from across Russia formed the national Federation of Jewish Communities to assist local Jewish institutions and to sponsor a legal fund to fight anti-Semitism. The government largely respects freedom of assembly, and numerous political rallies and other demonstrations occurred throughout the year. The Communist Party, which

claims more than 500,000 members countrywide, remains the best organized political force. Most other parties lack strong organization, are centered around specific personalities rather than policy issues, and were formed by political and business elites rather than at the grassroots level. The Unity Party, which offered few policy opinions, was formed in late 1999 as a vehicle to challenge the Fatherland/All Russia bloc in December's parliamentary elections. While the number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has continued to grow, parliament adopted a law in June requiring NGOs to reregister in order to own property or maintain a bank account. Critics charge that the law represents greater state intervention in the nonprofit sector and will deprive many organizations of the legal standing which they need to continue to operate.

The Federation of Independent Unions of Russia (FNPR), the successor to the Soviet-era organization, claims to represent 80 percent of all workers. As the dominant trade union movement enjoying often close affiliation with local political structures, the FNPR effectively places a constraint on the right to freedom of association. Approximately eight percent of union members belong to independent unions.

The judiciary is not fully independent and is subject to political interference, corruption, and chronic under-funding. According to a report by Human Rights Watch, police routinely use torture against detainees to force confessions, but are rarely prosecuted for committing such abuses. Judges commonly accept as evidence confessions made during torture. The prosecutor's office is responsible both for working with police in criminal investigations and fielding grievances against the police, a situation which creates a conflict of interest in cases of torture. In December, the Duma unanimously voted to expand the powers of the Federal Security Service (FSB) to fight terrorism or prevent mass disturbances. Critics expressed concern that the measure would provide a dangerous increase in the FSB's authority, including the right to seal off entire regions. Pre-trial detention centers and prisons suffer from overcrowding and disease among inmates. A constitutional court ruling in December upheld the president's right to suspend Prosecutor General Yuri Skuratov pending an investigation into his alleged criminal wrongdoing. Skuratov maintains that his suspension earlier in the year was designed to stop his investigation into allegations of Kremlin corruption. In two positive developments, former naval officer Alexander Nikitin and Captain Grigory Pasko were acquitted of espionage charges stemming from their separate reports documenting environmental damage caused by the navy's negligent handling of nuclear waste. In late 1999, parliament approved a new criminal code.

Corruption throughout the government and business world is pervasive, with Russian authorities rarely able to obtain successful prosecutions of influential businessmen and politicians. Members of the old Soviet Communist elite used insider information, contacts, and extra-judicial means to obtain control of key industrial and business sectors. Widespread corruption remains a serious obstacle to the creation of an effective market economy and an impediment to genuine equality of opportunity. A series of high-level corruption scandals broke in 1999, including accusations that Russian businesses and organized crime laundered up to \$ 10 billion through the Bank of New York and allegations that a Swiss construction firm received kickbacks to renovate the Kremlin.

Despite a constitutional court ruling that *propiskas*, or residence permits, violate the constitution, the continued use of Soviet-era residency laws in many areas severely hinders the ability of outsiders to register to live or work in certain regions. In late 1999, Moscow police detained and deported mostly ethnic Chechens who were not regis-

tered in the capital city as part of an alleged security sweep following several bomb attacks in Russia. Critics maintained that these actions violated both a 1991 law and a subsequent court decision outlawing the use of residence permits in Moscow and other municipalities.

Women are underrepresented in government and in management positions in the business world. According to a recent study by the U.S.-based Women, Law and Development International, male employers frequently discriminate against women who have children, are deemed unattractive, or are unwilling to provide sexual favors to the employer or his clients. Domestic violence remains a serious problem, with law enforcement authorities offering little protection or assistance.

Rwanda

Polity: Dominant party (military-dominated) **Political Rights:** 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Economy: Mixed statist **Status:** Not Free
Population: 8,20,000
PPP:na
Life Expectancy: 43
Ethnic Groups: Hutu (80 percent), Tutsi (19 percent), Twa [Pygmy] (1 percent)
Capital: Kigali



Overview:

Rwanda continues to slowly rebuild after the 1994 genocide. The government, led by the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) closely directs the country's political life. In 1999 it extended the transition period, before which multiparty national elections can be held, for an additional four years. Carefully controlled nonparty local elections were held in March. The search for justice in the wake of the genocide continued, with a prominent Roman Catholic bishop being placed on trial for complicity in the killings. The government severely criticized a decision by the International Tribunal based in Arusha to release a former government official charged with incitement to genocide. The security situation remained tenuous in parts of Rwanda, with violence perpetrated by both Hutu guerillas and government forces. The government also implemented a controversial policy of strongly encouraging citizens in the northwest part of the country to move into protected villages. The region continued to be highly unstable as Rwandans and Ugandans remained deeply implicated in the civil strife of the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda's ethnic divide is deeply rooted. National boundaries demarcated by Belgian colonists led to often violent competition for power within the fixed borders of a modern state. Traditional and Belgian-abetted Tutsi dominance ended with a Hutu rebellion in 1959 and independence in 1962. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were killed or fled the country in recurring violence during the next decades. In 1990, the RPF launched a guerrilla war to force the Hutu regime led by General Juvenal Habyarimana to accept power-sharing and the return of Tutsi refugees. Hutu chauvinists' solution to

claims to land and power by Rwanda's Tutsi minority, which constituted approximately 15 percent of the pre-genocide population, was to pursue their elimination as a people.

The 1994 genocide was launched after the suspicious deaths of President Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira in a plane crash in Kigali. The ensuing massacres had been well plotted. Piles of imported machetes were distributed, and death lists were broadcast by radio. A small United Nations force in Rwanda fled as the killings spread and Tutsi rebels advanced. French troops intervened in late 1994, not to halt the genocide, but in a futile effort to preserve some territory for the crumbling genocidal regime that was a closely linked to the French government.

International relief efforts that eased the suffering among more than 2 million Hutu refugees along Rwanda's frontiers also allowed the retraining and rearming of large numbers of former government troops. The U.N., which had earlier ignored specific warnings of the 1994 genocide, failed to prevent such activities. The Rwandan war became inextricably bound up with the Congo's conflict. This climate of unrest makes early improvement in the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms very unlikely.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Rwandans have never enjoyed their right to choose their representatives in open elections. The government announced in June that multiparty elections would not take place until 2003 at the earliest. The current self-appointed government is dominated by the RPF, but also includes several other political parties. A 70-member multiparty national assembly was appointed in November 1994.

Rwanda's basic charter is the Fundamental Law, an amalgam of the 1991 constitution, two agreements among various parties and groups, and the RPF's own 1994 declaration of governance. Political parties closely identified with the 1994 massacres are banned, and parties based on ethnicity or religion barred. Several other political parties operate and participate in government. There is some Hutu representation in the government, including President Pasteur Bizimungu.

Constitutional and legal safeguards regarding arrest procedures and detention are widely ignored. The near destruction of Rwanda's legal system and the death or exile of most of the judiciary are severely limiting criminal adjudication. To help address this problem, the government intends to revive a traditional court system, the Gacaca, wherein elders will preside over community trials dealing with the less serious genocide offences.

Rwandan media are officially censored and constrained by fears of reprisals. Journalists accused of abetting or participating in genocide have been arrested. The state controls the broadcast media, and the few independent newspapers publishing in Kigali reportedly exercise considerable self-censorship. The role of the media in Rwanda has become a contentious test case for media freedom and responsibility. During the genocide, 50 journalists were murdered, while others broadcast incitements to the slaughter.

Local nongovernmental organizations such as the Collective Rwandan Leagues and Associations for the Defense of Human Rights operate openly. International human rights groups and relief organizations are also active. Numerous clerics were among both the victims and perpetrators of the genocide (a prominent Roman Catholic cleric, Bishop Augustine Misago, is currently on trial). Religious freedom is generally respected.

Rwanda's economy is only now reaching pre-1990 production levels. There is serious de facto discrimination against women despite legal protection for equal rights.

Rape by Hutu soldiers and militiamen was widespread in 1994. Women are being forced to take on many new roles, especially in the countryside where the dearth of males necessitates their performance of many traditionally male tasks. Constitutional provisions for labor rights include the right to form trade unions, engage in collective bargaining, and strike. The Central Union of Rwandan Workers, which was closely controlled by the previous regime, now has relatively greater independence.

St. Kitts-Nevis

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 40,000
PPP: \$8,017
Life Expectancy: 67
Ethnic Groups: Black (95 percent), mulatto
Capital: Basseterre

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

After turning back a successionist challenge from Nevis the year before, the government of Prime Minister Denzil Douglas in 1999 sought to eliminate the remaining scars left from the devastating Hurricane George in September 1998. Working from a premise that small is beautiful, St. Kitts and Nevis officials in 1999 worked to create a national strategy of "boutique tourism" that attracts fewer, more upscale visitors, thus avoiding the developmental sprawl associated with the industry in other nearby islands.

The national government comprises the prime minister, the cabinet, and the bicameral legislative assembly. Elected assembly members, eight from St. Kitts and three from Nevis, serve five-year terms. Senators, not to exceed two-thirds of the elected members, are appointed, one by the leader of the parliamentary opposition for every two by the prime minister. The British monarch is represented by a governor-general who appoints as prime minister the leader of the party or coalition with at least a plurality of seats in the legislature. Nevis has a local assembly composed of five elected and three appointed members and pays for all its own services except police and foreign relations. St. Kitts has no similar body. Nevis is accorded the constitutional right to secede if two-thirds of the elected legislators approve and two-thirds of voters endorse succession through a referendum.

The center-right People's Action Movement (PAM) gained power in 1980 with the support of the Nevis Restoration Party (NRP). In 1983 the country achieved independence. The PAM-NRP coalition won majorities in the 1984 and 1989 elections.

In the 1993 elections the St. Kitts Labour Party (SKLP) and the PAM each won four seats, though the former won the popular vote. The Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM) took two Nevis seats and the NRP one. The CCM opted not to join the coalition, leaving the PAM-NRP to rule with a five-seat plurality.

Douglas, the SKLP leader, protested the new government. Violence erupted, which led to a two-week state of emergency. The SKLP boycotted parliament in 1994. The

PAM government was shaken by a drug-and-murder scandal that same year, and the weakened government agreed to hold early elections.

In the July 1995 elections the SKLP won seven of eight St. Kitts seats and 60 percent of the popular vote. The PAM took the eighth St. Kitts seat and 40 percent of the popular vote. On Nevis, the CCM retained its two seats and the NRP held on to the third. Following the vote, the PAM alleged that the SKLP dismissed or demoted PAM supporters and filled their positions with SKLP supporters.

In July 1996 Nevis Premier Vance Armory, reacting to St. Kitts's unwelcome move to open a government office in Nevis, announced his intention to break the 100-year political link between the two islands. On October 13, 1997 Nevis's five-person parliament unanimously voted for secession. However, in a referendum on August 10, 1999, secessionists won only a simple majority of the vote, falling short of the two-thirds margin required by the constitution.

The amount of cocaine passing through the Caribbean en route to the United States has reportedly doubled in recent years. St. Kitts is one of more than ten Caribbean islands to sign drug enforcement pacts with the United States. Nevis has more than 10,000 offshore businesses, operating under strict secrecy laws, and CCM secessionists argued that these were the bedrock of island strength in a global economy. However, a principal argument used against secession was that Nevis alone could not withstand the wiles of drug traffickers and money launderers. Nevis has resisted central government efforts to impose stiffer regulations (companies set up on Nevis territory need submit "no annual return or accounts") on the crime-prone industry.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens are able to change their government democratically. In the run-up to the secession referendum, Douglas promised to give Nevis a bigger role in federation affairs. Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression, the free exercise of religion, and the right to organize political parties, labor unions, and civic organizations are generally respected.

Drugs and money laundering have corrupted the political system. Apart from the 1995 drug-and-murder scandal, whose three hung juries suggested jury tampering and intimidation, there are also questions regarding business relations between SKLP leaders and the known drug trafficker Noel "Zambo" Heath, one of three alleged traffickers with government ties whose extradition has been sought unsuccessfully by the United States. In June 1997, despite concerns of its cost to a country of 42,000 people, parliament passed a bill designed to create a 50-member Special Services Unit, which received some light infantry training, to wage war on heavily armed drug traffickers.

The judiciary is generally independent. However, in March 1996 when the drug-and-murder scandal came to trial, the Public Prosecutions Office failed to send a representative to present the case. The charges were dropped, raising suspicions of a government conspiracy. The highest court is the West Indies Supreme Court in St. Lucia, which includes a court of appeals and a high court. Under certain circumstances there is a right of appeal to the Privy Council in London.

The traditionally strong rule of law has been tested by the increase in drug-related crime and corruption. In 1995, it appeared that the police had become divided along political lines between the two main political parties. The intimidation of witnesses and jurors is a problem. The national prison is overcrowded, and conditions are abysmal. In July 1998, the government hanged a convicted murderer, ending a 13-year hiatus in

executions and defying pressure from Britain and human rights groups to end the death penalty.

Television and radio on St. Kitts are government-owned, and there are some government restrictions on opposition access to them; Prime Minister Douglas has pledged to privatize the St. Kitts media. Each major political party publishes a weekly or fortnightly newspaper. Opposition publications freely criticize the government, and international media are available.

The main labor union, the St. Kitts Trades and Labour Union, is associated with the ruling SKLP. The right to strike, while not specified by law, is recognized and generally respected in practice. Violence against women is a problem.

St. Lucia

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 200,000

PPP: \$5,437

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Black (90 percent), mulatto (6 percent), East Indian (3 percent), white (1 percent)

Capital: Castries

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Prime Minister Kenny Anthony and the ruling St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP), having virtually eclipsed their political opponents in earlier elections, focused in 1999 on revitalizing the country's tourism trade through efforts to provide greater infrastructure for that industry.

St. Lucia, a member of the Commonwealth, achieved independence in 1979. The British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. Under the 1979 constitution, a bicameral parliament consists of a 17-member house of assembly, elected for five years, and an 11-member senate. Six members of the upper body are appointed by the prime minister, three by the leader of the parliamentary opposition, and two by consultation with civic and religious organizations. The island is divided into eight regions, each with its own elected council and administrative services.

The United Workers Party (UWP) government was long headed by John Compton, whose decision to retire in March 1996 was apparently linked to a number of scandals that included an alleged affair with a teenager. He had also been accused of knowing about the misappropriation of United Nations funds. Soon after his retirement announcement, his deputy both as prime minister and party leader, 72-year-old George Mallet, announced his decision to retire, clearing the way for Compton's handpicked successor, a former director-general of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean, Vaughan Lewis. Lewis had won Mallet's vacated seat in the February 1996 by-elections. Now holding a seat, Lewis was qualified to assume the party leadership. In April, since his party won the most seats, he automatically became the prime minister.

In June 1996, upon the retirement of Governor-General Sir Stanislaus James, Mallet

was sworn in as the country's fourth governor-general over protests that the post be reserved for those outside the sphere of party politics.

Opposition leader Julian Hunte also stepped down after taking third place in the February 1996 by-elections. Anthony, a former education minister, replaced him as leader of the SLP. By the end of 1996 the SLP had merged with smaller opposition parties, and Anthony led the coalition to victory in the May 23, 1997, elections. The biggest electoral landslide in the country's history resulted in the SLP, out of power since 1982, winning 16 of 17 seats in parliament and unseating Prime Minister Lewis with a 26-year-old political newcomer.

In 1998, Compton, prime minister for 29 years and a member of parliament for 40 years, returned to lead the UWP. Unemployment, estimated at 20 percent, remains a potential source of instability. Upon taking office, Anthony began to address concerns of an electorate weary of economic distress and reports of official corruption. In 1999, his government faced a series of issues concerning the hotel and airline industries, both vital for the tourism industry.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Citizens are able to change their government through democratic elections. Constitutional guarantees regarding the right to organize political parties, labor unions, and civic groups are generally respected, as is the free exercise of religion.

The competition among political parties and allied civic organizations is heated, particularly during election campaigns when one side invariably accuses the other of occasional violence and harassment.

The judicial system is independent and includes a high court under the West Indies Supreme Court (based in St. Lucia), with ultimate appeal under certain circumstances to the Privy Council in London. The constitution requires public trials before an independent and impartial court. Traditionally, citizens have enjoyed a high degree of personal security, although there are episodic reports of police misuse of force. In recent years, an escalating crime wave, much of it drug related, violent clashes during banana farmers' strikes, and increased violence in schools sparked concern among citizens. The island's nineteenth-century prison, built to house a maximum of 101 inmates, in fact houses more than 400.

The media carry a wide spectrum of views and are largely independent of the government. There are five privately owned newspapers, two privately held radio stations, and one partially government-funded radio station, as well as two privately owned television stations. In November 1995 the government refused to reissue a license for Radyo Koulibwi, a small FM station critical of the then ruling UWP party.

Civic groups are well organized and politically active, as are labor unions, which represent a majority of wage earners. Legislation passed in 1995 restricts the right to strike. The measure provides for a fine of about U.S.\$2,000 or two years in prison for inciting any person to cease performing any lawful activity on his property or on the property of another person. The government said the measure was aimed at curtailing strikes in the banana industry, which employs more than 30 percent of the workforce. Nonetheless, in October 1996, a 14-day strike took place in which banana industry workers demanded a greater role in management decisions. The strike resulted in violence, and the police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds, seriously injuring several people.

Though there are no official barriers to the participation of women and minorities in government, these groups are underrepresented. A growing awareness of the seriousness of violence against women has led the government and advocacy groups to take steps to offer better protection for victims of domestic violence.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 100,000
PPP: \$4,250
Life Expectancy: 73
Ethnic Groups: Black, mulatto
Capital: Kingstown

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview:

Political unrest and the health concerns of Prime Minister Sir James F. Mitchell, who underwent prostate surgery in September, led the news from St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1999.

Mitchell has led the Windward Islands nation since 1986. Earlier, Mitchell had called for a coordinated move by Caricom, the regional association of Caribbean countries, towards a presidential rather than parliamentary system of government, a move that appeared to respond to criticism about his own razor-thin election victory the year before.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a member of the Commonwealth, with the British monarchy represented by a governor-general. St. Vincent achieved independence in 1979, with jurisdiction over the northern Grenadine islets of Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, Mustique, Prune Island, Petit St. Vincent, and Union Island.

The constitution provides for a 15-member unicameral house of assembly elected for five years. Six senators are appointed—four by the government and two by the opposition. The prime minister is the leader of the party or coalition commanding a majority in the house.

In 1994, Mitchell won a third term as prime minister when his center-right New Democratic Party (NDP) won 12 seats. The center-left alliance, comprising the St. Vincent Labour Party (SVLP), which had held power from 1979 to 1984, and the Movement for National Unity (MNU), won the remaining three seats. The opposition contested the results, charging that voter registration irregularities had occurred.

In 1995, Deputy Prime Minister Parnel Campbell faced charges of financial impropriety when, disregarding government regulations, he took a loan from an offshore bank. With the opposition parties, now united into the Unity Labour Party (ULP), pressing for a parliamentary vote of no-confidence, Campbell resigned. In 1998, Mitchell took advantage of internal divisions within the opposition to announce elections a year earlier than expected. Mitchell led the NDP to a narrow victory in the June 15, 1998 general elections, which were marked by opposition accusations of fraud, bribery, and intimidation. The ULP delayed its recognition of the NDP's fourth successive win and, in 1999, staged street demonstrations protesting the 1998 poll and demanding new elec-

tions. Mitchell's efforts to diversify the islands' banana and tourism-based economy have met with limited success, however; and marijuana cultivation and narcotics smuggling remain major concerns.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government through elections. Following the June 1998 elections, the government and the opposition began discussing constitutional reforms centering on electoral reform. The ULP claimed it would have won the contest, rather than see the NDP gallop to victory, if a proportional representation system—instead of the "first-past-the-post" framework copied from Britain—had been used. (The ULP won 7 of 15 parliamentary seats, but took 55 percent of the vote.)

The judicial system is independent. The highest court is the West Indies Supreme Court (based in St. Lucia), which includes a court of appeals and a high court. A right of ultimate appeal reports under certain circumstances to the Privy Council in London. Murder convictions carry a mandatory death sentence.

Penetration by the hemispheric drug trade is causing increasing concern. Allegations have been made of drug-related corruption within the government and police force, and of money laundering in St. Vincent banks. The drug trade has also caused an increase in street crime. In 1995 the U.S. government described St. Vincent as becoming a drug-trafficking center and alleged that high-level government officials are involved in narcotics-related corruption. Since then, St. Vincent has taken steps to cooperate with U.S. antidrug trade efforts, such as signing an extradition treaty in 1996 with the United States.

Human rights are generally respected. While in 1999 there were no reports of politically inspired killings, a local human rights organization has accused police of using excessive force and illegal search and seizure, and of improperly informing detainees of their rights in order to extract confessions. The regional human rights organization, Caribbean Rights, estimates that 90 percent of convictions in St. Vincent are based on confessions.

The independent St. Vincent Human Rights Association has criticized long judicial delays and the large backlog of cases caused by personnel shortages in the local judiciary. It has also charged that the executive, at times, exerts inordinate influence over the courts. Prison conditions remain poor—one prison designed for 75 houses more than 400—and there are allegations of mistreatment.

The press is independent, with two privately owned independent weeklies—the *Vincentian* and the *News*—and several smaller, partisan papers. The opposition has charged the *Vincentian* with government favoritism. The only television station is privately owned and free from governmental interference. Satellite dishes and cable are available to those who can afford them. The radio station is government-owned and call-in programs are prohibited. Equal access to radio is mandated during electoral campaigns, but the ruling party takes inordinate advantage of state control over programming.

Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression, freedom of religion, and the rights to organize political parties, labor unions, and civic organizations are generally respected. Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is a major problem.

Labor unions are active and permitted to strike.

Samoa

Polity: Parliamentary democracy and traditional chiefs

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 200,000

PPP: \$3,550

Life Expectancy: 65

Ethnic Groups: Polynesian (93 percent), Euronesian [mixed] (7 percent)

Capital: Apia

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2*

Status: Free



Ratings change: Samoa's civil liberties changed from 3 to 2 as a result of the government's commitment to battle corruption, and the outcome of a political assassination trial, which could lead to an official abolition of the death penalty in Samoa.

Overview:

In July, Luagalau Levaula Kamu, the public works minister, was assassinated at an event marking the 20th anniversary of the ruling party in the capital, Apia. This was the first political killing in Samoa since the islands gained independence from New Zealand in 1962. The murder is said to be due to Levaula's determination to stamp out corruption under the new administration of Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi. The prime minister insisted that the anticorruption drive will continue.

Eletise Leafa Vitale, son of the minister for women's affairs, pleaded guilty to the killing and was given the death sentence. Toi Aukuso, Levaula's predecessor, and women's affairs minister Leafa Vitale were also charged with conspiracy to commit murder and will stand trial. Although Samoa has retained the death penalty, it has never been carried out in this predominantly Christian country, and the Levaula family has spoken out against the execution of Eletise. All this has sparked a debate on maintaining the death penalty.

In an effort to curb violence, the government announced a gun amnesty in August, allowing owners of illegal firearms one month to surrender them.

Samoa formally changed its name from Western Samoa in July 1998. The country consists of two volcanic islands and several minor islets located west of American Samoa in the south-central Pacific. In 1899, the United States annexed Eastern (American) Samoa, while the Western Samoan islands became a German protectorate. New Zealand occupied Western Samoa during World War II and acquired subsequent control of the territory first under a League of Nations and later a United Nations mandate. A new constitution was adopted in 1960, and on January 1, 1962, Western Samoa became the first Pacific state to achieve independence.

The ruling Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) has won a plurality in all five elections since 1982. In the first direct elections in 1991, Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana won a third term after the HRPP secured 30 of the 47 parliamentary seats. In the April 1996 elections, the HRPP won just 22 seats; the Samoan National Development Party (SNDP), 13; and independents, 14. Several independents joined the HRPP, and in May, parliament reelected Tofilau as prime minister over SNDP's Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi.

Under Tofilau's leadership, Samoa experienced an extended period of economic growth, and he expanded democracy by extending voting rights for only the *matai* (chiefs) to other citizens. However, corruption was widespread. In 1994, the country's chief auditor found half of the cabinet guilty of corrupt practices, but Tofilau only issued a public rebuke. Tofilau, ill with cancer, resigned on November 23, 1998, after 16 years as prime minister and he was replaced by Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, who had served as deputy prime minister and finance minister.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Samoans can change their government democratically. The 1960 constitution combines parliamentary democracy with traditional authority. However, until 1991, only the 25,000 *matai*, or chiefs of extended families, could sit in the unicameral parliament, Fono Aoao Faitulafono, and only two seats were reserved for citizens of non-Samoan descent. In a 1990 referendum, voters narrowly approved universal suffrage for parliament and increased the term from three to five years. The head of state is traditionally drawn from the four paramount chiefs and has the duty to appoint the prime minister and approve legislation. Susuga Malietoa Tanumafili II is the head of state for life, but his successors will be elected by parliament for five-year terms. In rural areas, the government has limited influence, and the 360 village councils, *orfonos*, are the main authority. Several formal political parties exist, but the political process is defined more by individual personalities than strict party affiliation.

In 1998, the government imposed stringent restrictions on press freedom. In April 1998, Samoan journalists were ordered not to report on the proceedings of a Commission of Inquiry into the disappearance of a police file indicating that Prime Minister Tofilau was convicted in 1996 and fined on two counts of theft. On May 15, the government ruled to make public funds available to finance defamation suits by high-ranking government officials.

The Samoa Observer, the independent newspaper, has faced several lawsuits brought by government officials and business leaders over stories it has published of growing corruption and abuse of public office in Samoa. Moreover, the paper's printing plant was burned down under suspicious circumstances, the editor was assaulted by relatives of a government minister, advertising was withdrawn, and the prime minister threatened to pass a law canceling the paper's business license.

The state-owned broadcast media, consisting of the country's only television station and Radio 2AP, are heavily government-controlled and restrict air time to opposition leaders. There are two private radio stations, and satellite television is available in parts of the capital city. Several Samoan-language newspapers and two English-language papers are published on a regular basis.

The *matai* often choose the religious denomination of their extended family in this predominantly Christian country, and there is strong societal pressure to support church leaders and projects financially. The government generally respects the right of assembly. There are two independent trade unions, plus the Public Service Association, which represents government workers. Strikes are legal, but infrequent. Collective bargaining is practiced mainly in the public sector.

The judiciary is independent, and defendants receive fair trials. However, many civil and criminal matters are handled by village *fonos* according to traditional law. The 1990 Village Fono Law provides some right of appeal in such cases to the Lands

and Titles Courts and to the Supreme Court. Village fonos occasionally order houses burned, persons banned from villages, and other harsh punishments. In October 1998, five men reportedly were hog-tied, their homes were destroyed, and they were banished from the village for conducting a non-Methodist service in their village. The police force is under civilian control, but its impact is limited mostly to the capital city, while fonos generally enforce security measures in the rest of the country.

Domestic violence is not uncommon. Traditional norms discourage women from going to the police or the courts for protection, and pro-active government measures are insufficient. Women are discriminated against in employment and underrepresented in politics. The church is a powerful force in Samoan society. Some clerics have become more willing to speak out in the fight against AIDS, such as encouraging the use of condoms. Although the numbers of HIV infections and AIDS cases are still low, AIDS and HIV are increasingly recognized by Samoans as a public health threat.

San Marino

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 30,000

PPP:na

Life Expectancy: 76

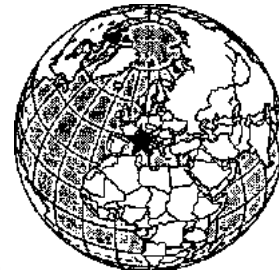
Ethnic Groups: Sanmarinese (78 percent), Italian (21 percent)

Capital: San Marino

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

San Marino is the sole survivor of the numerous independent states that existed in Italy prior to unification in the nineteenth century. Its modern multiparty democratic system has been dominated by a long succession of coalition governments. The three main political parties are the Christian Democratic Party (PDCS), the Socialist Party (PSS), and the Progressive Democratic Party (PPDC).

Since 1993, San Marino has been governed by a centrist PDCS-PSS coalition, which returned to power after the May 1998 elections.

A tiny enclave within the Italian province of Emilia-Romagna, San Marino has close ties to Italy, from which it receives an annual budget subsidy provided under the terms of a special treaty.

In addition to agriculture, the country's vibrant, primarily private enterprise economy includes production of livestock, light manufacturing, and tourism, which constitutes more than 60 percent of government revenue.

Reputedly founded in BCE 301, San Marino is the world's oldest and second smallest republic. The Sanmarinese are ethnically and culturally Italian, but their long history has created a strong sense of identity and independence.

San Marino's constitution, dating from the year 1600, vests legislative power in the Grand and General Council (parliament) of 60 members directly elected for five-year terms, subject to dissolution. A ten-member Congress of State, or cabinet, is elected

by the parliament for the duration of the term. Two members of the council are designated for six-month terms as executive captains-regent, one representing the city of San Marino and the other the countryside. The secretary of state for foreign affairs has come to assume many of the prerogatives of a prime minister.

San Marino is a member of the United Nations, International Court of Justice, Council of Europe, World Trade Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, International Monetary Fund, and International Labor Organization. Although San Marino has official relations with the European Union (EU), and participates in its security program, it is not a full member of the EU.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: San Marino's citizens can change their government democratically. The citizens elect the 60 members of the parliament according to a proportional system. All citizens having reached the age of 18 have the right to vote. Women were permitted to stand as candidates for seats in the Grand and General Council for the first time in 1974.

San Marino enjoys a free press. Newspapers are published by the government, by some political parties, and by the trade unions. Italian newspapers and radio and television broadcasts are freely available. Radio Titano is the country's only privately owned radio station.

San Marino has no formal asylum policy. Instead, it has allowed a small number of refugees to reside and work in the country. Immigrants and refugees are eligible for citizenship only after 30 years' residence. Those born in San Marino remain citizens and can vote no matter where they live.

Most Sanmarinese belong to the Roman Catholic Church. The law prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, disability, language, or social status.

Workers are free to form and join unions under a 1961 law. Collective bargaining agreements carry the force of law. Unions may freely form domestic federations or join international labor federations. Union members constitute approximately one-half of the country's workforce. Trade unions are independent of the government and political parties, but they have close informal ties with the parties, which exercise a strong influence on them. The right to strike is guaranteed, but no strikes have occurred in the past ten years. Freedom of association is respected.

The law provides for an independent judiciary, which is based on the Italian legal system. The judicial system delegates some of the authority to Italian magistrates, in both criminal and civil cases. A local conciliation judge handles cases of minor importance. Appeals go, in the first instance, to an Italian judge residing in Italy. The final court of review is San Marino's Council of Twelve, a group of judges chosen for six-year terms (four are replaced every two years) from among the members of the Grand and General Council.

Several laws provide for the equality of women in the workplace and elsewhere. In practice there is no discrimination in pay or working conditions. All careers are open to women, including careers in the military and police as well as the highest public offices.

São Tomé and Príncipe

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Economy: Mixed statist (transitional)

Status: Free

Population: 200,000

PPP: \$1,851

Life Expectancy: 64

Ethnic Groups: Mestico (Portuguese-African), African minority (Angola, Mozambique, immigrants)

Capital: Sao Tome



Overview: The new government of Prime Minister Guilherme Posser da Costa took office in January, inheriting an economy dependent on foreign aid and battered by a fall in the world price of cocoa, its main export. There had already been a decline in cocoa production because of inefficient state plantations. São Tomé and Príncipe has been struggling under a crushing debt of U.S.\$300 million, which is 14 times its annual exports. The center-left government planned to introduce an austerity package while seeking to bolster the economy through offshore oil exploration. Officials from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund visited São Tomé and Príncipe in September and said more work needed to be done on reforms before a proposed adjustment program could qualify for financing. Lenders said the islands nation would have to adjust its spending, press ahead with administrative reforms, and formally announce the privatization of state companies. Under the plan, public service would be trimmed and ports and customs would be reorganized to increase state revenue.

Parliamentary elections were held in November 1998, giving the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe-Social Democratic Party (MLSTP-PSD) an absolute majority. The balloting, which was conducted by an autonomous electoral commission with technical support from Taiwan, enabled the party to regain democratically the power that it had exercised for 16 years as the sole legal party before the country's democratic transition in 1992. In presidential elections scheduled for July 2001, MLSTP-PSD party leader Manuel Pinto da Costa, who served as president during the period of one-party rule, is likely to run against the incumbent, Miguel dos Anjos Trovoada.

São Tomé and Príncipe is extremely poor and has few local resources. Unemployment is endemic. Since achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, the country has relied mostly on external assistance to develop its economy. In 1997, the government established diplomatic ties with Taiwan in exchange for promises of assistance, reportedly valued at more than \$30 million. In apparent response, Beijing suspended relations and demanded immediate repayment of \$11 million in debt. This maneuvering reflects the desperate poverty of most of the country's people. Corruption, including the sale of diplomatic passports, is deeply entrenched.

São Tomé and Príncipe's two islands are located approximately 125 miles off the coast of Gabon in the Gulf of Guinea. Seized by Portugal in 1522 and 1523, they be-

came a Portuguese Overseas Province in 1951. Portugal granted local autonomy in 1973 and independence in 1975. Upon independence, the MLSTP, formed in 1960 as the Committee for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe, took power and functioned as the only legal party until a 1990 referendum established multiparty democracy. In 1991, Trovoada, an independent candidate backed by the opposition Democratic Convergence Party, became the first democratically elected president.

A group of demobilized army officers in 1998 threatened to take up arms against the government if promises of financial assistance and jobs for former soldiers were not met. The government then pledged to hasten restructuring the armed forces and to seek greater assistance for the retired soldiers, many of whom had participated in an abortive and bloodless coup in 1995.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Presidential and legislative elections in 1991 gave São Tomé and Príncipe's citizens their first chance to elect their leader in an open, free, and fair contest. Both the president and parliamentarians serve five-year terms. Legislative elections in 1994 were generally free and fair, but the November 1998 contest, in which the MLSTP-PSD won 31 of the 55 seats in the unicameral national assembly, was apparently the country's most democratic election to date. The Independent Democratic Alliance Party, which supports President Trovoada, won 16 seats.

Trovoada had won a second five-year term in July 1996 after receiving 52.74 percent of the approximately 40,000 votes cast in a runoff election. Despite numerous allegations of vote buying and other irregularities, international observers declared the results free and fair.

An independent judiciary, including a supreme court with members designated by and responsible to the national assembly, was established by the August 1990 referendum on multiparty rule. The court system is overburdened, understaffed, inadequately funded, and plagued by long delays in hearing cases. Prison conditions are reportedly harsh.

Constitutionally protected freedom of expression is respected in practice. One state-run and three independent newspapers are published. While the state controls a local press agency and the only radio and television stations, no law forbids independent broadcasting. The president has encouraged people to enter the private broadcast sector, but no one has. Opposition parties receive free air time, and newsletters and pamphlets criticizing the government circulate freely.

Freedom of assembly is respected. Citizens have the constitutional right to gather and demonstrate with advance notice of two days. They may also travel freely within the country and abroad. Freedom of religion is respected within this predominantly Roman Catholic country.

Women hold few leadership positions. Most occupy domestic roles and have less opportunity than men for education or employment. Domestic violence against women is reportedly common.

Saudi Arabia

Polity: Traditional
monarchy

Economy: Capitalist-
statist

Population: 20,900,000

PPP: \$10,120

Life Expectancy: 71

Ethnic Groups: Arab (90 percent), Afro-Asian (10 percent)

Capital: Riyadh

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free



Overview:

As Saudis began to face up to the end of a decades-long oil boom, Crown Prince Abdullah made some modest gestures aimed at economic reform. But increasing unemployment and widespread dissatisfaction with official corruption, fiscal mismanagement, and the denial of basic political rights continued to threaten social stability and lent urgency to the debate over Saudi Arabia's highly criticized system of fraternal succession.

King Abd al-Aziz al-Saud consolidated the Nejd and Hejaz regions of the Arabian peninsula into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. His son, King Fahd Bin Abd al-Aziz al-Saud, ascended the throne in 1982 after a series of successions within the family. The king rules by decree and serves as prime minister as well as supreme religious leader. The overwhelming majority of Saudis belong to the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam. In 1992 King Fahd appointed a 60-member consultative council, or Majlis al-Shura. The Majlis plays only an advisory role and is not regarded as a significant political force. The king expanded it to 90 members, including three Shiite Muslims, in 1997.

King Fahd's poor health has raised concerns about an orderly transfer of power. The system of fraternal succession adopted by Abd al-Aziz to prevent fratricide among his 44 sons has been criticized by politicians and businessmen, who believe that a potential series of aging, sickly rulers will leave Saudi Arabia with no direction at a time when waning prosperity requires strong leadership. It is well known that Crown Prince Abdullah, 76, has effectively ruled since Fahd suffered a stroke in 1995. But the succession after Abdullah is unclear. A 1994 decree gives the king the unilateral right to name his own successor, but philosophical and ideological rifts within the ruling family and varying degrees of power and spheres of influence among potential heirs will make any choice problematic. Of Abd al-Aziz's 25 living sons, many regard themselves as contenders, while others advocate passing power to the next generation.

Concerns over succession have been compounded by foundering oil prices (oil exports account for 75 percent of Saudi budget revenues) and the recognition that the government no longer has the funds to sustain the heavily subsidized welfare state to which Saudis have become accustomed. The government has implemented a job freeze in the bloated state sector, which traditionally ensured employment for some 40 percent of the workforce. Unemployment, estimated at 10 to 25 percent, is expected to rise as a slow-growing job market is unable to absorb the 100,000 people entering the workforce every year. Many worry that the discontent of an expanding class of poor Saudis will present a challenge to the regime's stability.

Abdullah began to enact modest reforms to offset economic uncertainty. In August, the government set up the Supreme Economic Council, which initiated a number of proposals to make Saudi Arabia more attractive to foreign investment. Foreigners will be allowed to invest in the stock market, to own property in the country, and to invest in upcoming energy industry projects. Hoping to spur a new industry, the government took the unprecedented step of issuing tourist visas, but placed numerous restrictions on tourists in order to protect Saudi Arabia's strict Islamic culture from outside influence. The government also made deep cuts in defense and security spending, and eliminated perks for hundreds of royals, who are known to ignore utility bills and to travel freely on the state airline.

But politically sensitive structural changes, such as the introduction of taxation, and the elimination of entrenched alliances between royals and big business, will be necessary if Saudi Arabia is to transform itself into a market-oriented economy. To make these changes without sparking political unrest may require increasing popular political participation and enhancing accountability for public funds. It appears unquestionable that Abdullah's reign will be turbulent, but many hope that his drive for economic reform will carry additional benefits for political openness.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Saudis cannot change their government democratically. Political parties are illegal, the king rules by decree, and there are no elections at any level. Majlis membership is not representative of the population.

Judicial independence is undermined by the influence of the royal family and its associates, who are also not required to appear before the courts. The king has broad powers to appoint or dismiss judges, and there is no standard penal or criminal code. Thus, judges may define criminal offenses and set punishments at their discretion. The legal system is based on Sharia (Islamic) law, and allows for the use of corporal punishment such as flogging and amputation. Death by beheading is the prescribed punishment for rape, murder, armed robbery, adultery, apostasy, and drug trafficking. The law allows heirs of a victim to demand "blood money" in exchange for sparing the life of the murderer. At least 98 people were executed in 1999, compared to 29 in 1998. Most of these were foreigners.

Under a 1983 law, detainees may be held for 51 days without trial, but in practice they are often held longer. Four leading Muslim activists were released in July after almost five years in detention without trial for publicly criticizing the presence of Western military forces in the country. Police routinely torture detainees in order to extract confessions, which may be used, uncorroborated, as evidence. Detainees have no right to legal counsel or due process safeguards.

Freedom of expression is severely restricted by prohibitions on criticism of the government, Islam, and the ruling family. The government owns all domestic broadcast media and closely monitors privately owned but publicly subsidized print media. The information minister must approve and may remove all editors in chief. The entry of foreign journalists into the kingdom is tightly restricted, and foreign media are heavily censored. In 1994, the government outlawed the private ownership of satellite dishes. In February 1999, Internet access was made widely available, with filters to block access to information deemed offensive to Islam or state security.

Political public demonstrations are prohibited, and public gatherings are segregated

by sex. Religious authorities, who hold considerable influence in the kingdom, issued decrees against celebrations of the centenary of the ruling dynasty in January and the change of the millennium in December. Celebrating birthdays and anniversaries is considered heresy under Islam. Religious decrees generally have the support of the Saudi government.

Islam, particularly the Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam, is the state religion, and all citizens must be Muslim. Shiite Muslims, who constitute about a third of the population, face systematic political and economic discrimination, such as arbitrary arrest on suspicion of subversion or pro-Iranian activities. The government prohibits the public practice of other religions, but tolerates private worship. Conversion by a Muslim to another religion is considered apostasy, a capital offense. In December, the government announced plans to deport non-Muslims who eat, drink, or smoke in public during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Of some six million expatriates in Saudi Arabia, 600,000 are non-Muslims.

Women are segregated in workplaces, schools, restaurants, and on public transportation, and they may not drive. They are required to wear the *abaya*, a black garment covering the head, face, and body. Officers of the Mutawwai'in, or Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, harass women for violating conservative dress codes and for appearing in public with unrelated males. Women may not travel within or outside the country without a male relative. Although they make up half the student population, women account for less than six percent of the workforce. They are not allowed to study engineering, law, or journalism. The issue of greater freedom for women has received wider attention in recent months. Members of the royal family called for lifting restrictions on women, and in October, women were allowed to observe a session of the Majlis for the first time. In November, the government announced that women would be issued identity cards for the first time, thus allowing them to be listed as citizens, and not as dependents on their families' or husbands' cards.

Government permission is required to form professional groups and associations, which must be nonpolitical. There are no publicly active human rights groups, and the government prohibits visits by international human rights groups and independent monitors. Trade unions, collective bargaining, and strikes are prohibited. Foreign workers are subject to abusive and oppressive working conditions and are often denied legitimate claims to wages, benefits, or compensation. They are not protected under labor laws, and courts generally do not enforce the few legal protections provided to them.

↑ Senegal

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 9,200,000
PPP: \$1,730
Life Expectancy: 52

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Ethnic Groups: Wolof (36 percent), Fulani (17 percent), Serer (17 percent), Diola (9 percent), Toucouleur (9 percent), Mandingo (9 percent), European and Lebanese (1 percent), other (2 percent)

Capital: Dakar

Trend Arrow: Senegal receives an upward trend arrow due to efforts to make the electoral process more fair and to make peace with Casamance rebels, and the release of a number of political prisoners.



Overview:

In 1999 Senegal was preparing for presidential elections in February 2000 while making advances toward ending a 17-year rebellion in the troubled southern Casamance region.

President Abdou Diouf, of the Socialist Party, is facing a number of challengers to his rule of nearly two decades, including popular opposition leader and law professor Abdoulaye Wade, of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS). Other aspirants include former ruling party member Moustapha Niassé, now of the Alliance of the Forces for Progress (AFP). He is a former foreign minister and has served as the United Nations special envoy to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Attorney and former minister Djibo Ka, of the Union for Democratic Renewal, is also seeking the presidency. If no candidate obtains a majority on February 27, a second round will be held in late March.

Negotiations with the rebel Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) in 1998 appeared to have been mere politicking on the part of the Diouf government, while recent efforts ring more genuine. The two sides signed a ceasefire in December 1999, agreeing to meet once a month for six months in Banjul, The Gambia, for further discussions. A previous ceasefire broke down. Officials said they would review the movement's demand to be transformed into a political party. A number of prisoners have been released, and the group's leaders are no longer under house arrest. Serious abuses by both sides in the fighting have been reported.

Casamance is almost entirely separated from the rest of Senegal by The Gambia, but is vital to Senegal's economy. The violence there has deterred tourism, disrupted rice production, and thereby harmed Senegal's economic growth. It has also tested the capacity and discipline of the country's professional and largely apolitical military. Senegalese peace-keepers have served in various parts of the world, including Bosnia, East Timor, Lebanon, Rwanda, and Liberia. Senegalese forces in Guinea-Bissau withdrew this year after 2,000 troops had been sent there in 1998, ostensibly to support Guinea-Bissau's now deposed government, but also to destroy suspected rear bases of the MFDC guerrillas.

Since independence from France in 1960, Senegal has escaped military or harshly authoritarian rule. President Leopold Senghor exercised de facto one-party rule under

the Socialist Party for more than a decade after independence. Most political restrictions were lifted after 1981. Diouf succeeded President Senghor in 1981 and won large victories in unfair elections in 1988 and 1993.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Senegalese people's right to choose presidents and legislative representatives in multiparty elections is constitutionally guaranteed, but has been realized only partially in practice. For decades, the Socialist Party's overwhelming dominance has blocked opposition chances to gain power. Voting regulations blatantly favored the ruling party for the first three decades after independence. Changes to the 1992 Electoral Code lowered the voting age to 18, introduced secret balloting, and created a nominally fairer electoral framework. The Socialist Party-controlled government, however, has used state patronage and state media to protect its position. Questions about the credibility of the National Elections Monitoring Committee have been raised by the appointment of a former supreme court justice to its leadership replacing a former interior minister. Nongovernmental organizations are monitoring distribution of voter cards to prevent possible fraud. There was an attempt by parliament to limit the number of party representatives that could be on hand at each polling station, but the effort failed.

The May 1998 polls returned the Socialist Party to a comfortable majority of seats in the national assembly, but also reflected a continuing slide in the party's share of the popular vote. Ruling party candidates won 93 of 140 seats, while the PDS won 23 and the Union for Democratic Renewal (URD) won 11. The election was judged by most observers to be the fairest in Senegal's history. The opposition, however, complained of fraud, which has historically helped to ensure successive, robust Socialist Party victories.

Poor pay and lack of tenure protections create windows for external influence on a judiciary that is, by statute, independent. In high-profile cases, there is often considerable interference from political and economic elites. Uncharged detainees are incarcerated without legal counsel far beyond the lengthy periods already permitted by law. The government released 120 suspected rebels in February. Efforts were underway to pardon another 218 prisoners, including suspected MFDC members. Security forces are reportedly responsible for dozens of extrajudicial executions, disappearances, and acts of torture to extract confessions related to the Casamance issue. Rebels are accused of torturing and killing dozens of civilians.

With the exception of activities by Islamist groups, freedom of association and assembly is broadly respected. Religious freedom is honored in Senegal, which is 90 percent Muslim. Human rights groups are among many nongovernmental organizations that operate freely. Five members of the powerful Senegalese Islamic brotherhood, the Mourid, were released in August after having been accused of being behind attacks on two mosques of a rival brotherhood. The Mourid has strong financial and political influence and is likely to back Diouf for president.

Freedom of expression is generally respected but not always guaranteed. A court in March sentenced an opposition leader to six months in jail for libeling Diouf and barred him from voting or standing in elections for the next five years. Members of the independent media are often highly critical of the government and political parties. The government does not practice formal censorship, but a strong element of self-censorship is instilled through fear of laws against "discrediting the state" and disseminating

"false news." There are three independent television stations and numerous independent radio stations.

Constitutional rights afforded women are often not honored, especially in the countryside, and women have fewer chances than men for education and employment. Despite government campaigns, spousal abuse and other domestic violence against women are reportedly common. Many elements of Islamic and local customary law, particularly those regarding inheritance and marital relations, are discriminatory toward women. Senegal banned female genital mutilation in December. Violators could serve five years in prison.

Union rights to organize and strike are legally protected, but include notification requirements and can carry penalties. Nearly all of the country's small industrialized workforce is unionized, and workers are a potent political force. The National Confederation of Senegalese Workers is linked to and provides an important political base for the ruling party. The National Union of Autonomous Labor Unions of Senegal, a smaller, rival confederation, is more independent. In May, a court ordered three trade union activists to pay U.S.\$450,000 to the National Electricity Company following a strike in 1998 that sparked some violence and led to a two-day blackout. The court also upheld jail sentences of six months against the leader of the electricity workers union and two colleagues. Nine other union activists were freed.

Senegal's population is mostly engaged in subsistence agriculture. There has been steady growth in the industrial sector, but lack of open competition obstructs independent business development. Major business opportunities in Senegal still require important political connections. The World Bank hailed liberalization of the country's banking and telecommunications sectors, while a number of foreign companies signed public agreements with the government in 1999 for offshore oil and energy exploration.

Seychelles

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Economy: Mixed statist
Status: Partly Free
Population: 100,000
PPP: \$8,171
Life Expectancy: 70
Ethnic Groups: Seychellois (mixture of Asian, Africans and French)
Capital: Victoria



Overview: President France Albert Rend and his ruling Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) party continued to exert nearly full control through a pervasive system of political patronage after being returned to power in the March 1998 elections. The government had more success in 1999 in implementing its own home-grown form of economic liberalization. Nearly all of the nation's hotels have been privatized, along with most of the tourist industry that the country relies on heavily for its foreign exchange. The gov-

ernment has also taken measures to reduce its fiscal deficit, which dropped from 26 percent of the gross domestic product in 1998 to about 13 percent in 1999.

Rend won a legitimate electoral mandate in the country's first multiparty elections in 1993. The 1998 polls were accepted as generally free and fair by opposition parties, which had waged a vigorous campaign. The Seychelles National Party of the Reverend Wavel Ramkalawan emerged as the strongest opposition group by espousing economic liberalization, which Rene had resisted.

The Seychelles, an archipelago of some 115 islands in the western Indian Ocean, was a French colony until 1810. It was then colonized by Britain until independence in 1976. The country functioned as a multiparty democracy for only one year until Rene, then prime minister, seized power by ousting President James Mancham. Mancham and other opposition leaders operated parties and human rights groups in exile after Rene made his SPPF the sole legal party. He and his party continue to control government jobs, contracts, and resources. René won one-party show elections in 1979, 1984, and 1989. By 1992, the SPPF had passed a constitutional amendment to legalize opposition parties, and many exiled leaders returned to participate in a constitutional commission and multiparty elections.

President Rend, who also heads the country's defense and interior ministries, is reportedly in failing health. Vice President James Michel, who also heads a number of ministries, has assumed a more prominent role in daily government affairs and is viewed as Rene's likely successor.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: In free and largely fair presidential and legislative elections in March 1998, the Seychellois people were able to exercise their right to choose their representatives. As in 1993, SPPF control over state resources and most media gave ruling-party candidates significant advantages in the polls. The president and the national assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage. As amended in 1996, the 1993 constitution provides for a 34-member national assembly, with 25 members directly elected and 9 allocated on a proportional basis to parties with at least ten percent of the vote. Other amendments have strengthened presidential powers. Local governments composed of district councils were reconstituted in 1991 after their abolition two decades earlier. In the March 1998 elections, Rene won with 67 percent of the vote. The ruling SPPF won 30 national assembly seats.

The judiciary includes a supreme court, a constitutional court, a court of appeals, an industrial court, and magistrates' courts. Judges generally decide cases fairly, but still face interference in cases involving major economic or political actors.

Two private human rights-related organizations, Friends for a Democratic Society and the Center for Rights and Development, operate in the country along with other nongovernmental organizations. Churches in this predominantly Roman Catholic nation have also been strong voices for human rights and democratization. All function without government interference. Discrimination against foreign workers has been reported. Security forces have been accused of using excessive force, including torture and arbitrary detention, especially in attempting to curb crime.

Freedom of speech has improved since one-party rule ended in 1993, but self-censorship persists. There is one government daily newspaper, and at least two other newspapers support or are published by the SPPF. Independent newspapers are sharply critical of the government, but government dominance and the threat of libel suits restrict media

freedom. Opposition parties publish several newsletters and other publications. The opposition weekly *Regar* has been sued repeatedly for libel under broad constitutional restrictions on free expression "for protecting the reputation, rights, and freedoms of private lives of persons" and "in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health." One of the latest lawsuits was brought in March by the minister of land use and habitat. The government-controlled Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation, however, provided substantial coverage to opposition as well as government candidates during the last elections. Academic advancement is reportedly contingent on loyalty to the ruling party.

Women are less likely than men to be literate and have fewer educational opportunities. While almost all adult females are classified as "economically active," most are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Domestic violence against women is reportedly widespread, but is rarely prosecuted and only lightly punished. Islanders of Creole extraction face de facto discrimination. Nearly all of the Seychelles' political and economic life is dominated by people of European and Asian origin.

The right to strike is formally protected by the 1993 Industrial Relations Act, but is limited by several regulations. The SPPF-associated National Workers' Union no longer monopolizes union activity. Two independent unions are now active. The government does not restrict domestic travel, but may deny passports for reasons of "national interest." Religious freedom is respected.

Seychelles has few natural resources and little industry. The government, however, has begun to diversify the economy and move it away from its heavy reliance on tourism. Shortages of foreign exchange and the presence of inefficient state enterprises have kept growth sluggish. Since the early 1990s, the government has implemented home-grown economic reforms with some progress. They include a mix of reduced controls on the economy and increased economic liberalization.

↑ Sierra Leone

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy (rebel insurgency) **Political Rights:** 3
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 5,300,000

PPP: \$410

Life Expectancy: 48

Ethnic Groups: Temne (30 percent), Mende (30 percent), other tribes (30 percent), Creole (10 percent)

Capital: Freetown

Trend Arrow: Sierra Leone receives an upward trend arrow due to a peace agreement reached between the government and rebels. Rebel leaders have returned to the capital to participate in the political process of rebuilding the country, and efforts at disarmament and demobilization are underway.



Overview: Sierra Leone suffered violent upheaval and made major steps towards peace after eight years of civil war. Revolutionary

United Front (RUF) rebels in January overran West African peacekeepers, who had restored the democratically elected government in 1998, and seized the capital, Freetown. Several thousand civilians were killed, and numerous other atrocities, such as amputating limbs and burning people alive, were committed in the battle for the city and the subsequent three-week rebel occupation. RUF fighters also abducted thousands of civilians, mostly young people, and particularly young women, in their retreat as regional peacekeepers, backed by foreign soldiers and pilots, won back control of Freetown.

Through diplomatic efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States and Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, a peace agreement was signed in July that provided a controversial amnesty for those involved in the fighting, which since the war broke out in 1991 has claimed at least 20,000 lives. The accord also gave RUF leader Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma, who led the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military junta that had ousted Kabbah in 1997, key positions in a coalition government. Security has improved, but reports persist of atrocities committed by rebel fighters. There have also been sporadic clashes between armed groups, and there are indications that weapons continue to come over the border from neighboring Liberia.

A number of camps to demobilize an estimated 45,000 fighters have been set up by the United Nations and West African peacekeepers, but substantial progress at disarmament has yet to get underway. There is deep mistrust among the armed groups, which include civil defense forces known as *kamajors* and former Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) soldiers. Meanwhile, the Kabbah government is struggling to revive the economy and build the democratic institutions it hopes will be able to oversee long-lasting peace. A total of 11,000 UN peacekeepers are due in the country to help complete the demobilization process, but their arrival has been slow.

Founded by Britain in 1787 as a haven for liberated slaves, Sierra Leone became independent in 1961. The RUF launched a guerrilla campaign from neighboring Liberia in 1991 to end 23 years of increasingly corrupt one-party rule by the All People's Congress party of President Joseph Momoh. Junior army officers led by Captain Valentine Strasser seized power in 1992 in protest against poor pay and working conditions at the front. The regime hired South African soldiers to help win back key diamond areas. In January 1996, Brigadier Julius Maada-Bio quietly deposed Strasser. Elections proceeded despite military and rebel intimidation, and 60 percent of Sierra Leone's 1.6 million eligible voters cast ballots. In a second round runoff vote in March 1996, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah defeated John Karefa-Smart of the United National People's Party. Koroma had invited the RUF to join his AFRC regime in 1997 before peacekeepers helped restore the legitimate government.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance to the tens of thousands of displaced civilians has been hampered by lack of security in the countryside. In December two employees from Doctors Without Borders were taken hostage.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Presidential and legislative elections in February and March 1996 were imperfect, but the most legitimate since independence. President Kabbah's February return to office reestablished representative government, although the legislative system, like most of the country's other institutions, is in disarray. Dozens of political parties have been formed,

but most revolve around a personality and have little following. The RUF is now recognized as a legal political party, and its members will be allowed to contest elections.

The judiciary is active, but corruption and a lack of resources are impediments. A number of young attorneys are trying to restore a degree of professionalism in the practice of law. In July, 41 former supporters of the ousted AFRC junta were freed from prison, in line with the peace agreement.

Exercise of the freedom of assembly and the right to demonstrate is permitted. A number of nongovernmental organizations operate openly in Freetown, but corruption among some of them hinders effective programs. Human rights abuses continue to be a widespread problem despite the signing of the peace accord. The general amnesty provided for in the peace agreement was harshly criticized by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Local rights groups condemned the amnesty and said the awarding of ministerial positions will only inspire others to take up arms. The accord does, however, call for a Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be formed, but as of December 1999 they had yet to be established. A coalition of about a dozen human rights groups in the country, the Civil Liberty Group, called on the government and the international community to help bring those who prosecuted the war to trial in an international court of law such as the one for Rwandan genocide suspects.

Journalists were targeted during the assault on Freetown in January and a number of them were killed. Among them was an Associated Press cameraman, who was gunned down by rebels. In addition, several journalists were subjected to harassment by security forces in 1999. Four journalists were detained by peacekeepers in June at the offices of the *Independent Observer*, and a number of employees were beaten. Weapons were allegedly discovered inside the office, but eyewitnesses said security forces planted them to discredit managing editor Jonathan Leigh. He had been arrested in May for an article that criticized the peacekeeping force. In August, RUF commanders reportedly attacked the offices of the newspaper *For Di People* and beat editor Paul Kamara. Efforts are underway to establish an independent radio station, but so far the only broadcasts are state-controlled. Numerous independent newspapers of varying quality are published in Freetown. Parliament was expected to vote on a controversial media bill that proposes to create a media council empowered to suspend or revoke licenses, and impose prohibitive fines. The bill does not proscribe existing restrictive laws such as the 1964 criminal libel law.

Despite constitutionally guaranteed equal rights, women face extensive legal and de facto discrimination as well as limited access to education and employment. Married women have fewer property rights than men, especially in rural areas, where customary law prevails. Female genital mutilation is widespread, and the practice was publicly supported by the ousted army junta. Rape, sexual assault, and sexual slavery were rampant during the war.

Sierra Leone is one of the world's poorest countries but has the potential to be among the most wealthy because of its diamond resources. Its economy has been devastated by the civil war while a number of individuals have enriched themselves through diamonds. There is a dearth of qualified personnel to put the country's institutions back together, as most of Sierra Leone's professionals fled the country during the war. Salaries are less than 20 percent of what they were at independence.

Singapore

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 4,000,000
PPP: \$28,460
Life Expectancy: 77
Ethnic Groups: Chinese (76 percent), Malay (15 percent), Indian (6 percent), other (3 percent)
Capital: Singapore

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In 1999, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's continued efforts to promote a more creative and entrepreneurial culture in Singapore remained at odds with an authoritarian political system that encourages conformity and restricts the flow of news and information.

Singapore became a British colony in 1867. Occupied by the Japanese during World War II, the city-state became self-governing in 1959, entered the Malaysian Federation in 1963, and in 1965 became fully independent under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The 1959 constitution created a parliamentary system with elections held at least once every five years. Two amendments authorize the government to appoint additional members of parliament to ensure that the opposition has at least three seats. A 1993 amendment provided for the president to be elected for a six-year term and vested the office with limited responsibility over certain budgetary and financial matters and civil service appointments.

The People's Action Party (PAP) won every seat in every election from 1968 to 1980 before losing a 1981 by-election. Lee resigned in 1990 in favor of Goh, his hand-picked successor. Prior to Singapore's first presidential elections in 1993, a three-member Presidential Elections Committee (PEC) rejected two opposition candidates for lacking proper character and the requisite financial experience. Deputy Prime Minister Ong Teng Cheong won 58 percent of the vote against a weak challenger to become president.

The nine-day campaign for the January 2, 1997, parliamentary elections featured a rare airing of diverse views on critical issues. Opposition calls for greater freedom of expression and criticism of rising costs of living appeared to resonate among young professionals. Goh responded by warning that neighborhoods voting against the PAP would be the lowest priority for government-sponsored upgrades of public housing estates, where some 85 percent of Singaporeans live. With the opposition contesting only 36 seats in an expanded 83-seat parliament, the PAP won 65 percent of the vote and 81 seats, with the left-of-center Workers' Party (WP) and the centrist Singapore People's Party each winning 1 seat.

Following the election, Goh and ten other PAP leaders filed defamation suits against two defeated WP candidates, party Secretary General J. B. Jayaretnam and Tang Liang Hong. Jayaretnam had announced during a campaign rally that Tang had filed police reports against PAP leaders for calling Tang "anti-Christian" and a "Chinese chauvinist." The courts ruled against both men, although the final judgments were for considerably less than the PAP leaders had sought.

In February and March 1999, Chee Soon Juan of the tiny, opposition Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) served jail terms of 7 and 12 days for violating the Public Entertainments Act after making a pair of financial district speeches without permits in December 1998 and January 1999. Chee opted to serve the sentences rather than pay fines and alleged that on previous occasions authorities had denied or delayed granting permits until it was too late to make arrangements. A second SDP member, found guilty under similar charges for assisting Chee during his January speech, also opted for a 12-day jail term rather than pay a S\$2,400 (US \$1,500) fine. In June, President Ong announced he would not run for a second term. In August, S. R. Nathan, 75, a former ambassador, became president by default after the PEC declared ineligible two other candidates—a private tutor and an opposition politician.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Constitutionally, Singaporeans can change their government through elections. In practice, the PAP government maintains tight limits on pluralistic politics through its use of civil and security laws against political opponents; control over the press; and use of patronage. Government agencies operate with limited transparency. Nevertheless, the PAP appears to enjoy considerable popular support for having overseen Singapore's transformation from a low-wage economy to a regional high-technology and financial center.

Opposition parties have trouble fielding viable slates for Group Representation Constituencies (GRC), or multimember electoral districts in which at least one candidate must be an ethnic minority. The current parliament has 15 GRCs, with a maximum of six seats each, and only 9 single-member districts. Strict regulations govern the constitutions and financial affairs of political parties. In 1998, parliament amended censorship regulations to ban political parties from making videos or television advertisements.

The judiciary has consistently ruled in favor of the government or PAP leaders in a series of defamation suits and other cases that have nearly bankrupted some opposition figures, including a 1986 fraud conviction against the WP's Jayaretnam that the Privy Council in London criticized. However, courts have acquitted defendants or reduced monetary damages in some such cases. Some of the grounds for conviction of opposition figures have raised serious questions about judicial independence. For example, Amnesty International criticized a 1997 defamation conviction against Jayaretnam for being based on alleged "innuendo" rather than Jayaretnam's actual words.

The president appoints supreme court judges on the recommendation of the prime minister with the advice of the chief justice, and appoints lower court judges on the recommendation of the chief justice. The Legal Services Commission, chaired by the chief justice, sets the terms of appointment. Judges, particularly supreme court judges, have close ties to PAP leaders.

Police reportedly abuse detainees to extract confessions. Authorities use caning to punish approximately 30 offenses, including certain immigration violations.

The colonial-era Internal Security Act (ISA) permits authorities to detain suspects without charge or trial for an unlimited number of two-year periods. The government uses the ISA relatively infrequently, but released the last political detainee under the ISA as recently as 1989. The ISA also permits the government to restrict the political and civil rights of former detainees. The government actively uses two other laws that

permit detention without trial: one to detain people for alleged narcotics offenses or involvement in secret societies, the other to commit drug abusers to rehabilitation centers. A 1989 constitutional amendment prohibits judicial review of the substantive grounds of detentions under the ISA and antismersion laws, and bars the judiciary from reviewing the constitutionality of such laws. There is no right to a public trial under the ISA.

By law, the government must approve the owners of key "management shares" in the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). SPH has close ties to the PAP and owns all general circulation newspapers. Journalists practice self-censorship regarding numerous political, social, and economic issues, and editorials and domestic news coverage strongly favor the PAP.

In 1994, a court fined two journalists and three economists under the Official Secrets Act, which bars the unauthorized release of government data to the media, for publishing advance gross domestic product figures. In 1995, courts ruled against the *International Herald Tribune* for contempt of court and libel, and assessed fines totaling \$892,000. The government can legally ban newspapers, although it has not done so recently. A 1986 amendment to the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act allows the government to "gazette," or restrict circulation of, any foreign periodical for publishing articles allegedly interfering in domestic politics. In recent years, authorities have gazzetted *Time*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *The Economist*, and other publications.

The government-affiliated Singapore International Media PTE, Ltd., operates all four free television stations and at least ten of Singapore's nearly 20 radio stations. Foreign broadcasts are available. Government-linked companies provide the three Internet services and the cable television service. In May 1999, an Internet service provider apologized for not having informed its customers before requesting in April that the home ministry scan 200,000 computers in an effort to trace a virus that allows hackers to steal computer passwords and credit card numbers. The government subjects movies, television, videos, music, and the Internet to censorship.

In April, after his convictions for unauthorized public speeches, a court convicted Chee under the Public Environmental Health Act for selling his book on Asian dissidents without a license; he paid a \$347 fine. In August, authorities reportedly refused to allow Chee to hold public speeches in two locations.

The Societies Act requires most organizations of more than ten people to be registered and restricts political activity to political parties. However, the PAP has close ties with ostensibly nonpolitical associations such as neighborhood groups, while authorities generally do not permit opposition parties to form similar groups. Authorities must approve speakers at public functions, and they occasionally deny approval to opposition politicians. The police must approve any public assembly of more than five people. In May 1999, opposition leaders Chee and Jayaretnam established Singapore's first politically oriented nongovernmental organization, the nonpartisan Open Singapore Center, to advocate greater transparency and accountability in government and business.

Freedom of religion is generally respected, although Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church are banned under the Societies Act. According to Amnesty International, in 1998, at least 36 conscientious objectors to military service, all members of the Jehovah's Witnesses, were in prison. Race riots between Malays and the majority Chinese killed scores of people in the 1960s, and the government takes measures to

promote racial harmony and equity. Minorities are well represented in government, but Malays reportedly face unofficial discrimination in employment opportunities.

Most unions are affiliated with the pro-government National Trade Unions Congress. There have been no strikes since 1986, in part because labor shortages give employees considerable leverage. The regional financial crisis pushed Singapore into its first recession since 1985 in the third quarter of 1998. In late 1999, some private economists estimated that gross domestic product had grown by 4 percent in 1999.

Slovakia

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 5,400,000

PPP: \$7,910

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Slovak (86 percent), Hungarian (11 percent), Roma [Gypsy] (2 percent), Czech (1 percent)

Capital: Bratislava

Political Rights: 1*

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Ratings change: Slovakia's political rights rating changed from 2 to 1 due to the new government enacting a previously suppressed law on direct presidential elections in January, followed by the election of Rudolph Schuster as president in May.

Overview:

Less than one year after emerging from international isolation under former Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar, Slovakia held direct presidential elections in 1999 and continued trying to catch up with its Central European neighbors in the race to join the European Union (EU) and NATO.

Meciar and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) party have dominated Slovakian politics since the fall of communism in 1989 and the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993. In the 1994 parliamentary elections, HZDS won 61 seats and formed a ruling coalition with the left-wing Workers Association (ZRS) and the ultra-right Slovak National Party (SNS). In 1995, Meciar moved to reduce the authority of President Michal Kovac, whom he blamed for the resignation of the previous HZDS government in early 1994.

By 1997, the EU and NATO had bypassed Slovakia in the first rounds of expansion because of Meciar's authoritarian rule. That summer, five opposition parties—the Christian Democrats, the Democratic Union, the Democratic Party, the Social Democrats, and the Green Party—formed the center-right Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK).

In September 1998, Slovak voters overwhelmingly backed the SDK and its allies. On October 30, the parliamentary chairman appointed the SDK leader Milukas Dzurinda prime minister. The government also included members of the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), which represented the country's estimated 500,000 ethnic Hungarians. In November, the ruling coalition won more than the three-fifths majority needed to change

the constitution and implemented direct presidential election laws that Meciar had obstructed in 1997.

The new government's program included pledges to privatize banks, to stabilize the economy, to make human and minority rights top priorities, and to push harder for membership in NATO and the EU.

The government allowed NATO to use Slovakia as a land corridor to Kosovo in April 1999 and pursued reforms of the bureaucracy and social welfare system. In October, the European Commission recommended starting EU membership negotiations with Slovakia. The government also investigated Meciar-era corruption. In February 1999, parliament waived immunity guarantees for government officials and indicted the former interior minister for forging ballots in a 1997 referendum. In April, a secret service agent confessed to participating in the 1995 kidnapping of the son of Michal Kovac, a former president and an opponent of Meciar's.

In July 1999, there were signs that Slovakia's strong growth would slow from 6 percent in 1998 to 4.4 percent in 1999. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned about high spending, but praised the country's macroeconomic policies. Yet austerity programs reduced government approval from 58 percent in June to 53 percent in July, and contributed to growing divisions within the coalition as well as rising popularity for the HZDS and other right-wing parties by September.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change the government democratically, and the 1998 parliamentary elections were free and fair. In May 1999, the government-supported candidate Rudolph Schuster, of the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP), defeated Meciar in runoff presidential elections, getting 57 percent of the vote to Meciar's 42 percent. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found the elections to be fair and media coverage balanced.

Article 26 of the Slovak constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press. In August 1999, parliament began consideration of a new draft media law that would end years of ambiguity and political fighting about media regulation in Slovakia. The law would meet EU requirements, although the International Centre Against Censorship noted that access of information to the public and whistle-blower protection could be strengthened. Article 103 of the Penal Code penalizes defamation of the president, but enforcement has been selective in the past. All major dailies are private. There are some 20 private radio stations. The state-owned Slovak Television, which reaches the whole country, broadcasts on two channels, STV-1 and STV-2. Private stations include TV Marzika and VTV, which broadcast via cable and satellite. In 1997, a private information agency, SITA, was established.

Freedom of religion is respected in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. Only registered churches and religious organizations have the explicit right to conduct public worship services. There are no significant restrictions on freedom of assembly.

Slovakia is a multiparty state, and there are some 90 political parties and movements. No parties have been banned.

Article 37 of the constitution allows for independent trade unions, and almost all are represented in the Confederation of Trade Unions (KOZ), which has 1.1 million members and 42 branches. In July 1999, more than 16,000 teachers protested in Bratislava against government budget cuts.

The court system consists of local and regional courts with the supreme court as the highest court of appeals except for constitutional questions, which are considered by the constitutional court. Most judges rule fairly and impartially, though the judicial system is overburdened. Throughout 1999, courts supported and upheld parliamentary decisions to investigate and prosecute officials from the previous government for corruption and illegal activity.

The Hungarian and Roma (Gypsy) minorities have faced discrimination in the past. The parliament approved a new language law in July 1999 to give more linguistic rights to the ethnic Hungarian minority. The law incorporated EU and OSCE suggestions, but ethnic Hungarians and the Hungarian government felt it did not offer Hungarians enough protection. Following migration attempts by groups of Roma in July, the Slovak government offered to work with the Czech Republic in resolving discrimination against the Roma in both countries.

There are no significant restrictions on freedom of movement, choice of residence, or employment. Article 20 of the constitution guarantees the protection of property rights. There are no serious impediments to operating a business, though growing tax and insurance burdens, increased administrative difficulties, and a shortage of loans and capital have had an impact on small- and medium-size enterprises. While "insider" privatization and corruption have effected equality of opportunity, Slovaks generally do have the means to share in legitimate economic gains. In May and June, the government announced new plans for increased privatization of the banking, power, and telecommunications industries.

Women are equal under the law and enjoy the same property, inheritance, and other legal rights as men; they are represented in the professions, government, and higher education, although wage discrepancies tend to favor men. In the first round of the May 1999 presidential elections, Magda Vasaryova, a sociologist and film star, finished third with six percent of the vote.

Slovenia

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 2,000,000

PPP: \$11,800

Life Expectancy: 75

Ethnic Groups: Slovene (91 percent), Croat (3 percent), Serb (2 percent), Muslim (1 percent), other (3 percent)

Capital: Ljubljana

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Slovenia, one of the region's smallest but most prosperous and stable states, supported the NATO campaign in Kosovo in 1999 and progressed with reforms aimed at securing its accession to the European Union (EU) and eventual NATO membership.

Slovenia was controlled for centuries by the Hapsburg empire before being incor-

porated into the new Yugoslavia created after World War I. After Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, its territorial defense forces secured the nation's sovereignty by overcoming an invasion by the Yugoslav People's Army.

In the November 1996 elections for the 90-member national assembly, the center-left Liberal Democratic Party (LDS), led by Prime Minister Janez Drovsek, won 25 seats, five fewer than before. The Slovenian Christian Democrats (SKD) won 10 seats, five fewer than in 1992. The rightist Slovenian People's Party (SLS) won 19 seats, and the ultraconservative Social Democrats (SDS), led by controversial former Defense Minister Janez Jansa, took 16 seats. The former Communist United List of Social Democrats, won 9; the Democratic Party of Pensioners, 5; and the National Party, 4. In February 1997, Drovsek ended a three-month stalemate by forging a coalition with the SLS and the small Democratic Party of Pensioners (DeSus). Incumbent president Milan Kucan was easily reelected in 1997.

In 1997 the EU voted to accept Slovenia as a member, but criticized the government's failure in 1998 to make necessary reforms despite its 1997 accession plan drawn up by Janez Potocnik, Slovenia's chief EU negotiator. The study laid out a timetable for instituting ambitious changes in the coming years to the existing taxation and pension systems, and for reform of the financial sector, including the privatization of state-owned banks and insurance companies. Slovenia was the last of the EU applicant countries from the former Communist bloc to launch a value-added tax (VAT), which was scheduled to start on July 1, 1999.

The LDS made a strong showing in local elections in 1998. This bolstered the often fragile coalition with the SLS, which lost seats from the previous vote. DeSus, the third coalition partner, slightly improved its standing. Keeping the fragile coalition intact led to a logjam of laws in parliament and an often laborious decision-making process that stalled reform in 1998.

In 1999, Slovenia, a Partnership for Peace member, allowed NATO to use its airspace during operations in Kosovo. By June, government efforts to make the country NATO-compliant boosted defense spending to 2.3 percent of the gross domestic product. The government also stepped up economic reforms and its regional diplomacy with Hungary and Croatia in preparation for its year 2003 accession to the EU. In May, it announced the beginning of sweeping bank privatization, and in June the government signed an agreement with Croatia to settle property disputes. U.S. President Bill Clinton praised the country's economic reforms and democratization during a June visit and said Slovenia was a strong candidate for the next, but as of yet undetermined, round of NATO expansion.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Slovenes can change their government democratically. The 1996 parliamentary elections involved many parties and candidates and were judged "free and fair," as were the 1997 presidential elections.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press, although the Slovenian Civil Code prohibits "insulting" officials. Most Slovenian media have been privatized. The major daily newspapers are supported with private investment and advertising. In 1999, there was increasing debate among journalists about standards and the influence of the private sector over news content. Slovenia Radio-Television broadcasts over three radio stations and two television stations. There are four inde-

pendent television stations and nine major commercial radio stations. The media offer a wide variety of opinion and commentary.

There are no restrictions on freedom of religion in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country, and freedom of assembly is guaranteed and respected. Slovenia is a multiparty democracy, and there are at least 30 political parties from the far-left to the far-right, with more than a dozen represented in parliament. The main opposition parties are the Social Democrats (SDS), the Slovenian Christian Democrats (SKD), and the United List of Social Democrats. There are hundreds of nongovernmental organizations, though most rely on foreign funding.

Trade unions are constitutionally protected and guaranteed the right to strike. The Association of Trade Unions is the de facto successor to the Communist-era trade union. A third, much smaller, regional union operates on the Adriatic coast. Unions are formally and actually independent of the government and political parties, but individual union members hold positions in the legislature. The United List party has wide trade union support.

The judiciary is independent, and the judicial system comprises district courts, regional courts, a court of appeals, and the supreme court. Judges are elected by the national assembly upon recommendation of an eleven-member judicial council, five of whose members are selected by parliament on the nomination of the president, and six of whom are sitting judges selected by their peers. In 1997, the government announced changes to the Penal Code to comply with the EU and conform to the requirements of a market economy. New commercial laws, as well as statutes dealing with corruption, money laundering, organized crime, and computer hacking were enacted. Laws protect journalists who betray state or military secrets if the disclosures reveal illegal or corrupt practices by government officials.

There are no significant government restrictions on movement, residence, or employment. Property rights for citizens are guaranteed by the constitution, and a 1998 law allows foreigners to own real estate. Private enterprise and ownership are promoted and legally protected. In 1999, the government loosened its grip on the tightly regulated banking sector and allowed foreign banks to open offices throughout Slovenia. Bureaucratic procedures for starting a business are generally transparent, though commercial legislation is incomplete.

In 1998, the European Commission reported that there was no significant corruption in the civil service. Initiatives to combat corruption have been included as part of the government's efforts to ensure compliance with EU requirements.

Women and men are equal under the law, and women are represented in government, business, and education.

Solomon Islands

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 400,000

PPP: \$2,310

Life Expectancy: 70

Ethnic Groups: Melanesian (93 percent), Polynesian (4 percent), Micronesian (1.5 percent), other (1.5 percent)

Capital: Honiara

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Ethnic tensions between the Gwale people, natives of the island of Guadalcanal, and those from the island of Malaita (60 miles away) worsened in January 1999, when Ezekiel Alebua, premier of Guadalcanal, asked the government to pay his province for hosting the capital, Honiara, and suggested that people from outside the province should not be allowed to own land there. The Gwale majority has long complained that migrants from elsewhere in the Solomon Islands are taking local jobs and land. Fighting broke out in June when lightly armed militants of the Gwale majority, calling themselves the Istambu freedom fighters, struck in the countryside and then moved to Honiara. The conflict caused at least six deaths and forced an estimated 25,000 Malaitans to flee from their homes and/or return to Malaita. The government invited Commonwealth special envoy Sitiveni Rabuka, a former prime minister of Fiji, to mediate the conflict.

Business declined as much as 50 percent as a result of the violence. Tourism, a key source of government revenue, was especially hard hit. The government declared a state of emergency, and Alebua called for a media ban on statements about the ethnic unrest in his province. In July, the conflict ended with the signing of the Honiara Peace Accord. Under the agreement, the militants agreed to disarm in return for an official review to ensure "even development" throughout the islands. On October 23, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and New Zealand signed a peace agreement on the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force. However, it is unclear whether a lasting peace will prevail. The government said there is evidence of the formation of a Malaitan military group.

The government replaced the Police Field Force, a paramilitary unit, with regular police. Maturangi Hika, a Maori from New Zealand, was chosen as the new police commissioner. Hika's appointment was made possible by the government's decision to "delocalize" several senior government positions, including commissioners of land, forest, and police. In July, the government announced plans to amend the constitution to be more reflective of island traditions. A constitutional review committee will be formed, and people are invited to comment.

The Solomon Islands, a twin chain of islands stretching nearly 900 miles in the western Pacific, became a British protectorate in the late 1800s and an independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1978.

Politics in this parliamentary is characterized by frequently shifting partisan loyalties. In 1990, Solomon Mamaloni, who was then serving his second term, quit his ruling party and formed a "national unity" government that included opposition politicians.

Mamaloni later formalized this as the Group for National Unity and Reconciliation (GNUR), which took 21 of 47 seats in the May 1993 elections. In June, an opposition alliance formed in parliament to elect as prime minister Francis Billy Hilly, a businessman who ran as an independent.

In October 1994, Governor General Moses Pitakaka removed Hilly after the prime minister lost his majority support in parliament over his declaration of a moratorium on the profitable logging industry and his handling of relations with neighboring Papua New Guinea. In November, parliament elected Mamaloni as prime minister, who immediately ended the logging ban, partially in response to a financial crisis that, by 1995, had the economy near bankruptcy.

In the August 6, 1997 elections, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, a former labor leader who headed the Alliance for Change and its dominant Solomon Islands Liberal Party, pledged to implement public service and finance reforms to end government corruption and mismanagement. The restructuring program, which includes cutting more than 500 jobs from the oversized civil service, attracted critical support from foreign banks and aid donors. The GNUR won 25 seats in an expanded 50-seat parliament, and the Alliance won 24, with 1 seat vacant. Mamaloni unexpectedly decided not to seek a fourth term. On August 27, parliament elected Ulufa'alu prime minister.

Ulufa'alu's government was shaken in mid-1998 by the defection of six parliamentarians. Ulufa'alu narrowly survived a vote of no-confidence in a special legislative session on September 18. The opposition was weakened by defection from within its ranks. On October 8, former prime minister Solomon Mamaloni was sworn in as leader of the opposition to replace the ailing Job Duddley Tausinga.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Citizens of the Solomon Islands can change their government democratically. Under the 1977 constitution, the 50-member unicameral parliament is directly elected for a four-year term. Executive power is vested in a prime minister and cabinet, and the British monarchy is represented by a governor-general. Traditional chiefs wield formal authority in local government. Party affiliations are weak and based largely on personal loyalties.

The country's three private newspapers vigorously criticize government policies, but have limited circulation outside the towns. There is a private FM radio station, and the state-owned Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation's (SIBC) radio service is the most important source of information and generally offers diverse viewpoints. The government appointed a prominent local journalist to head the SIBC in 1998. In mid-1998, an Australian television channel began broadcasting to the Solomon Islands. Curbs on the media were imposed during the state of emergency in Guadalcanal in 1999, and the government was slow in lifting them even after ending the emergency.

Religious freedom is respected in this predominantly Christian country. Freedom of assembly is also respected. Although public assembly requires a government permit, none is known to have been denied for political reasons. The law recognizes the right of workers to form and join unions and to strike. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of the population are employed in the wage economy, and about 60 to 70 percent of those are organized in trade unions. Disputes are usually referred to the independent Trade Disputes Panel for arbitration. Unions frequently exercise their right to bargain collectively. In July 1998, the Public Employees Union initiated a strike following the government's refusal to negotiate plans for downsizing the country's large public sector.

The judiciary is independent, and procedural safeguards are adequate, with a right of ultimate appeal in certain circumstances to the Privy Council in London. The constitution provides for an ombudsman's office to investigate claims of unfair treatment by the authorities, but its effectiveness is limited in practice by a lack of resources. There have been occasional reports of police abusing suspects.

Citizens are free to travel domestically and overseas. Women face discrimination in education and employment opportunities, and authorities have not sufficiently addressed the problem of domestic violence.

Somalia

Polity: Rival ethnic-based militias; unrecognized de facto state in the north

Economy: Mixed statist

Population: 7,100,000

PPP: na

Life Expectancy: 46

Ethnic Groups: Somali (85 percent), Bantu, Arab

Capital: Mogadishu

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Somalia has degenerated into a "black hole" of anarchy, according to a report by the United Nations in August. The functions that states perform, such as providing social services, overseeing law and order, and regulating the movement of goods and people, do not exist. Factional fighting continues, and poor security allows international relief agencies to operate only intermittently. Their hopes of working with civil societies to provide Somalis with some semblance of infrastructure dwindled in September when bandits ambushed the vehicle of one of the country's best-known humanitarian workers, of the UN Children's Fund, and killed him. In December, unidentified gunmen abducted an official with the World Food Programme from Mogadishu for the second time.

While struggles continue over control of Mogadishu and towns in fertile agricultural areas, much of the violence in Somalia is now criminal rather than political in origin. Fierce fighting broke out in Kismayo in June when an alliance of militia groups ousted the warlord who had controlled the city since 1993. Also in June, the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) launched an assault on Baidoa. Backed by Ethiopian troops, the RRA forced the militia of Somalia's most powerful warlord, Hussein Mohamed Aideed, of a faction of the United Somali Congress/Somalia National Alliance, to flee after Aideed had occupied the city for four years. Aideed, a former U.S. marine, was a member of the U.S. forces deployed in Somalia in 1992. He returned to the country in 1995 and, a year later, took over as the leader of the Somali National Alliance following the death of his father, Mohamed Farah Aideed. The Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict in the region is a further destabilizing factor, with each country accusing the other of funding and arming rival factions. In August Kenya banned flights to and from Somalia in an effort to stem arms smuggling and cross-border raids by Somali bandits.

The UN suggested that the international community do more to help Somalia regain its sovereignty, such as setting up a trust fund to help the peace process, limiting the flow of illegal weapons into the country, and finding ways to promote financial aid for development programs before a central government is established. The UN praised a recent initiative by the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, which has tried to broaden the peace process by bringing in civic and social groups as well as clan leaders.

The first international attempt to return to Somalia in December 1998 ended when a fact-finding team of diplomats was expelled by warlords who accused them of trying to divide the population. The December 1997 Cairo Agreement, the thirteenth peace pact among Somalia's armed ethnic factions since central administration collapsed in 1991, has proved to be no more successful than previous accords. Administrations in some parts of the country, however, have begun to provide some basic services. This is mainly in the internationally unrecognized Somaliland Republic, which covers northern territories once held as British Somaliland, and the autonomous Puntland. Both have elected their own governments and brought relative peace to their areas.

Somalia has been wracked for more than a decade by civil war, clan fighting, and natural disasters ranging from drought to flood to famine. Extensive television coverage of famine and civil strife that took approximately 300,000 lives in 1991 and 1992 prompted a U.S.-led international intervention. The armed humanitarian mission in late 1992 quelled clan combat long enough to stop the famine, but ended in urban guerrilla warfare against Somali militias. The last international forces withdrew in March 1995 after the casualty count reached into the thousands. Approximately 100 peacekeepers, including 18 U.S. soldiers, were killed. The \$4 billion UN intervention effort had little lasting impact.

Somalia, a Horn of Africa nation, gained independence in July 1960 with the union of British Somaliland and territories to the south that had been an Italian colony. Other ethnic Somali-inhabited lands are now part of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. General Mohammed Siad Barre seized power in 1969 and increasingly employed divisive clan politics to maintain power. Civil war, starvation, banditry, and brutality have wracked Somalia since the struggle to topple Barre began in the late 1980s. When Barre was deposed in January 1991, power was claimed and contested by heavily armed guerrilla movements and militias based on traditional ethnic and clan loyalties. Savage struggles for economic assets by the various factions led to anarchy and famine. Rebuilding the country will be an enormous task. Somalia can be described as a "failed state." Central authority has disappeared, and local traditional clan authorities have reclaimed state powers, including the administration of justice and control of external commerce. The country is unlikely to be reconstituted in its previous form.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Somalis have had no opportunity to choose their government on a national basis since 1969. The local administrations in Somaliland and Puntland have conducted some form of elections and installed apparently stable governments with functioning legislative arms and courts. Elsewhere, rival clan warlords rule by force of arms. Clan loyalties are the basis for most civil organization in the vacuum left by the disappearance of central authority.

Harsh implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) has returned a semblance of order to some areas, including parts of Mogadishu long plagued by lawlessness. Islamic courts are imposing sentences that include executions and amputations in accordance with

Sharia. Rights to free expression and association are ignored. Few autonomous civic or political groups can organize or operate safely. Several small newspapers and newsletters are published in Mogadishu, but the few independent journalists are under constant threat. International correspondents visit only at great risk. Radio stations are operated mainly by various factions, although the UN now sponsors "peace programming."

Under customary practices and variants of Koranic law, women experience intense societal discrimination. Infibulation, the most severe form of female genital mutilation, is routine. Various armed factions have recruited children into their militias.

The Republic of Somaliland has exercised de facto independence since May 1991. It is headed by President Mohammed Ibrahim Egal and based in Hargeisa, where resistance to the Siad Barre dictatorship in the 1980s was most intense. Egal has said that a referendum on independence will not take place until a peace agreement covering the rest of the country has been reached. Somaliland is far more cohesive than the rest of the country, although reports of some human rights abuses persist. Aid agencies are able to operate more effectively and safely in the Somaliland Republic and nearby Puntland than elsewhere in Somalia. Somaliland government revenues are derived mostly through duties levied on traffic through the port at Berbera, where large amounts of livestock are exported to the Persian Gulf states.

South Africa

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 42,600,000
PPP: \$7,380
Life Expectancy: 58
Ethnic Groups: Black (75 percent), white (14 percent), mixed race (9 percent), Indian (2 percent)
Capital: Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative)

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

South Africa embarked upon the next phase of its remarkable democratic consolidation process in 1999, with the retirement of Nelson Mandela and the second set of national elections since the end of apartheid. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) won a sweeping victory, just barely missing a two-thirds majority in parliament, which would have enabled it to unilaterally amend most of the constitution, including the bill of rights. Voter participation was approximately 85 percent of the 18.2 million eligible voters. Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's former deputy, assumed the presidency. He enjoys broad support and legitimacy, attributes he will need in addressing South Africa's internal and external challenges.

South Africa faces myriad and intractable problems of economic development and group relations, but its democratic political culture appears to be gaining hold. Consolidation of South Africa's democratic transition continued under the new constitution that took effect in February 1997. The country's independent judiciary and other insti-

tutions that protect and promote basic rights are growing stronger. The durability of these democratic structures, however, is uncertain in a country deeply divided by ethnicity and class and plagued by rising crime and corruption. Political violence continues in the Zulu areas of KwaZulu/Natal Province. Crime rates have reached endemic proportions.

The ANC leadership typically blames the former white supremacist regime, which ruled the country from 1948 until the 1994 election, for many of the nation's ills, which also include serious economic hardship and a rocketing AIDS infection rate.

This argument held particular currency in the first years after the regime change, but loses much of its potency as time passes.

South Africa's regional relations are highly sensitive and complicated. Angola continues to suffer from a civil war, and Zimbabwe has become increasingly unstable. Strife in the Great Lakes region, including the Congo, also poses a threat to economic and political progress in the region. Former President Mandela is attempting to mediate a peaceful resolution to Burundi's ongoing crisis.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The new South African constitution is one of the most liberal in the world. It includes a sweeping bill of rights, and it forbids discrimination on grounds, among others, of race, gender, religion, marital status, or sexual orientation. Parliament has passed more than 500 laws relating to the constitution, revamping the apartheid-era legal system.

South Africans has experienced two successful national elections since the end of apartheid. Elections for the 400-seat national assembly and 90-seat National Council of Provinces are by proportional representation based on party lists. The national assembly elects the president to serve concurrently with its five-year term. Local council elections in 1995 and 1996 brought nonracial local governance for the first time. In general, the electoral process, including extensive civic and voter education, balanced state media coverage, and reliable balloting and vote counting, has worked properly. An exception is in KwaZulu/Natal, where political violence and credible allegations of vote rigging have devalued the process.

Despite the predominance of the ANC, other political parties are active and could conceivably challenge the ANC for power in future elections. These include, among others, the Democratic Party, the New National Party, and the United Democratic Movement.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission has sought to heal divisions created by the apartheid regime through a series of open hearings. From 1996 to 1998, the commission received more than 20,000 submissions from victims and nearly 8,000 applications for amnesty from perpetrators. In 1998 the commission released a report on human rights abuses during the apartheid years that focused largely on atrocities by the white-minority government, but which also criticized the ANC.

The constitutionally mandated Human Rights Commission is appointed by parliament to "promote the observance of, respect for, and the protection of fundamental rights" and "develop an awareness of fundamental rights among all people of the republic." A constitutional court has been created to enforce the rules of the new democracy. The 11-member court has functioned quite effectively and has demonstrated considerable independence. Lower courts generally respect legal provisions regarding arrest and detention, although courts remains understaffed. Efforts to end torture and

other abuses by the national police force have been implemented.

An estimated four million illegal firearms circulate in South Africa, thereby contributing to increased, and more violent, crime. A similar number of licensed weapons also increases chances of gun violence.

Free expression in media and public discourse is generally respected. An array of newspapers and magazines publish reportage, analysis, and opinion sharply critical of the government, political parties, and other societal actors. Radio broadcasting has been dramatically liberalized, with scores of small community radio stations now operating. The state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation is today far more independent than during apartheid, but still suffers from self-censorship.

Equal rights for women are guaranteed by the constitution and promoted by a constitutionally mandated Commission on Gender Equality. Legislation such as the Maintenance Act and the Domestic Violence Act are designed to protect women in financially inequitable and abusive relationships, and other areas of social inequity.

These laws, though a step in the right direction, do not provide the infrastructure for their implementation. Discriminatory practices in customary law remain prevalent. In addition, the past several years have been marked by an increase in violence against women. It is estimated that every 26 seconds a woman is raped in South Africa. Violence against children is also reportedly widespread.

Crime rates have soared. Rural and urban South Africans alike have fallen victim to crimes ranging from murder, rape, robbery, and assault to racism, exploitation, theft, and corruption, which have clogged the country's judicial system and compounded the problem of overcrowded prisons.

White farmers on isolated homesteads have been particular targets in what some people claim is an organized campaign to drive whites from the land. More than 300 farmers have died violently in the past five years. Some 13,000 cars have been hijacked yearly during the same period.

Labor rights codified under the 1995 Labor Relations Act (LRA) are respected, and there are more than 250 trade unions. The right to strike can be exercised after reconciliation efforts. The LRA allows employers to hire replacement workers. The Congress of South African Trade Unions, the country's largest union federation, is formally linked to both the ANC and the South African Communist Party and was among the leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle. It maintained its ties to the government in 1998, despite growing unease with the ANC's economic direction. More radical unions are demanding quick redistribution of the national wealth.

Since its initial election in 1994, the ANC government has succeeded in some important achievements, including significantly increasing health care, school feeding programs, the number of households with electricity, and access to clean water.

South Africa faces other serious problems, however. It has one of the fastest-growing AIDS infection rates in the world. The quality of schooling is extremely uneven. More than three-quarters of South Africa's people are black, but they share less than a third of the country's total income. The white minority retains most economic power. Corruption is a serious and growing problem. Unemployment stands at about 40 percent among blacks and 4 percent among whites, coupled with the loss of an estimated 500,000 private sector jobs since 1994. Half of the population of 41 million lives below the poverty line.

Spain

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Status: Free

Population: 39,400,000

PPP: \$15,930

Life Expectancy: 78

Ethnic Groups: Spanish (72 percent), Catalan (16 percent), Galician (8 percent), Basque (2 percent)

Capital: Madrid



Overview:

By the end of 1999, hopes for a peace settlement between Basque separatists and the Spanish government faded with the ending of an 18-month-old ceasefire by the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) separatist guerrilla movement, Europe's largest terrorist group. The two sides had begun negotiations in September 1998 toward ending the violence that has claimed approximately 800 lives since 1970, with the ETA pledging to consider a "definitive" end to its violent campaign for independence. The two sides were emboldened to take these steps after witnessing the positive results of the signing of the Northern Ireland peace accords. But by November 1999, the ETA announced an end to the ceasefire, blaming Spain and France for adopting a confrontational stance in negotiations.

In December, seven former government officials went on trial on charges of state-sponsored terrorism. Alleged to have played a role in Spain's "Dirty War" of the 1980s, the seven were accused of involvement with government-funded death squads that carried out numerous kidnappings and murders of suspected Basque separatists. The death squads are held responsible for 28 deaths between 1983 and 1987. Included among the defendants was a former security chief and Civil Guard general who served under former President Felipe Gonzales.

Spain's current government came to power after winning a plurality in 1996 elections that ended 14 years of Socialist Party rule. By year's end, national elections were scheduled for April 2000. Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar's Partido Popular and its parliamentary partners share a commitment to participate in the European Monetary Union. Spain's Basques were the first group known to have occupied the Iberian Peninsula. The country's current language and laws are based on those of the Romans, who arrived in the second century B.C. In the year 711, the Moors invaded from North Africa, ruling for 700 years. The unification of present-day Spain dates to 1512. After a period of colonial influence and wealth, the country declined as a European power and was occupied by France in the early 1800s. Subsequent wars and revolts led to Spain's loss of its colonies in the Americas by that century's end. Francisco Franco began a long period of nationalist rule after the victory of his forces in the 1936-39 civil war. In spite of the country's official neutrality, Franco followed Axis policies during World War II. Even with its closed economy, the country was transformed into a modern industrial nation in the postwar years. After a transitional period upon Franco's death in 1975, the country emerged as a parliamentary democracy. It joined the European Union (EU) in 1986.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Spanish citizens can change their government democratically. Spain has been governed democratically since 1977, after nearly 40 years of dictatorship under Franco and a brief transitional government under Adolfo Suarez. The country is divided into 17 autonomous regions with limited powers, including control over such areas as health, tourism, local police agencies, and instruction in regional languages. The bicameral federal legislature includes a territorially elected senate and a Congress of Deputies elected on the basis of proportional representation and universal suffrage. Although the Socialist Party has ruled that women must occupy 25 percent of senior party posts and a feminist party has been officially registered since 1981, female participation in government remains minimal.

A Supreme Tribunal heads the judiciary, which includes territorial, provincial, regional, and municipal courts. The post-Franco constitution and 1996 parliamentary legislation established the right to trial by jury.

Freedom of speech and a free press are guaranteed. The press has been particularly influential in setting the political agenda in recent years, with national daily newspapers such as *El Mundo*, *ABC*, and *El Pais* covering corruption and other issues. A new conservative daily, *La Razon*, was launched in 1998. In addition to the state-controlled television station, which has been accused of pro-government bias, there are three independent commercial television stations.

The rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are constitutionally guaranteed. The country has one of the lowest levels of trade union membership in the EU, and unions have failed to prevent passage of new labor laws facilitating dismissals and encouraging short-term contracting.

In 1978, the constitution disestablished Roman Catholicism as the state religion, but directed Spanish authorities to "keep in mind the religious beliefs of Spanish society." Freedom of worship and the separation of church and state are respected in practice. Spain is home to many cultural and linguistic groups, some—such as the Basques—with strong regional identities.

Spain lacks antidiscrimination laws, and ethnic minorities, particularly immigrants, continue to report bias and mistreatment. In particular, North African immigrants report physical abuse and discrimination by authorities.

Sri Lanka

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy (insurgency)
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 19,000,000
PPP: \$2,490
Life Expectancy: 72
Ethnic Groups: Sinhalese (74 percent), Tamil (18 percent), Moor (7 percent), Burgher, Malay, Vedda (1 percent)
Capital: Colombo

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview: President Chandrika Kumaratunga won a second term in office in the December 1999 presidential elections amid both a deadlock in political and military efforts to end Sri Lanka's 16-year-old civil war, and consensus estimates that economic growth for 1999 would be below the modest 4.7 percent rate achieved in 1998.

This island nation located in the Indian Ocean off southeastern India achieved independence from Great Britain in 1948. Political power has alternated between the conservative United National Party (UNP) and the leftist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Colonial-era language policies favoring Tamils and other minorities over the Sinhala-speaking majority contributed to communal tensions that continued after independence.

The 1978 constitution vested broad executive powers in a president who is directly elected for a six-year term and has the right to dissolve parliament. The 225-member parliament is directly elected for six-year terms.

In 1983, an attack by Tamil guerrillas on an army patrol and subsequent anti-Tamil riots marked the beginning of an armed Tamil-based insurgency. The war came in the context of longstanding Tamil claims of discrimination in education and employment opportunities, the country's high unemployment rate, and a series of anti-Tamil riots pre-dating independence. By 1986, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which called for an independent Tamil homeland in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, controlled much of northern Jaffna Peninsula. The UNP government brought in an Indian peacekeeping force between 1987 and 1990 that largely failed to disarm Tamil militants. In 1987, the Marxist, Sinhalese-based People's Liberation Front (JVP) launched a separate insurgency in the south. The army and military-backed death squads crushed the JVP by 1990, with total deaths estimated at 60,000.

In 1993, a suspected LTTE suicide bomber assassinated President Ranasinghe Premadasa of the UNP. In the August 1994 parliamentary elections, held with a 76 percent turnout, the People's Alliance (PA), an SLFP-dominated coalition led by Kumaratunga that promised to end the 17-year war, won 105 seats to oust the UNP (94 seats). In the November presidential elections Kumaratunga won 62 percent of the vote against the widow of the UNP's original candidate, whom the LTTE had assassinated in October.

Early in her term, Kumaratunga tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a peace agree-

ment with the LTTE and subsequently turned to a military solution. In 1996, the army recaptured Jaffna Peninsula, sending the LTTE to the Vanni jungle. Between May 1997 and late 1998, the army lost thousands of soldiers trying unsuccessfully to secure a land route to Jaffna through the rebel-held Vanni.

In 1998 and 1999, Kumaratunga failed to persuade the opposition to support proposed constitutional amendments aimed at ending the war by devolving power to new regional councils, including one straddling the contested north and east. The UNP and the influential Buddhist clergy rejected the plan, alleging it would lead to a Tamil state, and the PA itself was short of the two-thirds parliamentary majority required for constitutional amendments. In October 1999, Kumaratunga called early presidential elections, which the government subsequently scheduled for December 21. On November 2, the LTTE began a major offensive that recaptured large areas in the Vanni the rebels had lost in the preceding two years, while causing several thousand villagers to flee their homes.

Kumaratunga campaigned on a pledge to win approval of her proposed constitutional amendments. Her main opponent, Ranil Wickremasinghe of the UNP, promised to de-escalate the civil war fighting and called for unconditional peace negotiations with the LTTE. On December 18, a suspected LTTE suicide bomber killed at least 24 people and slightly wounded Kumaratunga at an election rally in Colombo, and another bomb at a UNP rally killed 12 people. At the December 21 elections, held under an estimated 73 percent turnout, Kumaratunga won 51.12 percent of the votes to defeat Wickremasinghe, who took 42.71 percent; 11 other candidates shared the remainder.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sri Lankans can change their government democratically. The UNP and some independent poll monitors accused the governing People's Alliance of some electoral fraud and harassment of voters during the December 1999 presidential elections. The government denied nongovernmental monitoring groups access to polling booths. Independent monitors and the opposition also accused the PA of vote-rigging and instigating violence in the January 1999 polls for the North Western provincial council. Observers reported far fewer irregularities in five April provincial elections, although violence killed at least five people during the campaign. Parliamentary elections are due by August 2000.

The judiciary is independent. Conditions in prisons and remand homes are extremely poor. The Kumaratunga administration has frequently imposed both islandwide and local states of emergency related to the civil war. The Emergency Regulations allow authorities to detain suspects for up to one year without charge and to ban political meetings. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) permits authorities to detain suspects for 18 months without charge and provides broad immunity for security forces. These detention laws, and poor implementation of safeguards for detainees, are blamed in part for the continuing problems of torture and disappearances. In July 1999, Amnesty International reported that "torture continues to be reported almost (if not) daily" in the context of the civil war, while police officers "regularly torture" criminal suspects and people arrested over land disputes or other private matters.

Since the civil war began, government security forces, state-backed Sinhalese and Muslim civilian militias, and armed Tamil groups, particularly the LTTE, have committed massacres, disappearances, extrajudicial executions, rape, and torture against civilians, mainly Tamils. Press accounts indicate the war has killed 50,000 to 60,000

people, including many civilians. Civilians are occasionally killed during government bombing raids or by artillery fire from both sides. In September, authorities blamed the LTTE for the massacre of 56 Sinhalese civilians in eastern Ampara district, in apparent revenge for the accidental death of 22 Tamil refugees by government jet bombings in northeastern Mullaitivu district. Similar tit-for-tat killings of civilians occurred relatively frequently earlier in the war. In November, the military and the LTTE blamed each other for an attack on a Roman Catholic shrine in the northwestern town of Madhu that killed some 42 civilian refugees.

In the mid-1980s and again in the early 1990s, the army was implicated in thousands of disappearances in the northern Jaffna Peninsula and the Eastern Province. In 1997, the government announced that three presidential commissions established in 1994 had found evidence of 16,742 disappearances in the early 1990s. In 1996, security forces allegedly committed more than 600 disappearances of Tamil civilians in the Jaffna Peninsula, generally in reprisal for LTTE attacks on soldiers, although the number of disappearances has since dropped considerably.

In a landmark 1998 judgment, a court sentenced to death five soldiers in the 1996 murders of a schoolgirl, Krishanthi Kumarasamy, and three others in Jaffna, the first strict sentences handed down to security forces for severe abuses. In February 1999, a court sentenced six soldiers and a school principal to ten years' imprisonment for the disappearances of 25 people between late 1989 and early 1990, in the first judgment relating to the more than 12,000 disappearances in the late 1980s in the context of the JVP insurgency. Nevertheless, few security personnel have been convicted of rights abuses. An official Human Rights Commission has yet to substantially investigate abuses.

The LTTE and, to a lesser extent, other militant Tamil groups have killed large numbers of Tamil civilians during the civil war. The LTTE directly controls some territory in the Vanni, and maintains de facto control over many areas in the Eastern Province. The LTTE continued to be responsible for summary executions of civilians who allegedly served as informers or otherwise cooperated with the army; arbitrary abductions and detentions; denial of basic rights; and forcible conscription of children. The group raises money through extortion, kidnapping, and theft, and it has used threats and attacks to close schools, courts, and government agencies in nominally government-held areas in its self-styled Tamil homeland. In recent years, the LTTE has killed several Tamil politicians who participated in the political process and held moderate views, including the prominent constitutional lawyer and member of parliament, Neelan Thiruchelvam, in July 1999. The LTTE has also carried out major urban terrorism attacks in Sinhalese-majority areas in recent years that have killed hundreds of people. In response, authorities arbitrarily detained and sometimes tortured thousands of young Tamils in security sweeps.

The civil war has at various times internally displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians in the northern Vanni region. In 1999, the government continued to run several refugee camps and welfare centers in the Vanni. In June, Reuters reported that authorities had forced some 10,000 Tamil refugees living in Madhu back to their homes or to welfare centers in advance of annual pilgrimages to the town's Catholic shrine.

In 1994, Kumaratunga campaigned on promises to respect press freedom, but her government has filed criminal defamation charges against several editors, and authorities have occasionally harassed, threatened, and assaulted journalists, particularly Tamils. The government continued to limit journalists' access to war zones, and in November

1999 reimposed censorship on local media reporting on the civil war. Restrictive legislation further chills press freedom. Print media are both public and private. The government controls Lake House Group, the largest newspaper chain. Radio and television are predominantly state-owned, and political coverage favors the ruling party. Unknown gunmen murdered an editor of an outspoken newspaper in September.

Women hold only 4.8 percent of parliamentary seats and face unofficial discrimination in education and employment opportunities. Rape and other violence against women remain serious problems, and authorities weakly enforce existing laws. Many of the thousands of domestic child servants are physically abused. Child prostitution is fairly widespread. Conditions in asylums are often inhumane.

Human rights and social welfare nongovernmental organizations are active. Partisan violence on campuses periodically leads to university closings. Religious freedom is respected. However, private disputes occasionally turn into confrontations along religious and ethnic lines, with attacks against Tamils, Muslims, and Christians.

Trade unions are independent, and collective bargaining is practiced. State workers cannot strike. Kumaratunga has used the 1989 Essential Services Act, which allows the president to declare a strike in any industry illegal, to end several strikes. Employers on tea plantations routinely violate the rights of workers, most of whom are Tamil descendants of colonial-era migrant workers who have difficulty obtaining citizenship and identity documentation.

Sudan

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary (military-dominated)
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 28,900,000
PPP: \$1,560
Life Expectancy: 51
Ethnic Groups: Black (52 percent), Arab (39 percent), Beja (6 percent), other (3 percent)
Capital: Khartoum

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free



Overview:

Sudan's 17-year civil war continued in 1999 with no end in sight. As political wrangling within the government upstaged peace initiatives, the inauguration in May of a new oil pipeline raised the stakes in the bloody conflict, which has caused as many as two million deaths from combat, famine, and disease.

Africa's largest country has been embroiled in civil wars for 33 of its 43 years as an independent state. It achieved independence in 1956 after nearly 80 years of British rule. The Anyanya movement, representing mainly Christian and animist black Africans in southern Sudan, battled Arab Muslim government forces from 1956 to 1972. The south gained extensive autonomy under a 1972 accord, and for the next decade, an uneasy peace prevailed. In 1983, General Jafar Numeiri, who had toppled an elected

government in 1969, restricted southern autonomy and imposed Sharia (Islamic law). Opposition led again to civil war, and Numeiri was overthrown in 1985. Civilian rule was restored in 1986, but war continued. Lieutenant General Omar al-Bashir ousted a freely elected government in 1989. He now rules through a military-civilian regime backed by senior Muslim clerics, including Hassan al-Turabi, who wields considerable power as leader of the ruling National Congress (formerly National Islamic Front) and speaker of the 400-member national assembly.

The current conflict broadly pits the country's Arab Muslim north against the black African animist and Christian south. Some pro-democracy northerners, however, have allied themselves with southern rebels, led by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), to form the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), while northern rebels of the Sudan Allied Forces have staged attacks in northeastern Sudan. Some southern Sudanese groups have signed peace pacts with the government, and there is fighting among rival southern militias. A convoluted mix of historical, religious, ethnic, and cultural tensions make peace elusive, while competition for economic resources fuels the conflict.

Despite a declared unilateral ceasefire, the government continued to bomb civilian and military targets, and to arm tribal militias as proxy fighting forces. Tens of thousands of people were displaced by fighting among various government and rebel factions. Peace talks in Kenya between the government and the SPLM reopened in July after a yearlong break to discuss the questions of southern self-determination and the application of sharia in the south. However, talks resulted only in an agreement to set up a secretariat in Nairobi to facilitate further discussion. Other initiatives included a joint Libyan-Egyptian plan, supported by the NDA but not the SPLM, for a permanent ceasefire and a reconciliation conference.

The inauguration of a 950-mile oil pipeline from the Muglad basin to the Red Sea in May lent increased urgency to peace efforts. Built by a consortium of Chinese, Canadian, Malaysian, and Sudanese companies, the pipeline represents a threat to rebels, who regard it as increased government funding of the war effort against them. Government fears of rebel attacks on the pipeline were realized when the opposition Ummah Liberation Army bombed it in September, shortly after the first export of 600,000 barrels to Singapore.

Weary of a war that has devastated Sudan economically, and concerned about the security of its new oil pipeline, the government made overtures to opposition groups throughout 1999. In January, a constitutional amendment came into effect lifting a ten-year ban on political parties. Some 17 parties registered, though the NDA and the SPLM refused, calling the amendment a government attempt to enhance the NC's grip on power. In July, the government agreed to return property confiscated ten years ago from the opposition Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Al-Bashir also pardoned dozens of political prisoners and in December allowed the family of Ummah Party leader and former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi to return from exile. Al-Bashir signed an agreement in November with al-Mahdi calling for the establishment of a democratic federal system of government and a referendum on southern self-determination.

In September, al-Turabi began maneuvering to marginalize al-Bashir. At a National Congress Consultative Authority conference, he adopted a plan to restructure the party, placing himself at the head of a new leadership body and dissolving two bodies headed by al-Bashir. The move granted him sweeping powers to make key political decisions

for the government. But in December, on the eve of a legislative vote to curb al-Bashir's power, the president dissolved parliament and declared a three-month state of emergency. Although al-Turabi called al-Bashir's "coup" a detriment to democracy, al-Bashir maintained the support of the military, opposition parties, his cabinet, the media, and regional leaders, who generally mistrust al-Turabi because of his Islamist agenda. By year's end, al-Bashir and al-Turabi agreed to preserve the unity of the National Congress, with al-Bashir as chairman and al-Turabi as secretary-general.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sudanese cannot change their government democratically. President and Prime Minister al-Bashir claims electoral legitimacy through heavily manipulated March 1996 elections that cannot credibly be said to have reflected the will of the Sudanese people. Elections were also held in 1996 for 264 members of the national assembly; the remaining 136 seats are filled by presidential appointment. In January, the government permitted the registration of political associations after a ten-year ban and then held state assembly elections without giving the newly registered parties time to field candidates. Most opposition parties refused to register, citing a requirement that they express loyalty to the National Congress's Islamic agenda.

Serious human rights abuses by nearly every faction involved in the war have been reported. "Ghost houses," or secret detention and torture centers, are reportedly operated by secret police in several cities. In May 1999, the government acknowledged the problem of "abduction and forced labor of women and children" and set up a committee to address it. Relief agencies have liberated thousands of slaves by purchasing them from captors in the north and returning them to the south. The government continued to bomb civilian installations and relief sites. The SPLA apparently murdered three captured government employees and a Red Crescent officer despite international demands for their release. The war's devastation has been compounded by famine and disease among the displaced population, which numbers some four million. Fighting hampers the distribution of food and medical relief, while ethnic clashes among rebel ranks complicate the conflict.

The judiciary is not independent. The chief justice of the supreme court, who presides over the judiciary, is government-appointed. Regular courts provide some due process safeguards, but special security and military courts are used to punish political opponents of the government. Criminal law is based on Sharia, and provides for punishments including flogging; amputation, crucifixion, and execution. Ten southern, predominantly non-Muslim states are exempt from parts of the criminal code.

Security forces act with impunity, and arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture are problems. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that a journalist tortured during a month in security detention showed visible wounds upon release. Prison conditions do not meet international standards. According to HRW, 16 children living with their mothers in the Omdurman Women's Prison died of diseases inside the prison.

The government has gradually eased press restrictions since 1997, but journalists practice self-censorship in order to avoid harassment, arrest, and closure of publications. Reportedly, there are nine daily newspapers and a wide variety of Arabic- and English-language publications. All of these are subject to censorship. The daily *Al-Rai Al-Akhar*, known for its critical reporting of economic and political conditions in Sudan, was suspended at least six times in 1999. Other newspapers were suspended for "harming

the nation and the economy," while several journalists were arrested for alleged violations of national security. A press law provision adopted in June allows the press council to impose penalties on journalists for "professional errors." Broadcast media are directly controlled by the government and present only National Congress views. Despite restrictions on ownership of satellite dishes, citizens use them to access a wide range of foreign media.

Emergency laws in effect since 1989 severely limit freedom of assembly, and the government cracked down on protests and unregistered organizations. Eight men were detained in April for attending a seminar organized by an opposition activist. In September, several students were wounded and dozens arrested as police cracked down on an antigovernment protest.

The government treats Islam as the state religion, and the constitution claims Sharia as the source of its legislation. At least 75 percent of Sudanese are Muslim, though most southern Sudanese adhere to Christian or traditional indigenous beliefs. Under the 1994 Societies Registration Act, religious groups must register in order to gather legally. Registration is reportedly difficult to obtain. The government continues to deny the Roman Catholic Church permission to build churches while it destroys Christian schools, churches, and centers. Catholic priests face random detention and interrogation by police. A Canadian Catholic priest was expelled in August with no official explanation. Islamic organizations associated with the banned Ummah and Democratic Unionist parties are regularly denied permission to hold public gatherings. Their leaders were harassed and detained intermittently in 1999. Apostasy is a capital crime.

Women face discrimination in family matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, which are governed by Sharia. Nine female students in Khartoum were flogged in June on charges of "obscene acts," which apparently referred to their wearing trousers. Public order police frequently harass women and monitor their dress for adherence to Islamic standards of modesty. Female genital mutilation occurs despite legal prohibition, and rape is reportedly routine in war zones.

There are no independent trade unions. The Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation is the main labor organization, with about 800,000 members. Local union elections in 1992 and 1997 were rigged to ensure the election of government-approved candidates. A lack of labor legislation limits the freedom of workers to organize and to bargain collectively.

Suriname

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 400,000
PPP: \$5,161
Life Expectancy: 70
Ethnic Groups: East Indian (37 percent), Creole (31 percent), Javanese (15 percent), Bush Negro, Indian, Chinese, European
Capital: Paramaribo

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

The fortunes of former Suriname dictator Desi Bouterse appeared to improve in 1999, as the largely puppet government of President Jules Wijdenbosch crumbled by midyear and the Bouterse became the early form favorite to replace him in the year 2000 elections. Not everyone appeared ready to forget about Bouterse's past however, as a Dutch court tried and convicted him in absentia on charges of having introduced more than two tons of cocaine into the Netherlands between 1989 and 1997.

The Republic of Suriname achieved independence from the Netherlands in 1975, 308 years after the Dutch acquired it from the English for Delaware and the island of Manhattan. Five years later, a military coup, which brought Bouterse to power as the head of a regime that brutally suppressed civic and political opposition, initiated a decade of military intervention in politics. In 1987, Bouterse permitted elections under a constitution providing for a directly elected, 51-seat national assembly, which serves a five-year term and selects the state president. If the national assembly is unable to select a president with the required two-thirds vote, a People's Assembly, composed of parliament and regional and local officials, chooses the president. The Front for Democracy and Development, a three-party coalition, handily won the 1987 elections. The military-organized National Democratic Party (NDP) won just three seats.

In 1990, the army ousted President Ramsewak Shankar, and Bouterse again took power. International pressure led to new elections in 1991. The New Front, a coalition of mainly East Indian, Creole, and Javanese parties, won a majority, although the NDP increased its share to 12. The national assembly selected the Front's candidate, Ronald Venetiaan, as president.

Bouterse quit the army in 1992 in order to lead the NDP. The Venetiaan government took some constitutional steps to curb military influence and in late 1995 and early 1996 purged several high-ranking pro-Bouterse military officials. The government's economic structural adjustment program led to social and labor unrest amidst an inflationary spiral and a collapse of the Surinamese currency.

During the campaign for the May 23, 1996, parliamentary elections, the NDP pledged to reverse many of the economic programs of the Venetiaan government. The four-party New Front lost seats, winning 24, and entered into a coalition with the smaller Central Bloc, consisting of two opposition groups. The alliance proved insufficient to gain the necessary two-thirds parliamentary majority needed to return Venetiaan to office.

Bourterse's NDP, with 16 seats, joined with the Javanese-based Party of National Unity and Solidarity and dissident members of the East Indian-based United Reform Party to press for the convening in September of the constitutionally mandated 869-member People's Assembly. The deadlock was broken when Wijdenbosch, a former deputy party leader under Bourterse, was elected president.

Protected by Wijdenbosch, whom he both supported and advised, Bourterse remained one step ahead of Dutch police as the Europeans sought his arrest. The Bourterse affair came to a head just a month after protesting opposition parties and striking oil workers shut the capital city down for several days. In late 1998, the Wijdenbosch government oversaw the takeover of Suriname's traditionally independent high court.

In May 1999, massive antigovernment protests and continuing economic crisis forced Wijdenbosch to sack his entire 15-person cabinet. Three weeks later he announced that elections would take place a year early, no later than May 25, 2000. Bourterse, who continued to control the NDP despite being sentenced to 16 years imprisonment by the Dutch, became the center of political power as Wijdenbosch's government continued to crumble throughout the year. Wijdenbosch announced he would stand for reelection in the May elections.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Suriname can change their government democratically. The May 1996 elections were generally free and fair, and marked the first time since independence that one elected government transferred power to another. Political parties mostly reflect the cleavages in Suriname's ethnically complex society, a factor contributing to parliamentary gridlock and the continuing popularity of Bourterse, a self-described "jungle man" who eschews race-based appeals. Civic institutions are weak, and Bourterse's considerable influence seemed bolstered by his appointment in 1997 to the newly created position of Advisor of State, an effort to insulate him from the reach of Dutch justice.

The judiciary is weak and has been reluctant to handle cases involving human rights issues, the military, and supporters of Bourterse. A 1992 law granting amnesty to former rebels and soldiers for rights violations committed between 1985 and mid-1992 was upheld by a lower court in 1996. In July 1998, Wijdenbosch chose a president of the high court and the attorney general in contravention of constitutional balance of powers requirements. The move was declared null and void by the court, after which officers of the Central Intelligence and Security Service occupied the court president's office, in October. Abuse of detainees by the civilian police is a problem, and prisons are dangerously overcrowded.

The government generally respects freedom of expression. Radio is both public and private. A number of small commercial radio stations compete with the government-owned radio and television broadcasting system. State broadcast media generally offer pluralistic viewpoints. The private press practices some self-censorship, particularly concerning news about Bourterse.

Indigenous groups, although 15 percent of the population, are geographically isolated and face social discrimination, political marginalization, and denial of land rights, including the dislocation from their lands by foreign mining interests.

Constitutional guarantees of gender equality are not enforced, and the Asian Marriage Act allows parents to arrange marriages. Human rights organizations function

relatively freely. Several organizations specifically address violence against women, reports the trafficking of Brazilian women for prostitution, and related issues.

Workers can join independent trade unions, and the labor movement is active in politics. Collective bargaining is legal and conducted fairly widely. Civil servants have no legal right to strike but in practice do so.

Swaziland

Polity: Traditional monarchy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 1,000,000

PPP: \$3,350

Life Expectancy: 39

Ethnic Groups: African (97 percent), European (3 percent)

Capital: Mbabane

Ratings change: Swaziland's civil liberties rating changed from 4 to 5 due to a lack of progress on the Constitutional Review Commission, which purports to represent the broad political views of the people, but appears aimed more at maintaining the monarchy and status quo.

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5*

Status: Not Free



Overview:

The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) prolonged for another year its work on formulating a new charter that would extend democratic rights in the tiny kingdom. Formed in 1996, the commission was to have completed its work by August 1998 but now isn't scheduled to finish until 2001. A majority of the CRC's members are traditional chiefs or members of the royal family of King Mswati II. The commission considers input from individuals throughout the country, but pro-democracy activists accuse the royals and their supporters of extending the process in an effort to maintain the status quo. Political parties have been officially banned in Swaziland since 1973 but are allowed to function in the open.

Long an oasis of regional calm amid turmoil in neighboring Mozambique and South Africa, Swaziland is now the only southern African country without an elected government. At times the conflict between reformists and traditionalists has led to violence. Several bombs exploded in Mbabane following the October 1998 legislative elections which had excluded political parties and most of the democratic opposition. The polls were neither free nor fair. Another bomb exploded outside the capital in November 1999, destroying offices used by local politicians.

King Mswati II is the latest monarch of the Dlamini dynasty, under which the Swazi kingdom expanded and contracted in conflicts with neighboring groups. Britain declared the kingdom a protectorate to prevent Boer expansion in the 1880s and assumed administrative power in 1903. In 1968, Swaziland regained its independence, and an elected parliament was added to the traditional kingship and chieftaincies. Sobhuza II, Mswati's predecessor, who died in 1983, ended the multiparty system in favor of the *tinkhundla* (local council) system in 1973.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Swazis are barred from exercising their right to elect their representatives or to change their government freely. All of Swaziland's citizens are subjects of absolute monarch Mswati III. Royal decrees carry the full force of law. The king rejected an official 1993 report suggesting multiparty elections, and the bicameral legislature of indirectly elected and appointed members is mostly window dressing to royal rule. Voting in October 1998 legislative elections was marked by very low turnout and was neither open nor fair. It was based on the Swazi *tinkhundla* system of closely controlled nominations and voting that seeks to legitimize the rule of King Mswati HI and his Dlamini clan. Security forces arrested and briefly detained labor and other pro-democracy leaders before the elections and after the bomb blasts. The 55 elected members of the national assembly were government-approved. They were joined by ten direct royal appointees. The king also appoints 20 members of the senate, with the remaining ten selected by the national assembly.

The judiciary is generally independent in most civil cases, although the royal family and government can influence the courts. Traditional courts hear many cases. Prison conditions are poor, and overcrowding has increased since the adoption of the 1993 Non-Bailable Offenses Order. The decree covers serious crimes, including murder, robbery, rape, weapons violations, and poaching. The Swazi Law Society and international groups have protested that the decree effectively denies the presumption of innocence and convicts people without trial. There are regular reports of police brutality.

Freedom of expression is seriously restricted, especially regarding political issues or matters regarding the royal family. Legislation bans publication of any criticism of the monarchy. The constitutional commission has broad authority to prosecute people who "belittle" or "insult" it. Self-censorship is widespread. The *Times of Swaziland*, the only independent newspaper, is routinely harassed by the government. State-run television and radio stations are closely controlled by the government. Broadcast and print media from South Africa are received in the country. An editor with the *Sunday Times*, Bheki Makhubu, was arrested in December on charges of defaming the king's intended eighth wife after saying she was a poor student as a teenager. He was later released on bail.

Freedom of religion is respected, and a variety of Christian sects operate freely. Nongovernmental organizations not involved in politics are also permitted. Several political groupings operate openly despite their official prohibition, but members sometimes are harassed or detained.

Swazi women encounter discrimination in both formal and customary law. Married women are considered minors, requiring spousal permission to enter into almost any form of economic activity. Women are allowed only limited inheritance rights. Employment regulations requiring equal pay for equal work are obeyed unevenly. Violence against women is common, and discriminatory traditional values still great carry weight.

Unions are able to operate independently under the 1980 Industrial Relations Act, although the International Labor Organization sharply criticized the government's labor policies in a 1997 report. Wage agreements are often reached by collective bargaining, and 75 percent of the private workforce is unionized. The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, the country's largest labor organization, has been a leader in

demands for democratization. In December, the government Broadcasting and Information Services banned the federation from broadcasting any announcements or other information unless approved by authorities.

Swaziland's free market sector operates with little government interference, but most Swazis remain engaged in subsistence agriculture. A drop in the price of gold has hurt the economy. Many Swazi families depend on income from men working in South African mines.

Sweden

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 8,900,000

PPP: \$19,790

Life Expectancy: 79

Ethnic Groups: Swede (89 percent), Finn (2 percent), Lapp [Saami]

Capital: Stockholm

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

Since 1998 Prime Minister Goran Persson has led a left-of-center coalition including his Social Democratic Party (SDP), the ex-Communist Left Party and the Green Party. The principal opposition party and leader of the non-Socialist parties, the Moderate Party, underwent a change of leadership in 1999, after Carl Bildt, its leader for 13 years, resigned from his post.

Sweden is faced with the difficult decision of whether to join the European Monetary Union. A referendum on the issue may be held as early as 2001. Bildt had been a vigorous supporter of European integration and played an important role in steering the country into the European Union, which it joined in 1995. In contrast, the SDP's two coalition partners oppose joining the EMU and are unenthusiastic about Sweden's having joined the EU. Opinion polls conducted in 1999 indicate a growing support among Swedes for joining the EMU.

In October, Sweden unveiled major defense spending cuts. The cuts are so far-reaching that some senior military officers believe the country may have to abandon its long-standing nonaligned status and join NATO.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy and a multiparty parliamentary democracy. After monarchical alliances with Finland, Denmark, and Norway between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries, Sweden emerged as a modern democracy. Although it has been nonaligned and neutral since World War I, Sweden is now an active member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Swedes can change their government democratically. The 310-member, unicameral Riksdag (parliament) is elected ev-

ery four years through universal suffrage. To ensure absolute proportionality for all parties that secure more than four percent of the vote, an additional 39 representatives are selected from a national pool of candidates. Single-party majority governments are rare.

Citizens abroad are entitled to vote by absentee ballot in national elections, and non-nationals in residence for three years may vote in local elections. The Saami (Lapp) community elects its own local parliament with significant powers over education and culture. The Saami parliament serves as an advisory body to the government. The role of King Carl Gustaf XVI, who was crowned in 1973, is ceremonial. The prime minister is appointed by the speaker of the house and confirmed by the Riksdag.

The media are independent. Most newspapers and periodicals are privately owned. The government subsidizes daily newspapers regardless of their political affiliation. The ethnic press is entitled to the same kind of subsidies as the Swedish press. The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation and the Swedish Television Company broadcast weekly radio and television programs in several immigrant languages. In recent years, new satellite- and ground-based commercial television channels and radio stations ended the government monopoly on broadcasting.

Citizens may freely express their ideas and criticize their government. The government is empowered to prevent publication of information related to national security. A quasi-government body censors extremely graphic violence from film, video, and television.

International human rights groups have criticized Sweden for its immigration policies, which have severely limited the number of refugees admitted annually. Nordic immigrants may become citizens after two years, while others must wait a minimum of five years. Critics charge that the country does not systematically provide asylum seekers with adequate legal counsel or access to an appeals process. The jobless rate among non-Nordic immigrants is close to 20 percent, whereas among the general population it is about 6 percent. Immigrants, half of whom are from other Nordic countries, make up about 12 percent of the Swedish population.

Dozens of violent incidents with anti-immigrant or racist overtones are reported annually, and the government supports volunteer groups that oppose racism. The Nationalsocialistisk Front, the leading neo-Nazi group in Sweden, has an estimated 1,500 members and was recently permitted to register as a political party.

Although the country's 17,000 Saami enjoy some political autonomy, Sweden was the last Nordic country to approve a parliament for its Lappic population.

Religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed. Approximately 90 percent of the population is Lutheran. In 1995, the government and the Lutheran Church agreed to disestablish the state religion. By the year 2000, baptism will be required for membership in the church, and only baptized members will be required to pay the three percent income, or "church," tax.

Freedom of assembly and association is guaranteed, as are the rights to strike and participate in unions. Strong and well-organized trade union federations represent 90 percent of the labor force. Despite historic ties with the SDP, the labor movement has become increasingly independent.

The country's independent judiciary includes six courts of appeal, 100 district courts, a supreme court, and a parallel system of administrative courts.

In March, the government agreed to grant \$20,000 to each of the victims of a forced

sterilization program that took place between 1936 and 1976. About 63,000 women were sterilized involuntarily over the 40-year period.

Women constitute approximately 45 percent of the labor force, but their wage levels lag behind those of men. They are well represented in government, in part as a result of the SDP's pledge to appoint equal numbers of men and women to government positions at all levels.

Switzerland

Polity: Federal parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 7,100,000

PPP: \$25,240

Life Expectancy: 79

Ethnic Groups: German (65 percent), French (18 percent), Italian (10 percent), Romansch (1 percent), other (6 percent)

Capital: Bern (administrative), Lausanne (judicial)

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

In October, the right-wing Swiss People's Party, led by Christoph Blocher, registered dramatic gains in national elections. Running on an anti-immigration and anti-European Union platform, the party went on to become the second largest in the Swiss parliament, earning 44 seats against the 51 held by the ruling Social Democrats. Switzerland's electoral shift to the right followed a June citizens' vote in which more than 70 percent of ballots cast supported government measures to curtail the number of refugees seeking permanent asylum.

In December, Switzerland apologized for its wartime treatment of Jewish refugees seeking to escape into Switzerland. A government-commissioned report stated that Switzerland sealed its borders to Jews in 1942, turning back 25,000, and sending them to certain death in Nazi concentration camps.

Officially neutral and nonaligned, Switzerland is not a member of the United Nations or the European Union (EU). In a 1986 national referendum, voters rejected UN membership by a three-to-one margin. In a 1992 referendum, a narrow majority of voters rejected joining the European Economic Area, a grouping that is seen as a step toward EU membership. Since then, the government has grown increasingly anxious to negotiate a pact with the EU to give Swiss industries and service sectors some benefits of access to the single European market.

In 1996, Switzerland joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program, through which it can participate in nonmilitary humanitarian and training missions.

With the exception of a brief period of centralized power under Napoleonic rule, Switzerland has remained a confederation of local communities as established in the Pact of 1291. Most responsibility for public affairs rests at the local and cantonal levels. The 1815 Congress of Vienna formalized the country's borders and recognized its perpetual neutrality. Switzerland is often cited as a rare example of peaceful coexist-

ence in a multiethnic state. The republic is divided into 20 cantons and 6 half-cantons and includes German, French, Italian, and Romansch communities.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Swiss can change their government democratically. Free and fair elections are held at regular intervals. Initiatives and referenda give citizens an additional degree of involvement in the legislative process. The cantonal system allows considerable local autonomy, and localities' linguistic and cultural heritages are zealously preserved.

At the national level, both houses of the Federal Assembly have equal authority. After legislation has been passed in both the directly elected, 200-member National Council and the Council of States, which includes two members from each canton, it cannot be vetoed by the executive or reviewed by the judiciary. The seven members of the Federal Council (Bundesrat) exercise executive authority. They are chosen from the Federal Assembly according to a "magic formula" that ensures representation of each party, region, and language group. Each year, one member serves as president.

The judicial system functions primarily at the cantonal level, with the exception of a federal supreme court that reviews cantonal court decisions involving federal law. Switzerland's judiciary is independent. The government's postal ministry operates broadcasting services, and the broadcast media enjoy editorial autonomy. Foreign broadcast media are readily accessible. In addition, there are many private television and radio stations. Privately owned daily, weekly, and monthly publications are available in each of the most common languages and are free from government interference.

Freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religion are observed. While no single state church exists, many cantons support one or several churches. Taxpayers may opt not to contribute to church funds, yet in many instances, companies cannot. Human rights monitors operate freely. The country's anti-racist law prohibits racist or anti-Semitic speech and actions, and is strictly enforced by the government. In November 1998, the Federal Commission against Racism, the country's official human rights watchdog, warned that "latent anti-Semitism is again being increasingly expressed by word and by deed." It estimated in a major report that one-tenth of the population holds anti-Semitic views. To remedy this, it proposed steps to foster closer ties between the country's Jewish community and its other communities and called on the government to meet its special responsibility to stand up for Jewish citizens.

During the Kosovo war of 1999, thousands of ethnic Albanian refugees expelled from the Serbian province flooded into Switzerland. As a result, Swiss voters approved tighter asylum laws in a June vote. The new rules make it harder for refugees to claim asylum based on persecution in their home countries. Voter approval was highest in the German-speaking region of Switzerland, whose citizens were the most vocal in denouncing the presence of Kosovo Albanians.

A 1994 Amnesty International report cited excessive police force used against persons—particularly foreigners—in custody. The report was issued, in an effort to curb the drug trade, shortly after the National Council increased police powers of search and detention of foreigners who lack identification.

In 1995, federal laws aimed at dissuading drug traffickers from entering Switzerland authorized pretrial detention of legal residents for as long as nine months. With 33,000 drug addicts in a population of seven million, the use of hard drugs has become

one of the country's most pernicious social ailments. In June 1999, Swiss citizens voted to continue a state program that provides heroin, under medical supervision, to hardened addicts.

Although a law on gender equality took effect in 1996, women still face some barriers to political and social advancement. Some studies estimate women's earnings to be 15 percent lower than men's for equal work. Some charge that the army, from which women are excluded, creates networking opportunities for men, thus creating an economic disadvantage for women. Women were not granted federal suffrage until 1971, and the half-canton Appenzell-Innerrhoden did not relinquish its status as the last bastion of all-male suffrage in Europe until 1990. Until the mid-1980s, women were prohibited from participating in the Federal Council. In 1997, journalists revealed that hundreds of women had been forcibly sterilized under a cantonal law passed in 1928. A government critic demanded an official investigation after a historian claimed that the practice continued to this day. In June 1999, Swiss voters rejected a government proposal to introduce paid maternity leave. Swiss law bans women from working for two months after giving birth, but without any guaranteed wages during that period.

Workers may organize and participate in unions and enjoy the right to strike and bargain collectively. Unions are independent of the government and political parties, and approximately one-third of the workforce belongs to unions.

Syria

Polity: Dominant party (military-dominated) **Political Rights:** 7
Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 7
Population: 16,000,000 **Status:** Not Free
PPP: \$3,250
Life Expectancy: 67
Ethnic Groups: Arab (90 percent), other, including Kurd and Armenian (10 percent)
Capital: Damascus



Overview:

Syrian president Hafez al-Assad was elected to a fifth consecutive seven-year term in February 1999. In deteriorating health, Assad continued to quietly groom his son Bashar as a possible presidential successor, further sidelining his brother Rifaat as a candidate for leader of one of the region's most repressive regimes.

Assad reacted favorably to the election of Ehud Barak as Israel's prime minister in May, expressing unusual praise for the new Israeli leader and optimism for a peace deal between Israel and Syria. He authorized the resumption of peace talks with Israel, dispatching his foreign minister Farouq al-Shara to Washington to meet with Barak in December. Syria also moved to improve relations with both Jordan and Iraq during the year. While Syria's control over Lebanon remained strong, its influence over Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas operating in south Lebanon appeared to weaken, raising

the specter of a challenge to Damascus's overall ability to dictate regional events at a time of reinvigoration in the Middle East peace process.

Syria faced its worst drought in 25 years in 1999. Lower agricultural exports combined with a stagnant, state-run economy led to calls for economic reform.

Following four centuries of rule under the Ottoman Empire, Syria came under French control after World War I and gained independence in 1941. A 1963 military coup brought the pan-Arab, Socialist Baath party to power. As head of the Baath military wing, Assad took power in a 1970 coup and formally became president of the secular regime in 1971. Members of the Alawite Muslim minority, which constitutes 12 percent of the population, were installed in most key military and intelligence positions.

The 1973 constitution vests executive power in the president, who must be a Muslim and who is nominated by the Baath party to be elected through popular referendum. The 250-member People's Assembly holds little independent legislative power.

In the late 1970s, the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, drawn from the Sunni majority, carried out antigovernment attacks in several northern and central towns. In 1982, the government sent the army into the northern town of Hama to crush a Muslim Brotherhood rebellion. As many as 20,000 militants and civilians died in the resulting bloodshed, which decisively ended active opposition to the regime to this day.

Assad's reelection in February was by popular referendum. Running unopposed, he captured 99.99 percent of the vote. The ruling National Progressive Front, dominated by the Baath party, continues to hold an overwhelming majority in parliament. The death of Major Basil al-Assad, the president's son and heir apparent, in a 1994 auto accident, has placed the president's other son, Bashar, into the forefront of succession. Assad is reportedly of failing health, and there are growing signs that Bashar, an ophthalmologist by trade, is being groomed for the presidency. In 1998, after quickly climbing Syria's military ranks, Bashar was handed responsibility for overseeing Syria's role in Lebanon. The president's brother, and disgraced former vice president, Rifaat Assad, reportedly attempted in September to promote himself and his son over Bashar in a succession power struggle. According to media reports late in the month, Bashar ordered 600 of his troops to surround Rifaat's home in Latakia in a crackdown to prevent any such challenge.

Until fairly recently, Assad's domestic credibility relied on his hard line against Israel. He previously appeared in no rush to negotiate a settlement leading to the return of the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights, as this would likely require establishing full diplomatic relations with Jerusalem. However, given his fragile health and determination to smooth the way for a successor, and the election of a pro-peace government in Israel, Assad reportedly wants to preside over a final peace settlement, if only to relieve an untested heir of the contentious task. Assad reacted favorably to the May election of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, sensing that a return of the Golan was possible. Syria's position hardened over the summer, however, as it became clear Barak intended to negotiate from a fresh position over the Golan, rather than pick up where his Labor party predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, had left off. Syria insists that a deal to return all of the Golan was quietly offered by Rabin before his assassination in 1995. But by December, Syria resumed peace talks with Israel after a hiatus lasting over three years. Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in Washington to lay the groundwork for negotiations over the Golan and a final peace

arrangement. Prior to losing the Golan in 1967, Syria had used the territory to shell northern Israeli towns.

In March 1999, Syria and Iraq established interest sections in their respective capitals. Relations between the two historic Ba'athist rivals had been severed for the previous 19 years. Syria joined the multinational coalition against Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf War. In April 1999, reports surfaced that Syria was smuggling oil out of Iraq, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions levied in the wake of the war. There were signs of improving Syrian relations with Jordan during the year. In February President Assad attended the funeral of his long-time adversary, King Hussein, in Amman. Assad's son Bashar paid a state visit to King Hussein's successor, his 37-year-old son, King Abdullah. The visit was widely seen as emblematic of the emergence of a younger generation of Middle East leaders.

According to media reports in October, Assad's ability to control Hezbollah guerillas fighting in southern Lebanon against Israeli occupation is weakening. Syria reportedly urged Israel not to withdraw from its security zone in Lebanon's south for fear of not being able to fill the power vacuum. Damascus allegedly does not wish to commit troops to the region while the potential for a coup at home exists. Analysts suggested that in the midst of the succession issue, Assad's best assurance of stability at home relied on an Israeli presence in south Lebanon into at least the foreseeable future. Further complicating matters is Iran's support of Hezbollah guerillas. The guerillas are reportedly now receiving arms shipments from Iran via Beirut, rather than Damascus, the traditional transfer point.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Syrians cannot change their government democratically, though they ostensibly vote for the president and the People's Assembly. President Assad maintains absolute authority in the military-backed regime. Tightly controlled elections in November 1998 resulted in Assad's National Progressive Front dominating parliament. The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood condemned the elections and called for true political pluralism in Syria.

The Emergency Law, in effect almost continuously since 1963, allows authorities to carry out preventative arrests and to supersede due process safeguards in searches, detentions, and trials in the military-controlled state security courts, which handle political and security cases. Several independent security services operate independently of each other and without judicial oversight. Authorities monitor personal communications and conduct surveillance of suspected security threats.

The judiciary is subservient to the government. Defendants in ordinary civil criminal cases have some due process rights, though there are no jury trials. In state security courts, confessions obtained through torture are generally admitted as evidence. Nevertheless, acquittals have been granted in political cases. Trials in the Economic Security Court, which hears cases involving currency violations and other financial offenses, are also conducted without procedural safeguards. While hundreds of political prisoners were released in 1999 under a presidential amnesty, dozens were arrested on political grounds and hundreds of political prisoners, including Palestinians, Jordanians, Lebanese, Kurds, and other prisoners of conscience, remain jailed. In October, Human Rights Watch classified Syria as the only country in the Middle East and North Africa where human rights activists are serving lengthy prison terms. In July, President Assad pardoned all Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners and others who committed crimes

before March 11, 1999 (the beginning of Assad's new term). The pardon covered more than 200,000 prisoners jailed for crimes of smuggling, bribery, and fleeing army duty.

Freedom of expression is sharply restricted. All media are owned and operated by the government and the Baath party. Satellite dishes are illegal, although they are increasingly tolerated. As of February, government ministries, some businesses, universities, and hospitals were connected to the Internet, albeit on government-controlled servers. While private access is not sanctioned, some private homes are believed to connect to the Internet via Lebanese service providers. Bashar Assad is leading the drive to connect Syria to the Internet, but the country's ruling structure and intelligence services remain steadfastly against widespread access. The media have increasingly reported on regional issues, including the Middle East peace process, and run a number of articles as well as television programs criticizing official corruption and government inefficiency. Nonetheless, coverage of many topics can result in prosecution. At least ten journalists were imprisoned in Syria in 1999, according to Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists. In June, Syria banned domestic distribution of the London-based daily *Al-Quds al-Arabi* for publishing articles critical of the regime.

Freedom of assembly is nonexistent. The interior ministry must grant citizens permission to hold meetings, and most public demonstrations are organized by the government or Baath party. Freedom of association is restricted. Private associations must register with the government, which usually grants registration to groups that are non-political.

The state prohibits Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists from worshipping as a community and from owning property. The security apparatus closely monitors the Jewish community, and Jews are generally barred from government employment. They are also the only minority group required to have their religion noted in their passports and identity cards. Religious instruction is mandatory in schools, with government-approved teachers and curricula. Separate classes are provided for Christian and Muslim students.

Although the regime has supported Kurdish struggles abroad, the Kurdish minority in Syria faces cultural and linguistic restrictions, and suspected Kurdish activists are routinely dismissed from schools and jobs. Some 200,000 Kurdish Syrians are stateless and unable to obtain passports, identity cards, or birth certificates as a result of a policy some years ago under which Kurds were stripped of their Syrian nationality. The government never restored their nationality, though the policy ended after the 1960s. As a result, these Kurds are unable to own land, to gain government employment, or to vote.

Traditional norms place Syrian women at a disadvantage in marriage, divorce, and inheritance matters. Syrian law stipulates that an accused rapist can be acquitted if he marries his victim. Violence against women, including rape, is high in Syria. Women also face legal restrictions on passing citizenship on to children.

All unions must belong to the government-controlled General Federation of Trade Unions. By law, the government can nullify any private sector collective bargaining agreement. Strikes are prohibited in the agricultural sector and rarely occur in other sectors owing to previous government crackdowns.

Syria experienced its worst drought in 25 years in 1999. In a country with no industrial zones or modern banking system, farmers make up 30 percent of the Syrian workforce. The state-run economy suffers from corruption, a trend Bashar Assad fought

against during the year. Syria restored financial thefts by governmental bodies that occurred in 1998. Calls for economic reform increased in 1999, pertaining specifically to abolishing the prohibition on taking hard currency out of the country.

Taiwan (Rep. of China)

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 22,000,000
PPP: na
Life Expectancy: 75
Ethnic Groups: Taiwanese (84 percent), mainland Chinese (14 percent), Aborigine (2 percent)
Capital: Taipei

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

In February 1999, Premier Vincent Siew was reappointed by President Lee Teng-hui. In September, the ruling Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), endorsed the ticket of Vice President Lien Chen for president and Premier Vincent Siew as his running mate for the March 2000 presidential elections. The KMT National Congress also formally endorsed the bold description by President Lee in July of Taiwan's ties with China as being a "special state-to-state" relationship. This declaration raised tensions in cross-strait relations.

Deep political divides were also present within the KMT. Former Taiwan governor James Soong left the KMT to become an independent candidate in the March presidential elections. Although being a native-born Taiwanese has become a key factor in Taiwan's domestic politics, Soong, the only mainland-born presidential candidate, has wide popular support. Hence, his departure from the KMT has raised fears within the ruling party that other prominent members may also leave the party. In two separate decisions in November and December 1999, KMT's Evaluation and Discipline Committee ousted a total of 27 Soong supporters.

In September 1999, despite popular and government opposition, the National Assembly approved a two-year term extension for its deputies. The measure extends current four-year terms until 2002 to coincide with the next legislative elections. This highly controversial decision forced National Assembly Speaker Su Nan-chang to resign. At the same time, Vice President Lien, who is the KMT's presidential candidate for the March 2000 elections, said he would campaign for reforms to stop abuse of power. The National Assembly also rejected amendments to restore people's rights of initiative and referendum.

In April 1999, thousands of people gathered to protest against the construction of the country's fourth nuclear plant. On September 21, an earthquake registering 7.6 on the Richter scale hit Taipei and other parts of central Taiwan. More than 2,000 lives were lost, and thousands more were injured. Several strong but less devastating earth-

quakes hit the island in the months that followed. How the government handles reconstruction could affect voters' choices in the March elections. Already some public opinion considered the government slow in response and uncaring.

Following the Communist victory on the mainland in 1949, KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek established a government-in-exile on Taiwan, located 100 miles off the southern coast of mainland China. Both Beijing and Taipei officially consider Taiwan a province of China, although Taipei has abandoned its long-standing claim to be the legitimate government of mainland China. Native Taiwanese constitute 85 percent of the population, while mainlanders and their descendants make up the rest, along with a tiny minority of aboriginal peoples.

After four decades of authoritarian KMT rule, Taiwan's democratic transition began with the lifting of martial law in 1987. Lee Teng-hui became the first native Taiwanese president in 1988. Since then, he has asserted native Taiwanese control of the KMT, marginalized its mainlander faction, and de-emphasized the party's commitment to eventual reunification with China. In 1993, Lien Chen was chosen as the first native Taiwanese premier.

Although the KMT managed to maintain control of the National Assembly in Taiwan's first multiparty election in 1991, the Democratic People's Party (DPP), which officially favors formal independence from China, became established as a viable opposition. The widening political space and public dissatisfaction with the KMT's factionalism, corruption, and alleged links to organized crime weakened electoral support for the ruling party. At the November 1997 local elections, the DPP, downplaying its independence platform and promising clean, responsive government, defeated the KMT for the first time both in terms of administrative posts and in the popular vote, at 43 percent versus 42 percent.

The KMT recovered somewhat in the December 1998 local and national elections. The DPP suffered its first major setback in over a decade, but maintained control of key local governments and all of southern Taiwan. The New Party, which is the most supportive of unification with China, did the worst. Public opinion polls indicated that the majority of the population opposed a formal declaration of independence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The people of Taiwan can change their government democratically. The country's transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state was consolidated with the March 1996 presidential election. The constitution vests executive power in a president, who appoints the premier without parliamentary confirmation and can dissolve the legislature. The National Assembly can amend the constitution. (Until 1994, the National Assembly elected the president and vice president.) The government has five specialized *yuan* (branches), including a legislature that, since 1992, is directly elected for a three-year term. The ruling KMT maintains political advantages through its influence over much of the broadcast media and its considerable business interests in Taiwan's industrial economy. Nevertheless, opposition parties, which have grown rapidly in recent years, contest in elections freely and have an impact on national policy. The 1998 parliamentary and mayoral elections were generally regarded to have been free and fair.

Taiwan enjoys one of the freest media environments in Asia, despite some continuing legal restrictions and political pressures. Laws prohibiting advocacy of formal independence from China or of communism allow police to censor or ban publications

considered to be seditious or treasonous. These provisions, however, are not generally enforced in practice. Courts occasionally convict journalists for criminal libel in cases brought by the government or politicians.

Most of Taiwan's media are privately owned and express a wide variety of viewpoints, although the four major television networks are owned or closely associated with the government, opposition political parties, or the military. Some programs are openly critical of the ruling party. The government respects constitutional provisions for freedom of religion.

In January 1998, provisions of the Parade and Assembly Law prohibiting demonstrations that promote communism or advocate Taiwan's separation from mainland China were ruled unconstitutional. Authorities have refused to register some nongovernmental organizations with the name "Taiwan" in their titles, but such groups operate freely. Despite constitutional protections on the formation of trade unions, a number of regulations restrict the right of association in practice. The right to strike and bargain collectively is limited by laws that allow the authorities to impose mandatory dispute mediation and other restrictions. About 31 percent of the country's labor force belong to more than 3,000 registered unions. However, the country's labor laws allow only one labor federation. The pro-KMT Chinese Federation of Labor thus maintains its monopoly.

The judiciary is not fully independent. It remains susceptible to corruption and political influence from the KMT, although increasingly judges are being drawn from outside the ruling party. There were a number of indictments of judges during 1998 for accepting bribes in exchange for favorable judgments. The Anti-Hoodlum Law allows police to detain alleged "hoodlums" on the basis of testimony by unidentified informants. In 1998, a new organization of prosecutors was established to promote ongoing political reform, including higher professional standards. Police continue to abuse suspects, conduct personal identity and vehicle checks with broad discretion, and obtain evidence illegally with few ramifications. Prisons are overcrowded, and conditions are harsh in detention camps for illegal immigrants.

A new law in May 1998 bans companies connected with political parties from bidding for public contracts and designates life imprisonment for bid-riggers. This law was expected to help reduce corruption and reform business contract procedures.

In recent years, Taiwan has considerably relaxed travel restrictions on its citizens to the Chinese mainland, although many limits on the entry of mainland Chinese remain in force, ostensibly for security reasons. In 1999, the government launched an investigation into the background of more than 100,000 immigrants and visitors from mainland China after intelligence agencies said that some of these people were involved in espionage and other illegal activities.

Women face discrimination in employment, and rape and domestic violence remain serious problems. New legislation was adopted in June 1998 requiring all city and county governments to establish domestic violence prevention centers. The country's 357,000 aboriginal descendants of Malayo-Polynesians suffer from social and economic alienation and have limited influence over policy decisions regarding their land and natural resources.

Tajikistan

Polity: Presidential
(transitional)

Economy: Statist

Population: 6,200,000

PPP: \$1,126

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Tajik (65 percent), Uzbek (25 percent),
Russian (4 percent), other (6 percent)

Capital: Dushanbe

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

Two years after the formal end of Tajikistan's five-year civil war in 1997, the government and the United Tajikistan Opposition (UTO) took several important steps towards implementing the nation's fragile peace process. However, the November presidential election, in which incumbent President Emomali Rakhmonov ran essentially unopposed, highlighted the continuing lack of progress in establishing a democratic political system in this strife-torn country.

Conquered by Russia in the late 1800s, Tajikistan was made an autonomous region within Uzbekistan in 1924 and a separate socialist republic of the USSR in 1929. However, the ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, the two main centers of Tajik culture, remained part of Uzbekistan. The four leading regionally based clans in the country are the Leninabadi in the north, the Kulyabi in the southeast, and the Gharm and Badakhshan in the south. Tajikistan gained its independence in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Former Communist Party leader Rakhman Nabiyeu defeated six challengers in a November 1991 presidential election marred by vote rigging and other electoral irregularities. In May 1992, the ruling Communist government rejected a power-sharing accord with the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) and the secular, pro-Western Tajik Democratic Party (TDP), an alliance based upon the Gharm and Badakhshan clans. Fighting between supporters and opponents of the accord broke out in June, plunging Tajikistan into what was to become a five-year civil war for central government control by rival regional-political groupings based on clan loyalties. Specifically, the ruling Leninabadi elite and its Kulyabi allies were pitted against an opposition of anti-Communist, nationalist, and Islamist movements, centered around the Gharm and Badakhshan clans. In September, Communist hardliners forced the resignation of President Nabiyeu, who was replaced in November by leading Communist Party member Emomali Rakhmonov, an ethnic Kulyabi from Leninabad and the leader of pro-Nabiyeu forces in Kulyab. The following month, Rakhmonov launched attacks in the Gharm, Badakhshan, and Pamiri regions, causing some 60,000 people to flee into neighboring Afghanistan.

On November 6, 1994, Rakhmonov won presidential elections with a reported 58 percent of the vote against Abdumalik Abdullajanov, a former premier from northern Leninabad. However, the IRP and TDP boycotted the poll over violations of the country's electoral law and harassment of their candidates. A public referendum held

concurrently approved a new constitution vesting strong executive powers in a directly elected president and creating a 181-member parliament directly elected for a five-year term.

Elections to the new national legislature were held on February 26 and March 12, 1995, although the vote was boycotted by the UTO, a coalition of secular and Islamic groups formed in December 1993. The poll resulted in a parliament dominated by supporters of President Rakhmonov, with the Communist Party winning some 60 seats.

On June 27, 1997, President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri signed a formal peace agreement in Moscow officially ending the five-year civil war. The accord called for opposition forces to be merged into the regular army, granted an amnesty for UTO members, provided for the UTO to be allotted 30 percent of senior government posts, and established a 26-member National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), with seats evenly divided between the government and the UTO. The NRC was charged with implementing the peace agreements, including preparing amendments for a referendum on constitutional changes that would lead to fair parliamentary elections.

Despite continuing local insurrections and political assassinations which threatened to undermine the country's fragile peace, by the end of 1998 nearly all exiled UTO leaders and Tajik refugees from Afghanistan had returned, and the government had largely kept its pledge to fill 30 percent of senior government posts with UTO members. However, in early 1998, the government pushed back parliamentary elections scheduled for June of that year; elections are currently due to take place in February 2000.

Throughout 1999, both the government and the UTO took several important steps towards promoting reconciliation and implementing the peace process. In May, the Tajik parliament adopted a resolution granting a general amnesty applicable to over 5,000 opposition fighters, and in mid-1999, several members of the UTO were appointed to government posts in response to the opposition's demands for a greater share in the coalition. On August 3, the UTO announced that it had disbanded all of its military formations. This development paved the way for the supreme court's lifting of a ban on August 12 of four opposition parties—the Democratic Party, the Islamic Revival Party, and the Rastakhez and Lali Badakhshan movements—which had been imposed during the civil war.

In a nationwide referendum on September 26, voters overwhelmingly approved a series of constitutional amendments in a poll reportedly marred by widespread proxy and open voting and falsification of voter registration lists. The amendments considerably expanded the powers of the president by extending his term in office from five to seven years and creating a full-time, bicameral parliament whose members would be appointed directly by the president or elected by indirect vote through local parliaments led by presidential appointees. More importantly for the peace process, the amendments also permitted the formation of religion-based political parties, opening the way for the legal operation of the Islamic opposition, including the Islamic Renaissance Party, which constitutes the backbone of the UTO. The existing law on political parties dating from May 1998 had banned religious parties.

In the run-up to the November 6 presidential election, the government quashed any hopes for a democratic vote by attempting to obstruct the registration of opposition candidates and imposing restrictions on access to the media. The three opposition candidates to President Rakhmonov, Saifiddin Turayev of the Justice Party, Sultan

Kuvatov of the Democratic Party, and Economics Minister Davlat Usmon of the Islamic Renaissance Party, threatened to boycott the elections, arguing that they were not given enough time to collect the required number of signatures to register as candidates. However, the Central Election Commission (CEC) barred them from participating less than one month before the poll for failure to collect the necessary signatures. Usmon was subsequently given permission to compete, although he refused, claiming that the decision was merely an attempt to legitimize the elections. A UTO boycott of the vote was lifted only in the eleventh hour by UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri, reportedly in exchange for the release of 93 UTO members still in prison and for key concessions ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections. According to official election results, Rakhmonov received 97 percent of the vote, and Usmon, who had withdrawn from the race, 2 percent. However, the results of the election were heavily criticized by opposition members and election observers, who cited numerous irregularities, including multiple voting. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe refused to send monitors because of various significant flaws observed during the pre-election period.

The security situation in northeastern Tajikistan became more acute during the summer following the announcement of a plan to expel approximately 1,600 Uzbek nationals who had fled government crackdowns in Uzbekistan after a series of bombings in Tashkent in February. In August, hundreds of armed members of the group, many of whom appeared to be followers of Uzbek Islamic leader Juma Namangani, joined by former members of demobilized UTO military units, entered the Kyrgyz Republic twice, capturing several villages and taking both local and foreign hostages. After the release of the last hostages in October, Tajikistan deported hundreds of the remaining Uzbeks on Tajik soil.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Tajikistan cannot change their government democratically. The 1994 constitution provides for a strong executive who enjoys broad authority to appoint and dismiss officials. Amendments to the constitution adopted in a 1999 referendum further increased presidential powers. The 181-member national legislature is in practice dominated by the Rakhmonov government. Neither the country's presidential polls in 1994 and 1999 nor the parliamentary election in 1995 were free and fair.

Despite formal guarantees for freedom of speech and the press, media freedoms remain severely curtailed by the government. According to Human Rights Watch, independent journalists and broadcasters continue to face unprosecuted violence, pre-publication censorship, arbitrary denial to print at state printing facilities, penalties for libel and "irresponsible" journalism, and burdensome licensing procedures. Consequently, self-censorship among journalists is widespread. Although approximately 200 newspapers are officially registered, few are published regularly and there are no daily papers, in part because of financial difficulties. The country's few independent television stations continue to experience administrative and legal harassment by the authorities. No independent radio stations have yet received operating licenses.

The constitution formally guarantees freedom of religion. While the state Committee on Religious Affairs registers religious communities in this predominantly Muslim state, several minor unregistered groups operate with limited restrictions. The constitutional referendum of September 26, 1999, legalized the formation of religious-based political parties.

The state strictly controls freedom of assembly and association for organizations of a political nature. Nongovernmental organizations and political groups must obtain permits to hold public demonstrations, which at times the authorities have used excessive force to disrupt. Although four opposition parties were legalized and a ban on religion-based parties was lifted in 1999, the government has sought to stop or limit the activities of certain other political parties, including the Agrarian Party and the National Unity Party. Despite legal rights to form and join trade unions, in practice labor rights are largely ignored. All trade unions in Tajikistan are state-controlled, including the Confederation of Trade Unions for state enterprise workers, the Trade Unions of Private Enterprise Workers, which represents employees in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and the Union of Agricultural Workers.

The judiciary enjoys little independence from the executive branch, on which most judges depend for their positions. Many judges are poorly trained and inexperienced, and bribery is reportedly widespread. Local and international observers at the trial of the murderers of four United Nations Mission to Tajikistan personnel in July 1998 recounted torture of the accused and flagrant violations of basic legal principles. Police routinely conduct arbitrary searches and seizures and beat detainees to obtain confessions. Prison conditions have been described as life-threatening due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. High levels of criminal and political violence and lawlessness continue to directly or indirectly affect the personal security of most citizens. Numerous assaults, killings, and abductions occurred throughout 1999, many committed by members of the security forces, the UTO, or unaligned armed factions. Among the year's high-profile assassinations were those of former Deputy Procurator General Tolib Boboev and Socialist Party Chairman Safarali Kenjaev.

The government generally respects the right of its citizens to choose a place of residence and to travel. However, checkpoints manned by interior ministry troops and other armed units have extorted money from drivers and passengers, limiting their freedom of movement. Nearly all of the estimated 600,000-700,000 refugees who fled the country during the civil war have subsequently returned to Tajikistan. Corruption is reportedly pervasive throughout the government, civil service, and business sectors. Barriers to private enterprise, including limited access to commercial real estate and the widespread practice of bribe payments, continue to restrict equality of opportunity. Although women are employed throughout the government, academia, and the business world, they continue to face traditional societal discrimination. Domestic violence is reportedly common, and there are credible reports of trafficking of women.

Tanzania

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 4*
Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 4
Population: 31,300,000 **Status:** Partly Free
PPP: \$580

Life Expectancy: 47

Ethnic Groups: African (99 percent), other, including Asian, European, and Arab (1 percent)

Capital: Dar-es-Salaam

Ratings change: Tanzania's political rights rating changed from 5 to 4 due to a negotiated agreement on Zanzibar's political status.



Overview:

Tanzanian politics in 1999 were marked by the death of retired former President Julius Nyerere, who had led the country for most of its independence. An important accord addressing highly sensitive political issues regarding a fraudulent 1995 election in the federated semi-autonomous isles of Zanzibar and Pemba was finalized after arduous negotiations, but the longer-term relationship between the mainland and the islands remains unclear. Tanzania prepares for parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000, the second since the reintroduction of multiparty politics. Political tensions, which have traditionally been lower than in many countries in the region, are likely to rise as the ruling Chama Cha Mapazindi (CCM) appears set to maintain its hold on power through the advantages of incumbency and splits within the opposition.

After Tanzania gained independence from Britain in 1961, the CCM, under President Nyerere, dominated the country's political life. The Zanzibar and Pemba Islands were merged with Tanganyika to become the Union of Tanzania after Arab sultans who had long ruled the islands were deposed in a violent 1964 revolution. For much of his presidency President Nyerere espoused a collectivist economic philosophy known in Swahili as *ujamaa*. Although it may have been useful in promoting a sense of community and nationality, this policy resulted in significant economic dislocation and decline, the effects of which continue to be felt. During Nyerere's tenure, Tanzania also played an important role as a Front Line State in the international response to white-controlled regimes in southern Africa.

Nyerere retained strong influence after he officially retired in 1985. Although opposition parties were legalized in 1992, the CCM continues to dominate the country's political life and it won several parliamentary by-elections in 1999. Democratic consolidation and strong economic growth are unlikely until the party sheds its authoritarian instincts.

Although Tanzania has avoided the civil strife that has wracked many of its neighbors, there are a number of serious issues that could affect the country's stability. These include mainland Tanzania's long-term relationship with the Zanzibar archipelago, the stability of the ruling CCM, the presence in western Tanzania of 800,000 refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda, and the need for relief of the country's \$8 billion debt.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The ability of Tanzanians to freely choose their political leaders is not yet entrenched in practice. Legislative and presidential elections in 1995 were the most open on mainland Tanzania since independence, but the CCM's landslide legislative victory was, in particular, seriously tainted by fraud and administrative irregularities. In addition, extensive use of state broadcasting and other government resources during the campaign favored the ruling party. The CCM won 80 percent of the 232 directly elected seats in the national assembly. The voting in Zanzibar was plainly fraudulent, with the island's high court summarily rejecting opposition demands for fresh polls.

Thirteen opposition parties have formal status. Some of them are active, but they tend to be divided and ineffective. The largest opposition party, the National Convention for Constitution and Reform (NCCR-Mageuzi, whose candidate, Augustine Mrema, was runner-up to President Benjamin Mkapa in the 1995 presidential election) has split into two. Parties with parliamentary representation receive government subsidies, but they criticize the low level of funding and the formula on which it is allocated.

The CCM and the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) reached an agreement in 1999 that potentially could permit the will of the Zanzibaris to be democratically expressed through legitimate elections. This agreement makes provision for the reorganization of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission in order to make it more independent prior to the elections next year. An Inter-Parties Committee formed of equal numbers of CCM and CUF members will be charged with supervising this agreement.

President Mkapa demonstrates considerable sensitivity over actions of the political opposition. He has warned, for example, that the multiparty political system should not be used as a pretext to indulge in criminal political activities in the country. Mrema was arrested in late 1999 with six other politicians for allegedly making a "seditious and inciting" speech against Tanzanian state leaders.

Tanzania's judiciary has displayed signs of autonomy after decades of subservience to the one-party CCM regime, but it remains subject to considerable political influence. Constitutional protections for the right to free assembly are generally, but not always, respected. Laws allow rallies only by officially registered political parties, which may not be formed on religious, ethnic, or regional bases and cannot oppose the union of Zanzibar and the mainland. Freedom of religion is respected.

Print and electronic media are active, but media impact is largely limited to major urban areas. Private radio and television stations began receiving licenses at the beginning of 1994, but they are not allowed to cover more than 25 percent of the country's territory, according to the 1993 Broadcasting Act. The stated rationale for the limitation is to protect national interests. The Act also aims to avoid monopoly and the abuse of the electronic media. The government announced in 1999 that the official Tanzania news agency, Shihata, would be shut down as a result of competition following the liberalization of the media. In Zanzibar the government controls the electronic media.

Arrest and pretrial detention laws are often ignored. Prison conditions are harsh, and police abuses are said to be common. In November Tanzania's police commissioner complained that 45,000 inmates were being held in jails that should accommodate only 21,000. Many nongovernmental organizations are active, but some human rights groups have experienced difficulties in receiving required official registration. The broad distribution of Tanzania's population among many ethnic groups has largely diffused potential ethnic rivalries that have wracked neighboring countries.

Women's rights guaranteed by the constitution and other laws are not seriously protected. Especially in rural areas and in Zanzibar, traditional or Islamic customs discriminatory toward women prevail in family law, and women have fewer educational and economic opportunities. Domestic violence against women is reportedly common and rarely prosecuted. Human rights groups have sought laws to bar forced marriages, which are most common among Tanzania's coastal peoples. The employment of children as domestic servants is widespread.

Workers do not have the right to organize and join trade unions freely. Essential workers are barred from striking. Other workers' right to strike is restricted by complex notification and mediation requirements. Collective bargaining effectively exists only in the small private sector. Approximately 85 percent of Tanzania's people survive through subsistence agriculture. Economic decline in Zanzibar continues to dim the entire country's prospects.

Corruption remains a serious problem, although the government has made some attempts to address it. In 1996 President Mkapa dismissed the Dar es Salaam city council for alleged corruption. He created the Commission of Ethics, whose purpose is to assure greater openness and transparency in the government's financial dealings. Members of the government must submit written documents to the commission disclosing their personal finances.

In reality, however, the government has not succeeded in curbing corruption. Tanzania ranked near the bottom on Transparency International's 1998 corruption perception index. Corruption and mismanagement have hindered growth and reduced confidence in the current administration. Interpol has warned that Tanzania has become a major center for the transport of drugs from Asia to Europe.

Religious tensions between Muslims and other faiths, especially Christians, remained high in the wake of the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy and other instances of interfaith violence. In May the vice president announced that Committee for Muslims' Rights, led by the fugitive Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda, would be banned, and that the government has identified religious groups that had been aided by foreign agents to foment unrest.

Thailand

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 61,800,000

PPP: \$6,690

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Thai (75 percent), Chinese (14 percent), other (11 percent)

Capital: Bangkok

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

With Thailand's economy emerging from a deep financial crisis, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai announced in October

1999 that he would probably hold elections, due by November 2000, several months early.

Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, is the only Southeast Asian nation never colonized by a European country. In 1932 a bloodless coup, the first of 17 coups or attempted coups in the twentieth century, curbed the king's powers and established a constitutional monarchy. Today, King Bhumibol Adulyadej's duties are limited to approving the prime minister, but he is widely revered and exerts informal political influence.

In 1991, the army overthrew a hugely corrupt elected government. Following elections in April 1992 the new parliament appointed the coup leader, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, prime minister, even though he had not contested the vote. Bangkok's middle class organized massive demonstrations that climaxed in May, when soldiers killed more than 50 protesters. Suchinda resigned, Thailand returned to civilian rule, and parliament amended the constitution to require prime ministers to be members of parliament.

The 1996 elections brought to power a coalition headed by Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a former army commander. Chavalit inherited an economy that had recorded the world's fastest growth between 1984 and 1995, but was now weakened by slowing exports, \$63 billion in mostly short-term foreign debt, and a poorly supervised banking system burdened by bad property loans. The government floated the *baht* on July 2, 1997, after spending billions of dollars in a fruitless defense against speculators, and in August agreed to a \$17.2 billion loan package led by the International Monetary Fund conditioned on financial austerity. Middle-class Thais, blaming the financial crisis on a political system dominated by corrupt rural politicians, organized large anti-government demonstrations in Bangkok. In September, parliament approved a reformist constitution that included tough anticorruption provisions and redesigned the electoral system. The constitution created a directly elected house of representatives, with 400 single-member constituencies and 100 party-list seats, which serve four-year terms, and a 200-seat, directly elected senate. In November 1997, Chuan Leekpai of the Democratic Party formed a new six-party coalition.

In 1998, Chuan's economic policies drew international praise and domestic criticism. As the country endured its worst recession in decades, the government suspended 56 bankrupt financial institutions and maintained high interest rates. The opposition blamed the tight monetary policy for pushing the economy into recession and argued that privatization and other proposed liberalization measures would allow foreigners to dominate the economy and lead to even greater job losses. With the number of unemployed Thais rising from one million to three million and the economy contracting an estimated 7 to 8 percent, the urban poor, farmers, and other vulnerable groups accused the government of ignoring their plight.

In 1999, critics accused the government of failing to adequately confront the problem of nonperforming bank loans, which amounted to nearly half of total loans in the financial system. In late 1999, economists estimated that gross domestic product had grown 4 to 6 percent in 1999, although unemployment remained at record-high levels.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Thailand can change their government through elections, although voting is marred by fraud and irregularities. In the 1996 elections candidates spent an estimated \$1 billion buying votes and reportedly hired off-duty police and soldiers to intimidate voters and stuff ballots. Partisan attacks killed seven people in the most violent campaign ever.

Individual freedoms are generally respected, but police impunity, official corruption, limited bureaucratic transparency, mistreatment of refugees, discrimination against women and minorities, and trafficking of women for prostitution continue to be problems. The 1997 constitution is the sixteenth since 1932, but the first to be drafted with public consultation. It includes strong human rights guarantees and anticorruption provisions. However, according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, in 1998 and 1999 conservative lawmakers sought to restrict the interpretation of the constitution's human rights bill. Since the 1991 coup, the military has reduced its political role, although it still maintains substantial illicit business interests.

The judiciary is independent but is rife with corruption. In criminal cases, due process safeguards are generally adequate, but indigent defendants are not guaranteed an attorney. A constitutional court authorized by the 1997 constitution began operating in 1998. Sharia (Islamic law) courts hear civil cases concerning members of the Muslim minority. According to the U. S. Department of State, the sole political prisoner is a Muslim cleric who was sentenced in 1994 to a 12-year term for leading a 1990 political protest.

The police force is highly corrupt and inadequately trained, and operates with relative impunity. Police commit dozens of extrajudicial executions of drug traffickers and other criminal suspects each year with virtual impunity in the context of an increasingly violent narcotics trade. Police occasionally torture and rape detainees. Prison conditions are poor, and officials routinely beat and shackle inmates. Conditions at immigration detention centers, where female detainees say rape is common, worsened in 1998 after the government ordered a crackdown on illegal immigrants in response to the economic crisis.

The constitution and several laws restrict freedom of expression in specific areas, including advocating a Communist government and inciting disturbances. The government has not arrested anyone under laws against defaming the monarchy (*lese majeste*) since 1991, but citizens strictly adhere to lese majeste provisions.

The 1997 constitution prohibits the government from censoring, banning, or otherwise restricting the media, except by legislation during a crisis. The press criticizes government policies and publicizes corruption and human rights abuses, but journalists face occasional intimidation and exercise self-censorship regarding the military, monarchy, judiciary, and other sensitive issues. Each year the police issue several warnings to publications under the 1941 Printing and Advertisement Act, which broadly prohibits the media from disturbing the peace, interfering with public safety, or offending public morals. The government or the military controls all five national television networks, and the army owns most radio stations. The broadcast media generally offer pluralist views.

Police occasionally use excessive force in containing public demonstrations. Non-governmental organizations are active but face some police harassment and intimidation. The government is establishing an independent National Human Rights Commission, as called for by the 1997 constitution.

Thailand's financial crisis has exacerbated unemployment and other social problems in a country with a minimal welfare system. Prostitution is illegal but widespread, in part because many local officials, police, and soldiers have a financial interest in its continuation and because the government barely enforces relevant laws. Many prostitutes, particularly women and girls from hill tribes and those trafficked from neighbor-

ing countries, are forcibly brought into the trade and are subjected to physical abuse and confinement. Girls sold into prostitution by their families become bonded laborers. Rape and domestic violence continue to be problems.

Women are increasingly entering the professions. However, overall, women generally receive lower pay for equal work, are concentrated in lower paying jobs, and are frequently denied the minimum wage.

Religious freedom is respected, with Theravada Buddhism claiming the most adherents. Muslim Malays constitute a 10 percent minority and face unofficial social and employment discrimination. Roughly half of the 500,000 to 600,000 members of hill tribes are not registered citizens and therefore cannot vote or own land, have difficulty in obtaining social services, and are not protected by labor laws.

Thailand has for years sheltered hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees, currently including some 125,000 Burmese. The government generally provides first asylum to Burmese fleeing fighting, but often bars Burmese seeking asylum on broader grounds of persecution. Authorities frequently arbitrarily arrested and detained Burmese refugees and asylum seekers outside refugee camps as illegal aliens. In 1998 and 1999, the government deported tens of thousands of Burmese migrant workers in the context of the regional financial crisis, without screening the deportees to identify genuine asylum seekers.

Unions are independent. The lack of antidiscrimination legislation hampers organizing. Collective bargaining is legal in the private sector, but in practice employers maintain considerable leverage and generally set wages unilaterally. State workers can only join "associations," which cannot negotiate wages or hold strikes. The International Labor Organization has criticized seldom-used legislation permitting the government to restrict private sector strikes on national security or public welfare grounds or in essential services. Child labor is common. Working conditions in private factories are often poor and dangerous.

Togo

Polity: Dominant party (military-influenced) **Political Rights:** 5*

Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 5

Population: 4,500,000 **Status:** Not Free

PPP: \$1,490

Life Expectancy: 49

Ethnic Groups: Ewe, Mina, Kabye, 34 other tribes (99 percent), European and Syrian-Lebanese (1 percent)

Capital: Lome

Ratings Change: Togo's political rights rating changed from 6 to 5 following negotiations between the government and opposition and the return from exile of the country's main opposition leader.



Overview:

There were slight improvements in Togo's political sphere with negotiations between the government of President Gnassingbe

Eyadema and the opposition, leading to a framework agreement to form an independent national electoral commission that will organize and supervise future elections. The commission's members would be drawn equally from all political parties. The agreement also envisages compensation payments to victims of political violence. A 24-member joint committee has been formed to oversee implementation of the accord. New parliamentary elections in the year 2000 are to replace voting in March that was boycotted by the opposition.

Opposition leader Gilchrist Olympio, who has been living in exile in Ghana since the disputed presidential elections in June 1998, did not attend the talks, citing security concerns. But he did return to Togo in July and spoke to thousands of his supporters in a stadium in the capital, Lome, about talks between his Union of Forces of Change party and the government. Olympio contends he was robbed of a presidential victory in the 1998 polling, which international observers said was neither free nor fair.

Human rights abuses continued to be a problem, leading to a dispute with the rights group Amnesty International over reports of killings. Togo initiated a lawsuit against the group, but that has been suspended pending an international investigation into the reports.

Togoland was a German colony for more three decades until France seized it at the outset of World War I. It was held as French territory until its independence in 1960. Eyadema has ruled Togo with varying levels of repression and the strong support of successive French governments since he assumed full power in 1967; he had led an army coup as a demobilized sergeant, toppling the country's democratically elected government, four years earlier. Members of his Kabye ethnicity overwhelmingly dominate the security forces and, along with fellow northerners, Togo's civil administration. Opposition leader Olympio is the son of the country's founding president, who was murdered in the 1963 coup.

Joining the trend across sub-Saharan Africa, Eyadema in 1991 legalized political parties and multiparty elections were promised. The transition faltered, however, as soldiers and secret police harassed, attacked, or killed opposition supporters. In the 1993 presidential election, which the opposition boycotted, Eyadema claimed to have won 96 percent of the vote.

Violence and intimidation also marred the 1994 legislative elections. Opposition parties won a majority in the national assembly, but splits and flawed 1996 by-elections allowed Eyadema's Rally of the Togolese People party to regain control of the legislature. Eyadema has announced that he will not stand for reelection in 2003, but his opponents remain skeptical.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Togolese people cannot choose their representatives freely. Eyadema's 1998 reelection was blatantly fraudulent.

In the March 1999 election that was boycotted by the opposition, the ruling party won 79 out of 81 seats contested and the remaining two seats went to independent candidates. More than 50 political parties have been created in Togo over the past decade, although only about a dozen are still politically active. A new constitution was adopted in 1992, providing for the basis of democratic institutions, but power in the country still is overwhelmingly concentrated in the presidency.

The judiciary is heavily influenced by the president. All three constitutional court justices were appointed by Eyadema before the transition to a multiparty system. Togo's

criminal courts generally respect legal procedures, and traditional courts handle many minor matters. Courts are understaffed and inadequately funded. Pretrial detentions are lengthy, and prisons are severely overcrowded.

Demonstrations are officially banned, but security forces in November allowed a protest by thousands of students and teachers pressing for better conditions and pay to pass off peacefully. Killings, arbitrary arrest, and torture have continued. The rights group Amnesty International issued a report in May describing Togo as a "state of terror" and alleged that hundreds of people were killed by security forces during the 1998 election and that their bodies washed up on beaches in Togo and neighboring Benin. Amnesty also documented a series of extrajudicial executions from 1993 to 1998. The Togo government employed a top lawyer from its loyal backer, France, and said it intended to sue the rights body for slander and libel. In November Amnesty issued a new report confirming the earlier statements and said there had been a concerted campaign of intimidation, bribery, and threats against witnesses, journalists, and human rights defenders. Legal proceedings against Amnesty have been suspended, and Togo has agreed to invite an international commission of inquiry to investigate the reported killings.

A number of private newspapers publish in Lome, but independent journalists are subject to harassment and the perpetual threat of various criminal charges. Private radio and television stations now broadcast, but offer little independent local coverage. The new framework agreement would provide for the reorganization of the High Audio-Visual and Communication Authority, ostensibly to grant greater freedom to the press. However, officials in December adopted a bill that gives judges the option of handing down prison sentences for those accused of press offenses, despite reforms to the press code in 1998 that abolished prison sentences for journalists. The editor of the private weekly *L'Aurore*, Roland Kpagli Comlan, was jailed in December for an erroneous report alleging that police had killed a secondary school pupil during a student meeting. The student had been beaten unconscious but not killed.

Constitutionally protected religious freedom is generally respected, but demonstrations are often banned or violently halted. Ethnic discrimination is rife. Political power is narrowly held by members of a few ethnic groups from northern Togo. Southerners dominate the country's commerce, and violence occasionally flares between the two groups.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women's opportunities for education and employment are limited. A husband may legally bar his wife from working or receive her earnings. Customary law bars women's rights in divorce and inheritance rights to widows. Violence against women is common. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced by the country's northern ethnic groups.

Togo's constitution includes the right to form and join unions, but essential workers are excluded. Health care workers may not strike. Only 15 percent of the labor force is unionized. Unions have the right to bargain collectively, but most labor agreements are brokered by the government in tripartite talks with unions and management. Several labor federations are politically aligned.

Most of the country's people work in rural subsistence agriculture. Political instability and corruption deter significant international investment. In January the government announced that it had discovered oil and gas deposits off its coast. The European Union has linked resumption of aid to a negotiated political settlement in the country.

Tonga

Polity: Monarchy and partly-elected legislature
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 100,000
PPP:na
Life Expectancy: na
Ethnic Groups: Polynesian
Capital: Nuku'alofa

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free



Overview:

In January 1999, the pro-democracy movement organized a convention to discuss a new, more democratic constitution, which has remained virtually unchanged since 1875. The government did not endorse the meeting, but allowing non-Tongans to come to the meeting and government civil servants to participate in their personal capacity showed a more relaxed attitude.

A partial parliamentary election was held in March to fill nine commoners' seats in the kingdom's 30-member chamber. The Tongan Human Rights and Democracy Movement managed to take only five seats. Some observers questioned whether this signaled a declining support for the pro-democracy movement, but pro-democracy candidates said media coverage was biased. Akilisi Pohiva, head of the Tongan Human Rights and Democracy Movement secured only 8,554 votes out of a total of 52,000 votes.

Also in response to the pro-democracy movement's call for greater government transparency and accountability, former lands minister Fakafanua stood trial for charges of bribery, misuse of public funds, abuse of power, and fraud. The prodemocracy movement applauded a criticism by Crown Prince Pupouto'a, who said in June that some of the kingdom's laws were "inspired by totally medieval interpretations of the scripture."

The country's longest-serving prime minister, Prince Fatafehi Tu'ipelehake, brother of King Taufa'ahau Tupou, passed away. The prince was prime minister from 1965 to 1991, when illness compelled him to retire. Tonga gained full membership to the United Nations.

Tonga is made up of 169 islands in the South Pacific, with a predominantly Polynesian population. It was unified as a kingdom under King George Tupou I in 1845. In 1970, Tonga became an independent member of the British Commonwealth after 70 years of British influence. King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV has reigned since 1945.

The 30-seat Legislative Assembly serves a three-year term and consists of 12 ministers from the privy council, 9 nobles selected by and from Tonga's 33 noble families, and 9 People's Representatives (commoners) elected by universal suffrage. The 1990 legislative elections saw the emergence of a pro-democracy bloc that won five commoner seats. In August 1992, reform-oriented commoner representatives, led by Akilisi Pohiva, formed the Pro-Democracy Movement (PDM). The PDM favored holding direct elections for all 30 parliamentary seats and having parliament rather than the king select the privy council, while retaining the king as a figurehead. In November, the PDM organized a seminal conference on amending the constitution to introduce democratic reforms that were supported by the influential Roman Catholic and Free Wesleyan churches.

At the 1993 elections, prodemocracy candidates won six commoner seats. In 1994, the PDM organized Tonga's first political party, the Tonga Democratic Party, subsequently renamed the People's Party. In the January 1996 elections, pro-democracy candidates took all nine commoner seats, but only managed to keep five in the March 1999 elections.

In 1998, a parliamentary committee investigated charges of financial mismanagement and abuse of power against the Speaker of Parliament Noble Fusitu'a. The king ordered the investigation after receiving a petition of over 1,000 signatures describing the allegations and calling to remove Fusitu'a from office.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Tongans lacked the democratic means to change their government. The 1875 constitution grants the king and hereditary nobles a perpetual majority in parliament with a total of 21 out of 30 seats. This allows legislation to be passed without the assent of the popularly elected People's Representatives, whose nine seats represent roughly 95 percent of the population. Nevertheless, the commoner representatives have managed, on occasion, to reject legislation and the budget when joined by some noble representatives. The king has broad executive powers, appoints the prime minister, and appoints and heads the privy council (cabinet). The king and the nobility also hold a preeminent position in society through substantial land holdings.

Criticisms against the king, his family, and the government are not well tolerated. In 1985, Pohiva disclosed that assemblymen had granted themselves pay raises. He has faced harassment since then. In the early 1990s, he was fined for allegedly defaming the crown prince. In 1998, the supreme court acquitted Pohiva of criminal libel charges for a statement regarding the business dealings of the king's daughter, but he was found guilty of two defamation charges over comments about Police Minister Clive Edwards. The Tonga-based editor of the *Times of Tonga* was also found guilty of defaming Edwards and fined about \$400. Michael Field, a correspondent for Agence France Presse, has been denied entry into Tonga since 1993 after writing about Tonga's pro-democracy movement and allegations of government financial mismanagement.

The government weekly *Tonga Chronicle* carries some opposition views. There are several private newspapers, including the *Times of Tonga*, *Kele'a*, and an outspoken Roman Catholic Church newsletter. Political coverage on the Tonga Broadcast Commission's Radio Tonga favors the government, and the state owns the country's only television station. In December, the Privy Council approved the establishment of a new public television service. It will likely be launched on July 4, 2000 to coincide with the king's eighty-second birthday.

Religious freedom is respected in this predominantly Christian society. There are no significant restrictions on freedom of assembly. The 1964 Trade Union Act recognizes the right of workers to form independent unions. None has formed because most Tongans engage in subsistence agriculture. The king appoints all judges, and the lower levels of the judiciary are not independent. The supreme court is independent and uses expatriate judges.

Citizens are free to travel domestically and abroad. Women generally occupy a subordinate role in this male-dominated society. Few women participate in the formal labor force, and they cannot own land or hold noble titles.

Trinidad and Tobago

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 1,300,000
PPP: \$6,840
Life Expectancy: 71
Ethnic Groups: East Indian (41 percent), Black (40 percent), mixed (14 percent), European (1 percent), other (4 percent)
Capital: Port-of-Spain

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

Prime Minister Basdeo Panday's pro-business United National Congress (UNC) government, praised for its solid economic management and for cooperation in fighting the region's growing drug trade, continued its tough line against the opposition press in 1999. An April 19 shooting of the commanding officer of the presidential guard by an aide sent shock waves throughout the country, but the murder was later attributed to personal frictions between the two men. In August, another dispute with neighboring Venezuela arose over fishing rights in the narrow straits between the two countries, as Hugo Chavez of Venezuela sought to extend his country's influence over the English-speaking Caribbean.

Trinidad and Tobago, a member of the Commonwealth, achieved independence in 1962. The 1976 constitution established the two-island nation as a republic with a president, elected by a majority of both houses of parliament, replacing the former governor-general. Executive authority remains vested in the prime minister. The bicameral parliament consists of a 36-member house of representatives elected for five years and a 31-member senate, with 25 senators appointed by the prime minister and 6 by the opposition.

In the 1986 elections the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), a coalition that bridges traditional political differences between black and East Indian communities, led by A. N. R. Robinson, soundly defeated the black-based People's National Movement (PNM), which had ruled for 30 years. The coalition unraveled when Basdeo Panday, the country's most prominent East Indian politician, was expelled; he then formed the East Indian-based UNC.

In July 1991 a radical black Muslim group briefly seized parliament. Tensions increased between black and East Indian communities, each roughly 40 percent of the population, as the latter edged towards numeric, and thus political, advantage. In December 1991 Patrick Manning led the PNM to victory by taking 21 of 36 parliamentary seats. Manning's government deregulated the economy and floated the currency, but the social costs of these economic reforms caused the PNM's popularity to decline. Manning called snap elections for November 6, 1995.

The election campaign focused on unemployment and the effects of the structural adjustment program. Voting ran largely along ethnic lines, with East Indians voting overwhelmingly for the UNC and blacks for the PNM. Each party won 17 seats on Trinidad. The NAR retained its two seats on Tobago. The NAR entered into a coalition

with the UNC in exchange for a ministerial position for former Prime Minister Robinson and a promise of greater autonomy for Tobago. UNC leader Panday became Trinidad's first prime minister of East Indian descent.

In March 1996 Robinson was elected president. A series of incidents with Venezuela involving maritime rights—revolving around oil exploration and fishing rights, and Venezuelan drug interdiction efforts—dominated the news. Internal divisions within the NAR, resulting from the strain of being the minority member of a governing coalition, threatened to cause the coalition to disappear. More recently, unemployment has fallen to its lowest level in a decade and a half.

In 1997 there were growing accusations about sweetheart contracts and patronage jobs, and Panday responded by assailing the "lies, half truths and innuendoes" of the opposition press. In 1998, Panday continued his campaign, as his government chose not to renew the work permit of Barbadian newsman Julian Rogers, in apparent reprisal for his having broadcast telephone calls from government critics. In April 1999, Information Minister Rupert Griffith reminded the media of the government's power to grant and revoke broadcast licenses and warned that local media operations were being examined "under a microscope."

In 1999, the Panday government brushed aside criticism from international human rights groups and allowed 10 of the more than 100 prisoners on death row to be hanged. The local appeal of the move was underscored when the government used the day the first three men were executed to announce the holding of local elections the following month. Despite the move, the PNM, led by former Prime Minister Manning, made strong gains in the July 12 vote, in a contest marked by appeals along racial lines.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago can change their government democratically. Politics and party affiliations are largely polarized along ethnic lines.

The judiciary is independent, and the Privy Council in London serves as the recourse of ultimate appeal. As a result of rising crime rates, the court system is severely backlogged, in some cases for up to five years, with an estimated 20,000 criminal cases awaiting trial. Prisons are grossly overcrowded; the government does permit visits to them by human rights monitors. There are more than 100 prisoners on death row.

In May 1999, the government withdrew as a state party from the American Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits countries from extending the death penalty beyond those crimes for which it was in effect at the time the treaty was ratified. In June three men, including the reputed drug lord Dole Chadee, were hanged for their role in the 1994 murder of a couple and their two children—the first executions in five years.

As the country is an important transshipment point for cocaine, an estimated 80 percent of all crimes are believed to involve narcotics. High levels of drug-related violence and common crime continue to undermine the protection of civil liberties. There have been more than two dozen drug-related killings in recent years, including the still unsolved murder of former Attorney General Selwyn Richardson. Successive governments have also failed to enforce certain criminal laws. Corruption in the police force, often drug-related, is endemic, and law enforcement inefficiency results in the dismissal of some criminal cases. Information Minister Griffith in 1999 complained that the media "have created an environment plagued with foreign lifestyles, values, and an over-

load of gratuitous violence," adding that "there is definitely a link" between violent programming and spiraling crime rates.

The Panday government has won some points for its antidrug efforts and has been a principal proponent of a regional witness protection program. It has also signed several antinarcotics accords with the United States.

The press is privately owned and vigorous and offers pluralistic views; however, in May 1997, the government floated a restrictive journalistic code of conduct that the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago said led to instances in which reporters and other press workers were physically attacked. In 1998, Panday's refusal to allow the renewal of the work permit of a respected Barbadian broadcaster became a regional *cause celebre*. He also reiterated his refusal to sign the Inter-American Press Association's Chapultepec Declaration on press freedom until it addressed instances of media dissemination of "lies, half-truths and innuendoes." The broadcast media are both private and public. Freedom of association and assembly is respected.

Domestic violence and other violence against women is extensive and remains a low priority for police and prosecutors. However, in a 1999 landmark ruling, the court of appeals overturned a death sentence and reduced the charge from murder to manslaughter in the case of a woman the court said suffered from battered-wife syndrome.

Labor unions are well organized, powerful, and politically active, although union membership has declined. Strikes are legal and occur frequently.

Tunisia

Polity: Dominant party
Economy: Mixed capitalist
Population: 9,500,000
PPP: \$5,300
Life Expectancy: 69
Ethnic Groups: Arab and Berber (98 percent)
Capital: Tunis

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free



Overview:

As expected, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali won a third five-year presidential term in a landslide victory in October 24 elections. Parliament amended the constitution in June to relax some restrictions on candidacy, thus allowing opposition candidates to contest presidential elections for the first time. While Ben Ali touted this move as a courageous concession to dissent, most analysts described the electoral process as a farce. Of the two opposition leaders who met the stringent conditions placed on potential candidates, one refused to criticize the president and even claimed that he was running "not against Ben Ali, but with him." The other received so little media attention that most citizens could not recognize him. Both publicly conceded that their role was largely symbolic.

Elections to the 182-seat legislature were also held on October 24. A bill adopted by parliament earlier in the year increased the allotment of seats reserved for opposition candidates from 11.6 percent to 20 percent. Not surprisingly, Ben Ali's ruling

Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) won 80 percent of seats. Six opposition parties shared the remaining 20 percent.

Following Tunisia's independence from France in 1956, President Habib Bourguiba pursued secular pro-Western policies while moving toward political liberalization and modernization. In 1987, Prime Minister Ben Ali succeeded Bourguiba, who was deemed medically unfit to govern, and offered a brief promise of an open political system. However, his rule became increasingly autocratic and repressive. Intolerant of public criticism, he has allowed almost no credible opposition to exist; opposition parties have been banned or crippled by arrests and harassment. The government has consistently targeted trade unionists, human rights activists, student leaders, and the media, but it treats Islamists most harshly, claiming the need to avoid the kind of unrest seen in neighboring Algeria. Ben Ali has escaped meaningful criticism from Western governments, in part because much of the worst abuse is aimed at Islamic fundamentalists, but also because Tunisia is an important trading partner for several European countries.

The 1959 constitution provides for a president with broad powers, including the right to select the prime minister and to rule by decree during legislative adjournments. Under Ben Ali, the role of prime minister was reduced from leader of the government to "coordinator" of ministerial activities. The unicameral legislature is elected to five-year terms by universal suffrage. The president appoints a governor to each of Tunisia's 23 provinces, and municipal councils are elected.

Ben Ali named Mohammed Ghannouchi prime minister in November. An economist in charge of international development and foreign investment under the outgoing government, Ghannouchi represents Ben Ali's commitment to continue the economic reforms that have won him praise from the IMF. With the economy growing at between five and six percent a year, Ben Ali promises further privatization, foreign investment, cuts in public spending, and the creation of jobs. Unemployment stands at about 15 percent. An IMF report in October described Tunisia's social indicators as "outstanding by regional standards," notably in education, gender gaps, housing, and health care.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Tunisians cannot change their government democratically. Despite a slight relaxation of restrictions on opposition candidates in 1999 presidential elections, the elections were neither open nor competitive. The ruling RCD and its predecessor parties have controlled the government since independence. No political party based on religion or region is permitted, and all parties must be licensed.

Despite legal reforms that broadened the state's definition of torture and reduced the length of incommunicado detention from ten to three days, illegal detention and torture continued in 1999. According to Human Rights Watch, security forces act with impunity, as judges ignored evidence of torture and routinely convicted defendants on the basis of coerced confessions. In a notable case, 21 defendants, including 13 students, were tried in a single 20-hour session in July on charges that included terrorist activities and unauthorized meetings. Sixteen of the accused had been in pretrial detention since early 1998, and almost all reported being tortured into signing confessions. One of their lawyers, Radhia Nasraoui, along with her husband and four others, was also indicted as a codefendant. Amnesty International reported that the trial was characterized by "disrespect for defence rights and culminated in a unanimous walk-

out by defence lawyers protesting the judge's decision to prevent one of the lawyers from continuing his argument to the court." While Nasraoui received a suspended six-month jail sentence, the other 20 defendants received prison sentences ranging from 15 months to nine years.

Suspected Islamist sympathizers face severe repression. Actual or suspected members of the outlawed An-Nahdha movement constitute the majority of an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 political prisoners in Tunisia, according to Human Rights Watch. Many others are in exile. Former political prisoners are often deprived of their passports, monitored and searched by police, and discriminated against with regard to employment.

Press freedom is severely restricted. The press code prohibits subversion and defamation, both broadly defined, under threat of fines and confiscation. Newsprint subsidies and control over public advertising revenues are used by the government to limit dissent and encourage self-censorship. Prepublication submission requirements allow authorities to seize publications at will. All foreign publications are censored. The government tightly controls domestic broadcast media and restricts the rebroadcasting of foreign programming. Ownership of satellite dishes is restricted, but many people use them illegally.

On October 11, President Ben Ali announced his intention to submit amendments to the press code to "stimulate democratic dialogue even further." However, media coverage of the 1999 presidential campaign overwhelmingly favored Ben Ali, giving the two opposition candidates almost no attention. Throughout 1999, Taoufik Ben Brick, Tunis correspondent with a French daily, suffered intimidation by authorities. His telephone line was cut, his mail was confiscated, he was under constant police surveillance, he was interrogated, and his passport was confiscated. In the run-up to presidential elections, the government suspended broadcasts of France 2 television and blocked distribution of the French daily *Le Monde*.

Permission is required for public gatherings. Nongovernmental organizations dealing with human rights issues or other sensitive matters face harassment, and their meetings are routinely blocked. Printers are generally unwilling to risk government retribution by printing statements and reports from human rights groups. Agendas and papers from meetings and conferences must be submitted to the interior ministry in advance, and hotel managers must report on all gatherings on their premises.

Islam is the state religion, but is practiced under intense government scrutiny. The government controls and subsidizes mosques and pays the salaries of prayer leaders. Proselytizing by non-Muslims is prohibited. Other religions are generally tolerated, with the exception of Baha'i, whose adherents may not practice publicly.

General equality for women has advanced more in Tunisia than elsewhere in the Arab world. Inheritance law is based on Sharia (Islamic law) and discriminates against women, although the government enacted legislation in 1998 to improve women's rights in matters of divorce and property ownership. Women are well represented in academics and in the professions. Twenty-one seats in the national legislature went to women following October 1999 elections.

Tunisia's sole labor federation, the Tunisian General Federation of Labor, operates under severe legal constraints. However, assertive union dissidents campaigned in 1999 for greater autonomy. Ten of them were detained briefly in May.

Turkey

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy (military-influenced) (insurgency)
Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 65,900,000

PPP: \$6,350

Life Expectancy: 68

Ethnic Groups: Turk (80 percent), Kurd (20 percent)

Capital: Ankara



Overview:

Although Turkey ended 1999 with promising new commitments to improve its record on democracy and human rights, progress in these areas continued to be impeded by the military's insistence upon protecting Turkish society from the twin threats of political Islam and Kurdish separatism. Kurdish and Islamist political parties, organizations, and individuals faced severe harassment and restrictions on political and social freedom, particularly following the arrest of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan in February, and in advance of general elections in April.

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, who launched a reform program under which Turkey abandoned much of its Ottoman and Islamic heritage, proclaimed Turkey a republic in 1923. His secular, nationalistic legacy has profoundly influenced Turkish politics ever since, most notably in the post-World War II period. The doctrine of "Kemalism" has been used by the military to justify three coups since 1960. Turkey returned to civilian rule in 1983.

In 1995, the Islamist Refah (Welfare) party took advantage of discontent over corruption, high inflation, and unemployment to win a majority in general elections. After the collapse of a shaky center-right coalition, Refah and the center-right True Path (DYP) formed Turkey's first Islamist-led coalition government in June 1996. Refah Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan almost immediately found himself at odds with the military, which considers itself the guardian of Turkish secularism, over such government policies as allowing female civil servants to wear traditional headscarves. Erbakan resigned under intense military pressure in June 1997. Refah was outlawed in January 1998 for "conspiring against the secular order," and Erbakan and five other Refah leaders lost their parliamentary seats and were banned from politics for five years. Most remaining Refah MPs launched the Virtue party in February 1998.

A ruling coalition of the right-of-center Motherland (ANAP), the social-democratic Democratic Left (DSP) and the conservative Democratic Turkey parties under ANAP's Mesut Yilmaz spent 16 months under severe military pressure to curb Islamic activism before collapsing in November 1998 over corruption charges. After six weeks of political wrangling during which it was evident that the military would not allow the participation of Islamists in any coalition, the DSP's Bulent Ecevit announced in January 1999 that he would head an interim government to take Turkey to April elections.

In elections on April 19, the DSP won 22 percent of the vote, the far-right National

Action Party (MHP) 18 percent, and Virtue 16 percent. ANAP and DYP won 13 and 12 percent, respectively. The Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) did not win the 10 percent of the vote required to send members to parliament, but won control of 37 local administrations despite attempts by Turkey's chief prosecutor to ban it before the election. MHP's impressive showing was attributed to public weariness with perceived corruption in the center-right, a military campaign to prevent a strong showing by Islamists, and a wave of nationalist sentiment following the capture of Abdullah Ocalan. Ecevit assembled a coalition of the DSP, MHP, and ANAP and won a vote of confidence in June.

Turkish special forces captured Ocalan on February 16 in Kenya. Wanted by Turkey on charges of murder and terrorism in connection with the PKK's 15-year guerrilla war with the Turkish army, Ocalan was expelled from Syria in October 1998, unsuccessfully sought asylum in Russia and Italy, and briefly enjoyed the protection of Greek diplomats in Nairobi before his capture. He was tried before a state security court, convicted of treason, and sentenced to death in June. An appeals court upheld the death sentence in November, and in December, Turkey's top prosecutor rejected a last-ditch appeal, exhausting Ocalan's domestic options and opening the way for an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. Execution requires a parliamentary vote and presidential ratification, and the European court demanded suspension of the vote while it decides whether to hear Ocalan's appeal.

A thaw in relations between Turkey and the European Union at year's end improved prospects for human rights in Turkey and made Ocalan's execution seem unlikely in the near future. Already cool since the EU excluded Turkey from a list of prospective members in 1997, relations reached a low point as EU leaders demanded a fair trial for Ocalan, while Turkey accused the EU of hypocrisy for its failure to condemn Greece for harboring him. But exchanges of humanitarian aid in the wake of devastating earthquakes in Greece and Turkey during the summer brought about warmer relations between the two countries. In September, Greece lifted its objections to Turkish EU candidacy, and the EU formally declared Turkey a candidate in December. Membership will depend upon Turkey's taking tangible steps to address its much-criticized human rights record, including democratic reforms and changes to the penal and civil codes to allow tolerance of dissent. Turkey will also be required to abolish capital punishment. Such concessions will undoubtedly fuel tensions within the government, however, as the ultranationalist MHP vocally endorses Ocalan's execution and denounces Kurdish and Islamist threats to Turkish unity.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Turkish citizens can change their government democratically, though the military wields considerable influence in political matters. The 1982 constitution provides for a Grand National Assembly (currently 550 seats) that is directly elected to five-year terms. The assembly elects the president, whose role is largely ceremonial, to a seven-year term.

Islamist and Kurdish political parties suffered severe intimidation in advance of April parliamentary elections. Some 500 HADEP members and supporters were arrested in raids on party offices and homes, and party rallies were cancelled by security forces. The constitutional court banned a small pro-Kurdish party in February for fueling separatism. Human Rights Watch reported that ballots cast for HADEP were destroyed in at least one constituency. In July, five HADEP members, including leader

Murat Bozlak, resigned after an appeals court upheld prison sentences and bans on political activity for a 1993 speech that allegedly incited racial hatred.

Regarding Islamists, security forces were ordered to take "all necessary measures" against "anti-secular propaganda." In February, police raided a school and refused entry to students wearing traditional Islamic headscarves. In late March, former Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdogan was jailed for publicly quoting from an allegedly antiseccularpoem. Security forces reported that some 400 radical Islamists were arrested in a series of raids prior to elections. Following the elections, Virtue MP Merve Kavakci was prevented from taking her oath of office and stripped of her citizenship (Kavakci has dual U.S.-Turkish citizenship) for wearing a headscarf in parliament. Kavakci's actions prompted Turkey's chief prosecutor to initiate proceedings to ban Virtue and expel its MPs from politics.

As part of a deal to win Virtue support for economic reform legislation aimed at attracting an IMF loan, parliament amended the political parties law in August. The amendment raises the standard of evidence needed to shut down a political party for anti-secular activity, and partially lifts the ban on former Refah leader Necmettin Erbakan's participation in politics.

The conflict between the Turkish military and PKK forces, which has claimed as many as 37,000 lives, continued despite PKK declarations of its intention to abandon the armed struggle. After his capture, Ocalan redefined the PKK's stated goal from autonomy within Turkey to a vague request for Kurdish cultural rights, called upon the PKK to withdraw from Turkish territory, and ordered a group of militants to surrender in a show of good faith. Some 1,500 militants reportedly retreated to Iran and Iraq, and eight militants surrendered in October. PKK leaders publicly sought to negotiate a political solution with the government. However, the government dismissed PKK overtures and stepped up assaults on PKK bases in northern Iraq and southeast Turkey throughout the year.

The army has forcibly depopulated more than half the 5,000 villages and hamlets in the southeast, in many cases killing and torturing villagers. Parliament lifted the 12-year-old state of emergency in Siirt province in November, leaving four provinces under emergency law. Civil governors throughout the region may authorize military operations, expel citizens suspected of Kurdish sympathies, ban demonstrations, and confiscate publications. Police ration basic foodstuffs for fear that sympathizers might smuggle them to guerrillas. The PKK and smaller Kurdish groups commit extrajudicial killings, targeting individuals believed to be state sympathizers, such as government-sponsored village guards or civil defense forces, their families, local officials, and teachers who teach Turkish rather than Kurdish. Kurdish attacks on Turkish soldiers and terrorist acts including arson, shootings, and bombings followed Ocalan's sentencing but abated toward the end of the year.

Although the judiciary is nominally independent, the constitutional court is regarded as an arm of the military. State security courts, which try terrorist offenses, limit procedural safeguards and the right to appeal. Prison conditions are abysmal, characterized by widespread torture, sexual abuse, and denial of medical attention to inmates. Human Rights Watch reported three allegations of rape in police custody during 1999 and seven deaths.

Abdullah Ocalan's trial did not meet international standards of fairness. He was denied adequate access to legal counsel, and his lawyers were intimidated. One resigned

from the case in February, claiming inability to do his job because he feared for his life. Another was arrested for suspected ties to the PKK. Yet another was charged with aiding the PKK. In response to international criticism, the Turkish constitution was amended in June to remove military judges from security court trials, including Ocalan's.

Freedom of expression in Turkey is limited by the Criminal Code, which forbids insulting state officials and incitement to racial or ethnic hatred. The Anti-Terror Law (ATL) prohibits separatist propaganda. The subjects of the military, Kurds, and political Islam are highly sensitive and frequently earn journalists criminal penalties. At least 15 journalists were imprisoned in 1999, including Andrew Finkel, a Turkey-based correspondent with *Time*, who was charged in June with insulting the military. In May, Oral Calislar of *Cumhuriyet* received a 20-month prison sentence under Article 8 of the ATL for interviewing Kurdish political leaders. Kanal 6 television was shut down for a week following a report criticizing the government's handling of the earthquake in August. Two journalists were killed, one following torture by police and one in a terrorist attack. Books and newspapers were confiscated almost daily. In July, the European Court of Human Rights found Turkey guilty of human rights violations involving free expression in 13 separate cases. In September, the government suspended for three years all sentences imposed on writers and broadcasters. About a dozen journalists and writers were released, but those prosecuted for public speeches were exempted.

Rights groups criticized the verdict in the trial of six police officers charged in the beating death of journalist Metin Goktepe in 1996. After two and a half years of deliberations, the court convicted the officers of "involuntary homicide" in May and sentenced them to seven and a half years in prison.

Authorities may restrict freedom of association and assembly on the grounds of maintaining public order, and prior notice of gatherings is required. The Gaziantep branch of the Human Rights Association was closed for three months in July. In January, a branch of the Association for Human Rights and Solidarity with the Oppressed was closed for statements found insulting to the state. Another branch was closed in May, and 15 other branches and the homes of executive members were raided by police in June.

Roughly 99 percent of Turks are Sunni Muslim. Religious freedom is restricted by limits on worship to designated sites, constraints on building houses of worship for minority religions, and military-backed government crackdowns on political Islam. In 1998, parliament passed laws placing all mosques under government administration, requiring government authorization for the construction of mosques, and forbidding the wearing of uniforms and masks (including headscarves) by demonstrators. Police detained 40 people in September for operating a church in Izmir without an official permit.

Women face discrimination in family matters such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce. Social norms make it difficult to prosecute rape cases, and the penalty for rape may be reduced if a woman was not a virgin prior to her attack. In January, the Turkish justice ministry announced that family members and authorities will no longer be allowed to subject women and girls to gynecological tests to determine virginity.

Workers may form unions, bargain collectively, and strike, with the exception of workers engaged in the protection of life and property. This category includes workers in the mining and petroleum industries, sanitation, defense, and education. Labor unions held a strike in August to protest proposed pension reforms.

Turkmenistan

Polity: One party presidential dictatorship
Economy: Statist
Population: 4,800,000
PPP: \$2,109
Life Expectancy: 66
Ethnic Groups: Turkmen (77 percent), Uzbek (9 percent), Russian (7 percent), Kazakh (2 percent), other (5 percent)
Capital: Ashgabat

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The country's geostrategic importance as a potential major energy supplier to the West was highlighted in 1999 with an agreement between Turkmenistan and an international energy consortium to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan across Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey. The U.S.-backed project, which is scheduled to begin construction in the year 2000, could bring much needed hard currency to this energy-rich but impoverished Central Asian state.

During December 12 legislative elections, every candidate for the country's rubber stamp parliament was pre-selected by the government. The poll was widely criticized by international organizations for numerous flaws, including the lack of any genuine opposition party participation. In a further consolidation of President Saparmurat Niyazov's extensive powers, parliament unanimously voted in late December to make Niyazov president for life. With this decision, Turkmenistan became the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country to formally abandon presidential elections.

The southernmost republic of the former Soviet Union, Turkmenistan was conquered by the Mongols in the thirteenth century and seized by Russia in the late 1800s. Having been incorporated into the U.S.S.R. in 1924, Turkmenistan gained formal independence in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Saparmurat Niyazov, the former head of the Turkmenistan Communist Party, ran unopposed in elections to the newly created post of president in October 1990. After the adoption of a new constitution in 1992, Niyazov was reelected as the sole candidate for a five-year term with a reported 99.5 percent of the vote. The main opposition group, Agzybirlik, which was formed in 1989 by leading intellectuals, was banned and its leaders harassed. Niyazov's tenure as president was extended for an additional five years to the year 2002 by a 1994 referendum, which exempted him from having to run again in 1997, as originally scheduled. In December 1994 parliamentary elections, only Niyazov's Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT), the renamed Communist Party, was permitted to field candidates.

Turkmenistan, which has the fourth-largest known natural gas reserves in the world, has struggled to bring its energy resources to foreign markets in the face of limited export routes and nonpaying customers, including Ukraine. In 1997 and 1998, a pricing dispute with Russia's natural gas monopoly Gazprom resulted in a dramatic decline in exports through Russian pipelines, although Turkmenistan continued to export limited quantities of gas through a smaller line to Iran.

In 1999, a joint venture of Royal Dutch/Shell, GE Capital, and PSG announced plans to build a 1,250-mile gas pipeline stretching from gas fields in Turkmenistan through Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey. The estimated \$2.5 billion project, which would allow Turkmen gas to bypass Russian and Iranian routes, is supported by the United States as a way of reducing the influence of both Moscow and Tehran in Central Asia. However, competition for the Turkish market from other sources, including the planned Russian-Italian Blue Stream pipeline and a large natural gas field discovered in Azerbaijan in July, cast doubts on the economic viability of the U.S.-backed project. Turkmenistan continued to pursue other energy development options throughout the year, such as possible gas routes to China and to Pakistan through Afghanistan, as well as an oil exploration agreement with the United Arab Emirates signed in November.

Despite the country's wealth of natural resources, there have been few reforms of the Soviet command system, and the majority of citizens live in poverty. The economy suffers from a large trade deficit and foreign debt, and major industries remain state-owned.

In December 12 elections to the National Assembly (*Mejlis*), 104 candidates competed for the legislature's 50 seats. Every candidate was selected by the government, and virtually all were members of President Niyazov's Democratic Party of Turkmenistan. According to government claims, voter turnout was 98.9 percent. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which cited the lack of provisions for nongovernmental parties to participate and the executive branch's control of the nomination of candidates, refused to send even a limited assessment mission. Some diplomatic observers noted numerous irregularities, including empty polling stations and instances of family voting.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Turkmenistan cannot change their government democratically. President Niyazov enjoys virtually absolute power over all branches and levels of the government. He has established an extensive cult of personality, including the erection of monuments to his leadership throughout the country. In 1994, he renamed himself *Turkmenbashi*, or leader of the Turkmen. The country has two national legislative bodies: the unicameral National Assembly (*Mejlis*), composed of 50 members elected in single-mandate constituencies for five-year terms, which is the main legislature; and the People's Council (*Khalk Maslakhaty*), consisting of members of the Assembly, 50 directly elected representatives, and various regional and other executive and judicial officials, which meets infrequently to address certain major issues. Neither parliamentary body enjoys genuine independence from the executive. The 1994 and 1999 parliamentary elections were neither free nor fair.

Freedom of speech and the press are severely restricted by the government, which controls all radio and television broadcasts and print media. Reports of dissenting political views are banned, as are even mild forms of criticism of the president. Subscriptions to foreign newspapers, other than Russian ones, are severely restricted. Foreign journalists have limited opportunities to visit Turkmenistan and are often restricted to certain locations.

The government imposes restrictions on some religious groups through its registration requirements. Amendments to the 1991 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations require religious groups to have at least 500 adherents to register,

which has prevented all but Sunni Muslims and Russian Orthodox Christians from establishing legal religious organizations. Religious groups that are not officially approved by the government, including Baptists, Pentecostals, and Bahais, face harassment. Since independence, Turkmenistan, which is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, has enjoyed a modest revival of Islam, some aspects of which the government has incorporated into its efforts to define a national Turkmen identity.

While the constitution guarantees peaceful assembly and association, these rights are restricted in practice. Only one political party, the Niyazov-led Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, has been officially registered. Opposition parties have been banned, and most of their leaders have either fled abroad or face harassment and detention in Turkmenistan. Social and cultural organizations are allowed to function, but often face difficulty registering. The government-controlled Colleagues Union is the only legal central trade union permitted. There are no legal guarantees for workers to form or join unions or to bargain collectively.

The judicial system is subservient to the president, who appoints and removes judges without legislative review. The authorities frequently deny rights of due process, including public trials and access to defense attorneys. There are no independent lawyers, with the exception of a few retired legal officials, to represent defendants in trials. Police abuse of suspects and prisoners, often to obtain confessions, is reportedly widespread, and prisons are overcrowded and unsanitary.

In August, Pirimkuli Tangrykuliev, a prominent doctor and former parliamentarian, was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges of stealing state property and misusing his government position. Critics charge that his detention was motivated by his plans to establish an independent political party and run as an opposition candidate in parliamentary elections in December. In September, Koshali Garaev, who had been sentenced to a maximum security labor camp on charges of plotting to overthrow the government, was found hanging in his solitary confinement cell. Various human rights organizations, who described Garaev as a political prisoner and the charges against him as fabricated, believe that his death was not a suicide. President Niyazov granted several prisoner amnesties throughout the year affecting hundreds of prisoners, including foreign nationals. A December 1998 moratorium on the death penalty came into force on January 1, 1999.

Citizens are required to carry internal passports for identification. Although residence permits are not required, place of residence is registered in passports. Obtaining passports and exit visas for foreign travel is difficult for most nonofficial travelers and, allegedly, often requires payment of bribes to government officials. The security services regularly monitor the activities of those critical of the government. A continuing Soviet-style command economy and widespread corruption diminish equality of opportunity.

Traditional social-religious norms limit professional and educational opportunities for women, and anecdotal reports suggest that domestic violence is common.

Tuvalu

Polity: Parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 10,000
PPP: na
Life Expectancy: na
Ethnic Groups: Polynesian (96 percent)
Capital: Fongafale

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free



Overview: In April 1999, parliament elected Ionatana Ionatana, a former education minister, as the new prime minister to replace Bikenibeu Paeniu. Paeniu was ousted by his own cabinet for allegations of misconduct in his personal life and for failing to complete government programs he had promised when he came to office in March 1998.

Tuvalu, formerly known as the Ellice Islands, is a small, predominantly Polynesian country, consisting of nine atolls stretching over 500,000 miles of the western Pacific Ocean. The islands were proclaimed a British protectorate with the Gilbert Islands (now independent Kiribati) in 1892 and were formally annexed by Britain in the years between 1915 and 1916, when the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony was established. The Ellice and Gilbert Islands separated in October 1975, and the former was renamed Tuvalu. The country became an independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1978. In Tuvalu's first post-independence general election in September 1971, Dr. Tomasi Puapua was elected as prime minister.

Following the September 1973 elections, parliament was deadlocked between two candidates for premier after two rounds of voting. Governor-General Sir Toalipi Lauti used his constitutional powers to dissolve this new legislature, and the country held fresh elections in November. In December, parliament elected as prime minister Kamuta Laatasi, a former general manager of BP (British Petroleum) Oil in Tuvalu.

Laatasi lost a vote of confidence on December 17, 1996, and on December 23, parliament elected Bikenibeu Paeniu prime minister. After the country's last general election in March 1998, Paeniu was elected by the 12-member parliament to another term as prime minister. Some citizens have argued that ending the country's link to the monarchy and adopting republic status could reduce instability in the tiny parliament.

The primarily subsistence economy consists mainly of coconuts, taro, and fishing. Much of the country's revenue comes from the sale of stamps and coins, as well as from remittances by some 1,500 Tuvalu citizens working overseas, mostly as merchant seamen or phosphate miners on Nauru and Kiribati. Interest from the Tuvalu Trust Fund, established in 1987 by major aid donors, covers one-fourth of the annual budget. Until recently, an estimated ten percent of the country's budget came from the controversial practice of leasing unused telephone numbers to international providers of sex telephone lines. As a low-lying island state, the country is concerned about the effects of global climate change. Tuvalu is one of 16 countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The treaty,

with 84 signatories to date, urges national actions and international cooperation to control and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Tuvalu can change their government democratically. The 1978 constitution vests executive power in a prime minister and a cabinet of up to four ministers. The 12-member parliament, Fale I Fono, is directly elected for a four-year term. The prime minister appoints and can dismiss the governor-general, a Tuvalu citizen who represents the queen of England, who is head of state, for a four-year term. The governor-general appoints the cabinet members and can name a chief executive or dissolve parliament if its members cannot agree on a premier. Each of the country's nine islands is administered by directly elected six-person councils, which are influenced by village-based hereditary elders who wield considerable traditional authority. Political parties are legal, but no formal parties have been established. Most elections hinge on village-based allegiances rather than policy issues.

Freedom of speech and of the press is respected. The government broadcasts over Radio Tuvalu and publishes the fortnightly newspaper *Tuvalu Echoes* in the Tuvalu language and in English, and there is a monthly religious newsletter. Although most of the population belongs to the Protestant Church of Tuvalu, all religious faiths practice freely.

The government respects freedom of assembly and association. Workers are free to join independent trade unions, bargain collectively, and stage strikes. Only the Tuvalu Seamen's Union, with about 600 members, has been organized and registered. No strikes have ever occurred, largely because most of the population is engaged outside the wage economy. Civil servants, teachers, and nurses, who total fewer than 1,000 employees, have formed associations, but they do not yet have union status.

The judiciary is independent. Citizens receive fair public trials with procedural safeguards based on English common law and have a right of ultimate appeal under certain circumstances to the Privy Council in London. The small police force is under civilian control.

Citizens are free to travel within the country and abroad. Traditional social restrictions limit employment opportunities for women, though many are securing jobs in education and health care and are becoming more politically active. Violence against women appears to occur rarely.

Uganda

Polity: Dominant party (military-influenced)
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Political Rights: 5*
Civil Liberties: 5*
Status: Partly Free



Population: 22,800,000

PPP: \$1,160

Life Expectancy: 42

Ethnic Groups: Baganda (17 percent), Karamojong (12 percent), Basogo (8 percent), Iteso (8 percent), Langi (6 percent), Rwanda (6 percent), Bagisu (5 percent), Acholi (4 percent), Lugbara (4 percent), Bunyoro (3 percent), Batobo (3 percent), other (23 percent)

Capital: Kampala

Ratings Change: Uganda's political rights and civil liberties ratings changed from 4 to 5 due to tightened political controls in the run-up to a 2000 constitutional referendum on whether to lift restrictions on political parties, and increased government intimidation of the press.

Overview:

A tense regional situation and a controversy over an upcoming referendum on whether to remove a ban on political party activities have dominated Ugandan politics. In Kampala, which used to be one of Africa's safer cities, rebels have set off about 20 bombs in the past two years, killing some 45 people. The murder of 8 tourists in western Uganda in March focused international attention on instability in that part of the country. The Ugandan military remains directly involved in civil strife in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) dominates the nation's political life. The government appears increasingly determined to ensure that the referendum results in continuing restrictions on political parties. Opposition parties are divided over whether to boycott the referendum. The press and civil society remain relatively free and active, despite some crackdowns. In addition, the parliament has become increasingly assertive, occasionally rejecting appointments or policy initiatives proposed by the executive branch.

Uganda has experienced considerable political instability since independence from Britain in 1962. An increasingly authoritarian president, Milton Obote, was overthrown by Idi Amin in 1971. Amin's brutality and buffoonery made world headlines as hundreds of thousands of people were killed. Amin's 1978 invasion of Tanzania finally led to his demise. Tanzanian forces and Ugandan exiles routed Amin's army and prepared for Obote's return to power in the fraudulent 1980 elections. Obote and his backers from northern Uganda savagely repressed his critics, who were primarily from southern Ugandan ethnic groups. Approximately 250,000 people were killed as political opponents were tortured or murdered and soldiers terrorized the countryside. Obote was ousted for a second time in a 1985 army coup. Conditions continued to worsen until Museveni led his National Resistance Army into Kampala in January 1986.

Manipulation and exploitation of ethnic divisions pose the gravest threat to peace in Uganda. Baganda people in the country's south are demanding more recognition of

their traditional kingdom. Northern ethnic groups complain of government neglect; that region, along with the west, is subject to continuing guerilla activities.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Uganda's only open multiparty elections were held in 1961 in preparation for the country's independence from Britain. Since 1986, political parties have been banned, and candidates stand as individuals in elections. Museveni did not ban the old political parties; they were, however, prevented from operating. Arguing that first-past-the-post democracy exacerbates religious and ethnic tensions in Africa, Museveni substituted a "no-party" system. Since 1996, when he was confirmed by an election as president, his government's base has narrowed, and any distinction between Uganda and a single-party state appears to be academic. Several assemblies or meetings organized by opposition and civil society groups were violently broken up by police because they were deemed "political". A 1999 report by an independent non-governmental organization, Human Rights Watch, concludes that "the NRM has consolidated its monopoly on political power through exclusive access to state funding and machinery, widespread and sometimes compulsory political education programs."

In 1996, Ugandans voted for their president and parliamentarians in elections without open party competition. State media and other official resources were mobilized in support of Museveni's successful candidacy, and the ban on formal party activities further hindered the opposition. Most observers believe that Museveni would have won handily in a multiparty contest and described the balloting and counting as largely transparent. The opposition claimed that the elections were rigged and boycotted subsequent parliamentary polls. Supporters of the opposition parties were allowed to contest on an individual basis, and several were elected. Overall, the elections maintained the NRM's hold on the legislature, its comfortable majority buttressed by dozens of presidentially nominated special interest representatives.

Central political power rests firmly in the hands of the NRM. Important policy issues, such as the decision to intervene directly in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are taken without significant public or parliamentary debate or input. Nonetheless, some space is allowed for parliament and civil society to function. Parliament, for example, has occasionally censured government ministers accused of corruption and forced budgetary amendments. The Uganda Human Rights Activists, the Uganda Law Society, and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives are among non-governmental organizations that focus directly on human rights issues. There is no state religion, and freedom of worship is constitutionally protected and respected. Various Christian sects and the country's Muslim minority practice their creeds freely.

With parliamentary approval, the president names a judicial commission that oversees judicial appointments. The judiciary is still influenced by the executive despite increasing autonomy. It is also constrained by inadequate resources and the army's occasional refusal to respect civilian courts. At times the government liberally applies the charge of treason against nonviolent political dissidents. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 1,000 persons are currently incarcerated in Uganda, awaiting trial on treason charges. Local courts are subject to bribery and corruption. Prison conditions are difficult, especially in local jails. More than 500 prisoners die annually as a result of poor diet, lack of sanitation, and inadequate medical care. Serious human rights violations by rebel groups and the Uganda People's Defense Forces have been reported.

There is some freedom of expression. The independent print media, which include more than two dozen daily and weekly newspapers, are often highly critical of the government and offer a range of opposition views. Buttressed by legislation limiting press freedoms, however, the government at times selectively arrests or harasses journalists. Several private radio stations and two private television stations report on local political developments. The largest newspapers and broadcasting facilities that reach rural areas remain state-owned. Governmental corruption is reported. Opposition positions are also presented, but the coverage is often not balanced.

Women experience discrimination based on traditional law, particularly in rural areas, and are treated unequally under inheritance, divorce, and citizenship statutes. A woman cannot obtain a passport without her husband's permission. Domestic violence against women is widespread. President Museveni has courted controversy by speaking out strongly against homosexuals.

The National Organization of Trade Unions, the country's largest labor federation, is independent of the government and political parties. An array of essential workers is barred from forming unions. Strikes are permitted only after a lengthy reconciliation process.

Most Ugandans are subsistence farmers. Despite overall growth under president Museveni, Uganda's economy has recently slowed. The United Nations categorizes 40 per cent of the population as living in poverty. Foreign-aid donors, who pay more than half of his government's running costs, are increasingly concerned. In March the International Monetary Fund delayed an \$18 million loan to Uganda, largely because of increased defense spending. Aid donors calculate that corruption costs Uganda at least \$200 million a year.

↓ Ukraine

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Economy: Capitalist-statist (transitional)
Population: 49,900,000
PPP: \$2,190
Life Expectancy: 68
Ethnic Groups: Ukrainian (73 percent), Russian (22 percent), Jewish (1 percent), other (4 percent)
Capital: Kiev

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Trend Arrow: Ukraine receives a downward trend arrow due to increased government pressure on the independent media, presidential elections in October-November which were not free and fair, and attempts by the executive after the elections to increase presidential powers at the expense of parliament.

Overview: Leonid Kuchma was reelected president on November 14, 1999 in the second round of a bitterly contested election. In the first round, held on October 31, were 13 candidates: 3 from

extreme left and Pan-Slavic parties (including the Communists), 2 moderate leftist candidates (including the Socialist leader Oleksandr Moroz), 5 centrist candidates (including Kuchma and former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk), and 3 radical reformers (including 2 from different wings of Rukh). Kuchma and Communist leader Petro Symonenko went through to the second round, where Kuchma won with 56.25 per cent against Symonenko's 37.8 per cent. Oleksandr Tkachenko, parliamentary chairman, dropped out of the race on the eve of the elections and advised his supporters to back the Communists.

International observers unanimously declared that the 1999 elections were not free, fair and democratic. Both the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe listed numerous violations committed during the presidential elections. These included employment of state officials (the militia, teachers, civil servants, and hospital staff) in pro-Kuchma campaigns, biased pro-Kuchma media (especially state television); and a failure to follow election procedures according to the law. A leading left-wing populist, Natalya Vitrenko, leader of the Progressive Socialists, narrowly survived an apparent assassination attempt. Moderate left-winger Moroz, whom Kuchma most feared to face in the second round, was the target of a large disinformation and obstructionist campaign. Regardless of these violations, international observers did not believe that the final outcome would have been different had conditions been more fair.

The combined left vote in the parliamentary elections on March 29, 1998 remained 40 per cent, the same as it had been in the 1994 parliamentary elections. While labeling the vote generally free and fair, international monitoring groups from the OSCE and the Council of Europe cited some cases that had marred the election campaign. Voting took place under an electoral system, adopted in 1997, in which half the seats were decided by proportional representation according to national party lists and half were allocated in single-mandate constituencies. Turnout was reported at 70 percent.

In summer 1998, after months of deadlock, the Rada (parliament) elected Tkachenko, a leading member of the anti-reform Peasants Party, as parliamentary chairman. Tkachenko has used his position to halt economic and political reforms and called for Ukraine to change its foreign policy orientation away from the West, towards the Russian-Belarusian union. By summer 1999 the balance of political forces in the Rada was 175 from 4 left-wing factions plus 17 from Hromada. Reformist forces in the Rada could count upon 151 pro-Kuchma centrist factions and 89 from anti-Kuchma centrist and center-right groups, such as Rukh. Between 1998 and 1999 the overall balance of forces gradually shifted away from the left, and in the aftermath of the presidential elections a center/center-right pro-reform majority emerged of 250 deputies that will attempt to remove Tkachenko from his position.

In other issues, the International Monetary Fund suspended further financial assistance until after the presidential elections and the formation of a new reformist government. Industrial production grew in 1999, and Ukraine could record its first year of Gross Domestic Product growth in 2000. After being reelected Kuchma promised to reinvigorate his reform program and hold a referendum on changing the constitution to grant him additional economic powers, which had ended in June 1999, and reform the Rada into a bicameral parliament. Since December 1998, former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko has been awaiting his application for asylum in the United States, accused of money laundering and corruption, through 1999-2000.

Ukraine declared independence from a crumbling Soviet Union in 1991, when Leonid Kravchuk was elected president. In the summer 1994 presidential race, Kravchuk lost to Kuchma, an industrialist and former prime minister, in a runoff. After the president warned that he would call for a popular referendum, parliament voted in favor of the constitution in June 1996.

Ukraine's parliament ratified the May 1997 Russian-Ukrainian treaty in February 1998, and the lower and upper houses of the Russian parliament followed suit in December 1998 and February 1999. The Black Sea Fleet question was resolved with the signing of three agreements that lease it three out of five bays in Sevastopol until 2017; another 17 agreements await signing. The Crimean question was resolved with the adoption of the first nonseparatist constitution in October 1998, ratified and put into operation by the Rada in December.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Ukrainians can change their government democratically. Presidential and parliamentary elections in 1994 and parliamentary elections in 1998 were deemed generally "free and fair" by international observers, though there were reports of irregularities and preelection intimidation as well as violence directed at democratic organizations and activists. Changes in the electoral law adopted in 1997 instituted a mixed system in which 50 percent of candidates were elected by majority vote and 50 by proportional representation. International observers reported that the 1999 presidential elections were not held in a fair and free manner. The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly decided to not suspend Ukraine after the constitutional court ruled on December 30 that the death penalty is unconstitutional. The CE also welcomed the Ukrainian parliament's ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

A 1991 press law purports to protect freedom of speech and the press, but it only covers print media. The constitution, the Law on Information (1992), and the Television and Radio Broadcasting Law (1994) protect freedom of speech, but there are laws banning attacks on the president's "honor and dignity." There are more than 5,000 Ukrainian- and Russian-language newspapers, periodicals, and journals, although most Ukrainians obtain their news from television. Privately owned broadcasters include 1+1. Inter (formerly state television channel 3) and the former independent television station STB are now controlled by pro-Kuchma groups. There are 25 regional and two national state-owned television and radio stations. From 1997 to 1999 pro-Lazarenko/Hromada newspapers were either closed or bought out by pro-Kuchma oligarchs. Mykhailo Brodsky, owner of the antigovernment *Kievskiy Vedomosti*, was arrested in March 1998 and charged with illegal property deals. In 1999 the newspaper was taken over by Hryhorii Surkis, a leading businessman and member of the pro-Kuchma United Social Democrats.

The previously outlawed Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox churches are now legal, but conflicts continue over church property and personalities, such as Patriarch Filaret, head of one of the autocephalous churches. Of the three Ukrainian Orthodox churches, two autocephalous and the third and largest, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, still owe their allegiance to the Moscow patriarch. Calls to unite all 3 Orthodox Churches are regularly made by government officials and parties, but little progress will be made until Filaret is no longer Patriarch. Ukraine's estimated 600,000 Jews have more than 300 organizations divided between two bodies that main-

tain schools and social services. The large Russian and smaller Hungarian, Polish and Romanian minorities enjoy full rights and protections.

Freedom of assembly is generally respected, but organizations must apply for permission to their respective local administration at least ten days before a planned event or demonstration, of which there were several in Kiev in 1999.

There are 90 national political parties representing the political spectrum from far-left to far-right; the largest of these remain the Communists. In 1999 Viacheslav Chornovil, leader of Rukh and a former dissident, died in what some believe was a suspicious car accident. Rukh then went on to divide itself into conservative and radical wings. Thirty parties and blocs contested the March 1998 parliamentary elections. There are some 4,000 registered nongovernmental organizations in Ukraine, including cultural, women's, sports, human rights, environmental, and public policy organizations. The Federation of Trade Unions, a successor to the Soviet-era federation, claims 20 million members. The National Confederation of Trade Unions has three million members and includes some independent trade unions.

The judiciary remains subject to political interference. The courts are organized on three levels: *rayon* (district) courts, *oblast* (regional) courts, and the supreme court. Parliament, the president, and the congress of judges each appoint six of the constitutional court's 18 members for nine-year terms. Judges are appointed by the president for an initial five-year term, after which they are subject to parliamentary approval for lifetime tenure.

Freedom of movement within the country is not restricted by law. However, regulations impose a nationwide requirement to register at the workplace and place of residence in order to be eligible for social benefits, thereby complicating freedom of movement by limiting access to certain social benefits to the place where one is registered.

Property rights are formally guaranteed by the constitution and the property laws. Land reform is still in the preliminary stages. Though, under law, citizens have the right to form businesses, these rights are hindered by taxation policies, overregulation, and growing crime and corruption. Fifty percent of the GDP is believed to be generated by the "shadow economy" that operates outside business and tax regulations.

Women are well represented in education, in government, and in the professional classes, and there are numerous NGOs that focus on women's issues such as domestic violence. Women remain underrepresented in the Rada.

United Arab Emirates

Polity: Federation of traditional monarchies
Economy: Capitalist-statist

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 2,800,000

PPP: \$19,115

Life Expectancy: 74

Ethnic Groups: South Asian (50 percent), Arab and Iranian (42 percent), other (8 percent)

Capital: Abu Dhabi



Overview:

A 1999 United Nations development report placed the United Arab Emirates among the world's top performers in terms of quality of life as measured by real income, life expectancy, and educational standards. Although its economy is largely dependent on oil revenues, the UAE has weathered oil price fluctuations better than its neighbors because of its massive holdings of liquid assets overseas. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi has led the transformation of the UAE from an impoverished region of small desert principalities into a modern, wealthy state. In doing so, he has maintained the country's Islamic traditions while promoting tolerance of the numerous other religions and nationalities within its borders. He has also worked tirelessly to protect the country's independence and cohesion in the face of perceived threats from outside.

The seven emirates that constitute the United Arab Emirates formed a unified federation after gaining independence from Britain in 1971. Under the 1971 provisional constitution, the emirate rulers make up the Federal Supreme Council, the highest legislative and executive body. The council elects a state president and vice president from among its membership, and the president appoints the prime minister and cabinet. A 40-member Federal National Council, composed of delegates appointed by the seven rulers, serves as an advisory body with no legislative authority. While there are separate consultative councils in several emirates, there are no political parties or popular elections.

Sheikh Zayed has served as president since independence and is considered largely responsible for the country's unification, development, and economic success. The UAE has a free market economy based on oil and gas production, trade, and services. The economy provides citizens with a high per capita income but is heavily dependent on foreign workers, who constitute some 80 percent of the population.

The UAE has maintained a generally pro-Western foreign policy since the Persian Gulf War and continues to cooperate militarily with the United States, Britain, and France. Tensions arose in relations with Saudi Arabia in 1999 as the latter improved political and economic ties with Iran. Iran and the UAE have been locked in a dispute since 1992 over three islands, located near the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran controls in defiance of UAE claims to the territory. Furthermore, the UAE regards its powerful neighbor's perceived intentions of Gulf supremacy as a threat, and has responded with steep increases in defense spending.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of the UAE cannot change their government democratically. There are no elections at any level, political parties are illegal, the Federal Supreme Council holds all executive and legislative authority. The seven emirate rulers, their extended families, and their allies wield political control in their respective emirates. Citizens may voice concerns to their leaders through open *majlises* (gatherings) held by the emirate rulers.

The judiciary is not independent; its decisions are subject to review by the political leadership. The judicial system comprises both Sharia (Islamic) and secular courts. There are no jury trials, but due process protections exist in both religious and secular courts. Military courts try only military personnel, and there is no separate state security court system. Sharia allows for corporal punishment for such crimes as adultery, prostitution, or drug/alcohol abuse. Drug trafficking has been a capital offense since 1995, though executions are rarely reported. Police may enter homes without warrants or probable cause, but their actions are subject to review and disciplinary action.

Journalists routinely censor themselves when reporting on government policy, national security, and religion, and refrain from criticizing the ruling families. The information minister, a son of Sheikh Zayed, was quoted in November as telling the media to "criticize freely," though there is no evidence that journalists complied. The print media are largely privately owned but receive government subsidies. Foreign publications are censored before distribution. Broadcast media are government-owned and present only government views. Satellite dishes are widely owned and provide foreign broadcasting without censorship. Human Rights Watch called the UAE "the most wired state in the Arab world," with some 143,000 Internet users. However, the UAE has also been the regional leader in advocating restricting access to the World Wide Web through technology.

The government restricts freedom of assembly and association. Permits are required for organized public gatherings. Political discussions are generally confined to gatherings in private homes and are tolerated by officials. Private associations must be licensed, but enforcement varies among emirates.

Islam is the official religion of the UAE. About 85 percent of its citizens are Sunnis, and the remaining 15 percent Shias. About 95 percent of Sunni mosques are government funded or subsidized. Shias are free to worship and to maintain mosques. The Federal Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs distributes weekly guidance to both Sunni and Shiite Sheikhs regarding religious sermons and ensures that sermons do not deviate frequently or significantly from approved topics. A limited number of Christian groups are granted legal recognition. Non-Muslims may practice freely but may not proselytize or distribute religious literature.

Women are well represented in education, government, and in the professions, but face discrimination in benefits and promotion. There are numerous NGOs that focus on women's issues such as domestic violence. Islamic law discriminates against women in family matters such as divorce and inheritance, and tradition keeps many women from working. A married woman must have her husband's consent to accept employment or to travel abroad.

Foreign nationals brought into the UAE sometimes fall prey to abuse by managers who take most of their earnings and force them to work long hours in extreme heat or other dangerous conditions. Labor law offers some protection, but most abuse goes unreported. Unions, strikes, and collective bargaining are illegal and do not occur.

United Kingdom

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Political Rights: 1

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free

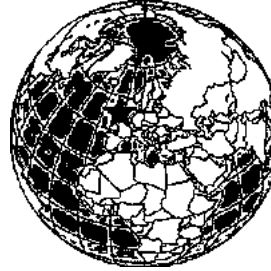
Population: 59,400,000

PPP: \$20,730

Life Expectancy: 77

Ethnic Groups: English (81.5 percent), Scottish (9.6 percent), Irish (2.4 percent), Welsh (1.9 percent), Ulster (1.8 percent), other, including West Indian, Indian, and Pakistani (2.8 percent)

Capital: London



Overview:

In 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the Labour Party presided over a remapping of the British political landscape, highlighted by the implementation of a Northern Ireland peace agreement and the devolution of legislative powers to Scotland and Wales. As part of his overall agenda to reinvent and modernize Britain's traditional political system, Blair all but dissolved one segment of the House of Lords, dismissing most hereditary peers from the chamber. His government commands a 179-seat majority in parliament and enjoys the highest popularity rating in British history. With the opposition Conservative Party in disarray, the government has room to implement its political agenda. However, allegations of corruption have tainted numerous Labour politicians, including some close to the prime minister.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encompasses the two formerly separate kingdoms of England and Scotland, the ancient principality of Wales, and the six counties of the Irish province of Ulster (see Northern Ireland under Related Territories). The British parliament has an elected House of Commons with 659 members chosen by plurality vote from single-member districts and a House of Lords with 478 hereditary and appointed members. A cabinet of ministers appointed from the majority party exercises executive power on behalf of the mainly ceremonial sovereign. Queen Elizabeth II nominates the party leader with the most support in the House of Commons to form a government.

Blair's "New Labour," so called because of its radical shift from its socialist past, adopted Conservative-style positions on a number of issues and swept general elections in May 1997. The government continues to define itself as it goes along by blending traditional Labour and Conservative policies. Since taking office, Labour has abandoned tax-and-spend policies, devolved monetary policy to the Bank of England, and imposed strict spending limits. But it has also reintroduced the minimum wage and restored rights to trade unions.

With his sizable parliamentary majority, Blair has successfully pushed through a number of reforms. Devolution of power to Scotland and Wales took place in May 1999, with both territories establishing their own legislatures. The 129-member Scottish parliament and the 60-member Welsh assembly exercise control over transportation, health, education, and housing, while foreign, defense, and economic policies

remain under British parliamentary control. The Labour Party dominated parliamentary elections in both territories. In November, the government carried through with a sweeping reform measure for the House of Lords. Of the 1,144 members, 666 hereditary peers lost their sitting. Some 500 life peers, along with 92 remaining hereditaries, will remain until further reform of the 800-year-old chamber, which wields no significant political power but does act as a tempering influence on the House of Commons. In March 1998, the government announced the creation of a mayoral seat and a 25-member assembly for London. Elections are scheduled for 2000.

Prime Minister Blair continued to make overtures to left-wing Tories to join his pro-European Union "Britain in Europe" campaign. Regarding the European Monetary Union (EMU), the government still rules out joining the single currency during the current parliamentary term, which very likely precludes a referendum until 2002.

On December 1 1999, the new 108-member Northern Ireland Assembly, based in Belfast, was officially handed power by the British parliament, ending 27 years of direct rule from London and ushering in a new era of Protestant-Catholic relations in Northern Ireland. The inauguration of a shared-power arrangement between the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), stems from the Good Friday Agreement of April 10, 1998. Central to the Ulster Unionists acceptance of the power-sharing arrangement was the IRA's promise to agree to a timetable for decommissioning its arms. The assembly, elected by proportional representation, establishes a north-south ministerial council to consult on matters of mutual concern to Ireland and Northern Ireland and establishes a British-Irish council of British, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish, and Welsh representatives to discuss particular policy issues.

Allegations of financial and political misconduct have multiplied since Labour's election. Peter Mandelson, the trade and industry secretary and chief Blair ally, resigned in late 1998 after it was revealed that he had accepted a \$373,000 loan from Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson. At the time of the disclosure, Robinson was under investigation by Mandelson's office for corruption. Robinson also resigned. The affair forced the resignation in January of Press Secretary Charlie Whelan, amid accusations that he leaked news of the loan. However, allegations of impropriety have apparently not taken a toll on Blair's popularity; in the fall he was enjoying the highest approval ratings of any British prime minister in history.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of the United Kingdom can change their government democratically. Voters are registered by government survey and include both Irish and Commonwealth (former British Empire) citizens resident in Britain. British subjects abroad retain voting rights for 20 years after emigration. Welsh and Scottish legislatures have authority over matters of regional importance such as education, health, and some economic matters. The Scottish parliament has limited power to raise taxes.

In November 1999, when the government dismissed 666 hereditary peers from the House of Lords, critics charged that Lords reform should have begun with arrangements for a partial election, lest a government pack the house with cronies. Hereditary peers had constituted more than half the members of the Lords; the balance are government appointees.

Britain does not have a written constitution, and civil libertarians have criticized

legal attempts to combat crime and terrorism as dangerous to basic freedoms. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which is renewed every two years, suspects may be detained without charge or legal representation for up to seven days. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 allows a jury to infer guilt from a defendant's silence. In the wake of a bombing that killed 28 people in Omagh, Northern Ireland, in August 1998, the government called an emergency session of parliament to pass the toughest antiterror laws in British history. The laws make it possible to jail suspected terrorists on the word of a senior police officer and allow security forces to seize the property and money of known terrorists. In November 1999, Home Secretary Jack Straw announced a set of proposals to "modernize and make permanent" the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Included in the proposals was a move to broaden the definition of terrorism, which could implicate those who propose the political use of violence. Civil rights leaders decried the new proposals, fearing they would curtail legitimate political activity. The new bill will also grant wider powers to police, enabling them to seize assets in drug smuggling cases.

In November, the government passed the Human Rights Act of 1998, incorporating articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into British law. The act compels all public bodies to act in accordance with the convention and allows British citizens to take alleged violations of the convention to British courts. In September 1999, the ministry of defense suspended further action against homosexuals serving in the armed forces after the European Court of Human Rights ruled the British ban on gays in the military unlawful.

In April 1999, 78-year-old Anthony Sawoniuk, a naturalized British citizen, was sentenced to two life prison terms for his role in the killing of 18 Jews in a Polish town in 1942. Sawoniuk was the first person tried in Britain under its 1991 War Crimes Act. In October, a London court moved to extradite General Augusto Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile, to Spain, where he faces charges of torture, murder, and other human rights violations. The high court in London set March, 2000, as the start date for Pinochet's appeal process.

A government report issued in February 1999 found London's police force "riven with pernicious and institutionalized racism." The findings stem from complaints of police harassment of blacks and the specific case of Stephen Lawrence, an 18-year-old black man stabbed to death in 1993 by a group of white youths. The inquiry into the crime was said to have been mismanaged by the police. The report recommends setting recruitment targets for black and Asian officers and extending the 1976 Race Relation Act to the police and other public bodies, thereby opening up the police force to greater public scrutiny.

Though uncensored and mostly private, the British press is subject to strict libel and obscenity laws. Print media are privately owned and independent, though many of the national daily newspapers are aligned with political parties. The BBC runs about half the electronic media in the country. It is funded by the government, but editorially independent. In March 1999, Britain's Independent Television Commission (ITC) ordered MED TV, a London-based Kurdish-language channel, to cease broadcasting for 21 days for issuing calls for violence in Turkey. MED TV is the world's only Kurdish-language TV station, watched by thousands in eastern Turkey. In April, MED TV's license was revoked by the ITC. In May, authorities in London shut down a Web site containing names of more than 100 secret intelligence operatives, posted by a former MI6 agent.

In May 1999, the government introduced a draft Freedom of Information bill, allowing public access to a wide range of information previously denied, including police data. Several exclusionary clauses were attached to the bill, including information regarding national security, defense, international resolutions, safety of the individual and the public, commercial interests, and law enforcement.

British workers are free to form and join independent trade unions. A 1998 Fairness at Work bill proposes to boost worker rights and improve union recognition. It includes improvements in both maternity and sick leave, provisions for equality between part-time and full-time workers, and higher rewards for unfair dismissal. It also grants unions automatic recognition where 50 percent of workers in a workplace are union members or if 40 percent of workers support recognition.

A national minimum wage policy was introduced in April 1999, establishing a graduated pay scale based on age.

Criticism of British immigration policy continued in 1999. In June, human rights and refugee groups criticized the new British Immigration and Asylum Bill, claiming the new law will increase poverty among foreigners in Britain. Specifically criticized was a proposal in the bill to replace benefits with food vouchers. The vouchers, good only in certain stores, will not allow for bargain shopping, critics charge.

United States of America

Polity: Federal presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 272,500,000

PPP: \$29,010

Life Expectancy: 77

Ethnic Groups: White (73 percent), black (13 percent), Hispanic (10 percent), Asian-Pacific (3 percent), native American (1 percent)

Capital: Washington, D.C.

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free



Overview:

After having been impeached by a vote of the House of Representatives in December 1998, President Bill Clinton managed to retain his office by a vote of the Senate in January.

Clinton had been impeached on two counts brought against him because of his involvement in a sex scandal involving a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky: first, for lying before a grand jury about the affair and, second, for obstruction of justice in subsequent attempts to investigate the matter.

Although the Clinton presidency survived, the president was clearly weakened by the year-long crisis triggered by the Lewinsky affair. In the absence of major legislative initiatives and elections of national significance, the year was dominated by preliminary skirmishing over the presidential nominations of the two major parties, Democrat and Republican, for the presidential election in year 2000. The Democratic front-runner, Vice President Al Gore, faced a serious challenge from former Senator Bill

Bradley. In the Republican Party, the early lead was assumed by George W. Bush, the governor of Texas and son of former President George Bush. Bush, however, was given a strong challenge by Senator John McCain, a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War.

The U.S. federal government has three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. In addition, the American federal system gives substantial powers to state and local governments and the citizenry.

The president and vice president are elected by popular vote to four-year terms. The technical device for the election of a president is the electoral college. The voters in each state and Washington, D.C., cast their ballots for slates of electors who, in turn, cast ballots in the electoral college for the candidate who received the most votes in their particular state. In 1996, the ticket of incumbent President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore won 379 electoral votes to 159 for the Republican ticket of Bob Dole and his running mate Jack Kemp. In the popular vote, the Clinton ticket received 49 percent, with Dole at 42 percent.

The U.S. Congress is bicameral. There are 435 members of the House of Representatives as well as non-voting members from Washington, D.C., and several related territories. Each state is guaranteed at least one representative in the House. The rest are apportioned on the basis of population. In the 1998 mid-term elections, Republicans continued their domination of the House by winning 223 seats to 211 for the Democrats, with 1 independent. This result represented a net gain of 5 seats for the Democrats. The 100-member Senate has two members from each state, regardless of population. Each senator serves a six-year term. In the mid-term election, Republicans won 55 Senate seats; the Democrats won 45 seats.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Americans can change their government democratically. Voter turnout has been relatively low in recent years; in the 1998 midterm elections, voter turnout stood at just 36 percent of the voting-age population, the lowest level since 1942. Elections are competitive, but congressional incumbents win in a majority of cases. In recent years, the cost of political campaigns has risen substantially. Much of a candidate's time is consumed with fund-raising, and while Congress has periodically passed laws imposing limitations on political contributions, candidates have found ways to circumvent the spirit of the laws, and court decisions have limited their effectiveness. Indeed, both Bill Bradley and John McCain made reform of the election finance system a priority in their early campaigning for the presidency. Some critics have argued that generous contributions by business, labor unions, and other "special interests" have made it practically impossible for candidates to dislodge incumbents. Recent elections, however, have tended to weaken the thrust of that argument. In the 1994 midterm election, Republican challengers ousted a substantial number of Democratic incumbents, and in the 1998 elections, Democratic challengers defeated a significant number of sitting Republicans.

The American political system is overwhelmingly dominated by the two major parties. Various insurgent parties of the Left and Right have issued periodic challenges through the years, with little success. The most recent effort was spearheaded by Ross Perot, a Texas billionaire who sought the presidency on the Citizens Party line in both 1992 and 1996. In 1998, Jesse Ventura, a former professional wrestler, was elected governor of Minnesota on the Reform Party line. In 2000, the Reform Party is expected to nominate a candidate for president, possibly Patrick Buchanan, a former Republi-

can who advocates trade protectionism, immigration curbs, and opposition to American intervention in foreign conflicts. Nevertheless, at present, the party does not pose a significant challenge to the dominant position of the Republicans and Democrats.

The two major parties choose their presidential candidates through a lengthy and expensive process during the winter and spring of election years. Party members vote for their preferred candidates either in primary elections or in local meetings of party members, called caucuses. The nominating process has been criticized for its cost and length, and for the sometimes undue influence of unrepresentative minority factions. Defenders of the system claim that allowing rank-and-file party members to participate in the nominating process is more democratic than is the case in other countries where a small group of party leaders select the nominee.

A recent trend has been the increased use of initiative and referendum to determine issues of public policy. Some states, California most notably, permit public initiatives on almost any issue of public concern; in other states, strict limits are placed on the practice. In recent years, voters in various states have decided on such issues as whether to impose restrictions on illegal immigrants, the legality of assisted suicide, the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes, affirmative action for women and minorities, and casino gambling.

The American media are free and competitive. Some observers have expressed concern over the trend towards the ownership of the largest and most influential newspapers, magazines, and television networks by large corporate conglomerates. Another worrying trend is the enhanced role of television, where news is covered in a superficial and sensationalistic way, at the expense of newspapers. On the other hand, some point to the explosion of new, specialized journals as well as the Internet and public affairs programming on cable television in arguing that Americans have suffered no loss of alternative viewpoints or in-depth coverage of public issues.

Public and private discussion are very open in the United States. In recent years, concern has been expressed over the adoption by many universities of restrictive codes designed to prohibit speech that is deemed insulting to women, racial minorities, and homosexuals. Several of these codes have been struck down by the courts, but many remain in place, and are said to have a chilling effect on academic freedom.

The American court system has long been a subject of controversy. Some critics accuse judges of being overly "activist" by issuing rulings on issues which, critics contend, should be resolved through the legislative process. More recently, the courts have been at the center of controversial lawsuits which seek millions of dollars in damages from tobacco firms and handgun manufacturers. Some fear that such actions could establish a trend towards social regulation through lawsuit rather than by acts of Congress or state legislatures.

The past year has seen the continuation of a trend towards the decrease in crime throughout the country. Instances of violent crime are at their lowest level in years, especially in major cities like New York. The reason for the decrease is a source of debate, though some credit is given new strategies of zero-tolerance law enforcement adopted in a number of cities. These tactics, in turn, have elicited the criticism of civil liberties organizations, which claim that police abuse of civilians is on the increase. In February a major controversy was ignited by the shooting death at the hands of four New York city police officers of an unarmed African immigrant, Amadou Diallo. The incident provoked weeks of protest demonstrations in New York, and led to charges

that the police in many cities were practicing "racial profiling"—that is, singling out black or Hispanic civilians for arrest or questioning. These charges led the federal government to intervene in the state of New Jersey to ensure that racial profiling practices were eliminated in the state police force.

While crime continues to decline, Americans were increasingly concerned about episodes of violence in the schools. The country was shocked when two students at Columbine High School in Colorado opened fire with semiautomatic weapons and killed 12 fellow students and a teacher. Such incidents have led many schools to adopt "zero tolerance" policies under which students are suspended from school for what many consider to be minor infractions.

The U.S. has freedom of association. Trade unions are free, but have been in decline for some years and today represent the lowest percentage of American workers in the postwar period.

The American economy enjoyed one of its strongest years of the past half-century in 1999, with an official unemployment rate under 4.5 percent and one of the world's lowest rates of inflation. More so than in most other countries, the U.S. economy is well integrated in the world economy. The Clinton administration has strongly supported free trade and the further integration of the American economy into the world trading system. The administration, however, suffered a setback when protests and riots disrupted the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle.

There is religious freedom in America. A persisting controversy involves the separation of church and state, in particular regarding whether federal money can be given to organizations or projects sponsored by religious groups. Although the courts have generally ruled in favor of strict separation of church and state, the Supreme Court in 1998 let stand a lower court decision which allowed students who attended church-sponsored schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to receive government tuition assistance.

Race relations remained one of America's most serious problems. African-Americans remain disproportionately poor, less likely to complete high school or college, more likely to have out-of-wedlock births, and more likely to suffer major health problems than other groups. Although a substantial degree of integration has been achieved in a number of American institutions, residential segregation is still high as is the tendency of blacks and Hispanics to predominate in the public schools of major cities. Blacks did, however, benefit from the high growth and low unemployment which characterized the economy in 1998.

Affirmative action programs remained a source of friction. In recent years, affirmative action plans which give advantages to minority groups or women have suffered reversals through referenda and court decisions. As an alternative to traditional affirmative action plans, two states, Florida and Texas, have adopted schemes to give a specified percentage of top high school graduates automatic admission to state universities. Some predict that such plans may be expanded in the future in an attempt to replace policies based solely on race or gender.

America continued to permit high levels of legal immigration. At the same time, the U.S. has beefed up its patrols at the border with Mexico in an attempt to stem the flood of illegal immigrants. One result has been an increased number of clashes between the border patrol and illegal immigrants. The U.S. has also adopted stricter criteria for the approval of political asylum, and has raised concerns over the incarceration of some asylum seekers in prisons with regular criminals.

American women have made significant gains in recent years, and have benefited from affirmative action laws, anti-discrimination measures, and judicial decisions which have penalized corporations millions of dollars in discrimination cases.

American Indians continued to suffer disproportionately from poverty and social problems such as alcoholism. In recent years, some Indian reservations have experienced some economic progress through the development of gambling casinos on Indian property. But many have expressed doubts that casino gambling will lead to broad economic development for the majority of impoverished Indians.

Uruguay

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 3,400,000

PPP: \$9,200

Life Expectancy: 74

Ethnic Groups: European (88 percent), mestizo (8 percent), black and mulatto (4 percent)

Capital: Montevideo

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free



Overview:

Faced with dismal economic prospects and a choice between presidential candidates representing the moderate right and an eclectic left, in 1999 Uruguayans elected as their president conservative, five-time Colorado Party candidate Jorge Batlle, with 52 percent of the vote. Tabare Vasquez, a moderate socialist medical doctor and his renewed leftist coalition eliminated Uruguay's other traditional party, the National Party, from contention in the first round and went on to win 44 percent in the second round of voting held in November. By establishing itself as the single largest political force in the country, taking the largest portion of congressional seats and winning the most votes ever, the election constituted a serious challenge by the Uruguayan left to the country's traditional, but ailing, two-party system.

After gaining independence from Spain, the Oriental Republic of Uruguay was established in 1830. The Colorado Party dominated a relatively democratic political system throughout the 1960s. The 1967 constitution established a bicameral congress consisting of a 99-member chamber of deputies and a 31-member senate, with every member serving a five-year term. The president is also directly elected for a five-year term.

An economic crisis, social unrest, and the activities of the Tupamaro urban guerrilla movement led to a right-wing military takeover in 1973, even though the Tupamaros had been largely crushed a year earlier. During the period of military rule, Uruguay had the largest number of political prisoners per capita in the world and was known as "the torture chamber of Latin America." Civilian rule was restored through negotiations between the regime and civilian politicians. Julio Sanguinetti won the presidential elections in 1984. In 1989 Luis Alberto Lacalle of the centrist National Party was elected

president. His popularity plummeted, however, as he attempted to liberalize one of Latin America's most statist economies.

In the 1994 campaign, Sanguinetti ran as a social democrat. The two other main contenders were the leftist Broad Front's Vasquez, who was the popular mayor of Montevideo, and the National Party's Alberto Volante. The 1994 election was the closest ever. The Colorado Party won 31.4 percent of the vote; the National Party, 30.2 percent; and the Broad Front, 30 percent.

Sanguinetti took office in March 1995 and enjoyed considerable congressional support, in part as a result of the inclusion of numerous National Party members in his cabinet. He won legislative support for an austerity package that partially dismantled the country's welfare state. A series of labor stoppages and a sharp decline in Sanguinetti's popularity followed.

In 1998 the National Party was wracked by mutual accusations of corruption, mostly dating from the time of the Lacalle government. In 1999, public safety and unemployment levels of more than 11 percent continued to be primary concerns. On October 31, Vazquez won 39 percent of the vote against Batlle's 31.7, in the first round of the presidential contest. The elections also turned the Broad Front into the leading force in congress. Just three weeks before the final round of voting, the chief of the Uruguayan army, General Fernan Amado, warned that human rights violations committed during the previous dictatorship were "a closed chapter." The National Party backed Batlle, a 72-year-old senator, whose father and great-uncle had been respected Colorado Party presidents, in the second election contest.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Uruguay can change their government democratically. In 1999, for the first time, Uruguayan parties selected a single presidential candidate in open primary elections. Previously the parties had fielded a number of candidates, and the candidates with the most votes had then accumulated the votes cast for the others. Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression, freedom of religion, and the right to form political parties, labor unions and civic organizations are generally respected. The former Tupamaro guerrillas now participate in the system as part of the Broad Front. In 1999, the commander of the Uruguayan army repeated earlier warnings to political sectors, mostly on the left, who have insisted on investigating the fate of "disappeared" guerrillas and other dissidents presumed to have been secretly killed by the armed forces. Uruguayans of all political tendencies pride themselves on their refusal to make a public issue of the private lives of public officials.

The judiciary is relatively independent, but has become increasingly inefficient in the face of escalating crime, particularly street violence and organized crime. The court system is severely backlogged, and prisoners often spend more time in jail than they would were they to serve the maximum sentence for their alleged crime. Allegations of police mistreatment, particularly of youthful offenders, have increased; however prosecutions of such acts are also occurring more frequently. Prison conditions do not meet international standards.

In 1991, a decision by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States ruled that the 1985 law that granted the military amnesty from rights violations during the years of dictatorship violated key provisions of the American Convention on Human Rights. (During Sanguinetti's first government

[1985-1990], a military commission he appointed cleared the armed forces of responsibility for hundreds of brutal detentions and the disappearances of more than 150 Uruguayans at home or in neighboring countries.) Sanguinetti has remained steadfast in refusing to accede to further investigations of the issue.

The press is privately owned, and broadcasting is both commercial and public. Numerous daily newspapers publish, many associated with political parties; there are also a number of weeklies. In 1996 a number of publications ceased production because of a government suspension of tax exemptions on the import of newsprint. In addition, a June 1996 decree requires government authorization to import newsprint.

Civic organizations have proliferated since the return of civilian rule. Numerous women's rights groups focus on violence against women, societal discrimination and other problems. The small black minority continues to face discrimination. Uruguay's continuing economic crisis has forced thousands of formerly middle-class citizens to join rural migrants in the shantytowns ringing Montevideo.

Workers exercise their right to join unions, bargain collectively, and hold strikes. Unions are well organized and politically powerful. Strikes are sometimes marked by violent clashes and sabotage.

↓ Uzbekistan

Polity: Dominant party presidential dictatorship
Economy: Statist
Population: 24,400,000
PPP: \$2,529
Life Expectancy: 69
Ethnic Groups: Uzbek (80 percent), Russian (5.5 percent), Tajik (5 percent), Kazakh (3 percent), other (6.5 percent)
Capital: Tashkent

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Trend Arrow: Uzbekistan receives a downward trend arrow due to increasing government repression of religious groups and political opponents, including widespread arrests following a series of bomb attacks in Tashkent in February.

Overview:

In February 1999, a series of bombings in Tashkent provided President Islam Karimov with an opportunity to use the threat of religious extremism as a pretext to increase repression of his political opponents. Although no group claimed responsibility, the government, which blamed Islamic militants for the attacks, initiated a wave of mass arrests and subsequent trials targeting religious Muslims and critics of the regime. December's parliamentary elections, in which the ruling party captured the most votes, was strongly criticized by international observers for the absence of genuine opposition candidates and other irregularities.

Located along the ancient trade route of the famous Silk Road, Uzbekistan was conquered by Genghis Khan and Tamerlane in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By the late 19th century, the territory had become part of the Russian Empire. The

Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1925, and its eastern ethnic Tajik region was detached and made a separate Soviet republic five years later.

On December 29, 1991, the country's independence was endorsed in a popular referendum by more than 98 percent of the electorate. In a parallel vote, Islam Karimov, former Communist Party leader and chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the successor to the Communist Party, was elected president with a reported 88 percent of the vote. His rival, prominent poet and chairman of the democratic *Erk* (Freedom) Party, Mohammed Solih, officially received 12 percent. However, Erk members charged election fraud, claiming that Solih actually received over 50 percent. The largest opposition group, the nationalist *Birlik* (Unity) movement, was barred from contesting the election and later refused legal registration as a political party. The Islamic Renaissance Party and Islamic Adolat group were banned entirely. A February 1995 national referendum to extend Karimov's first term in office until the year 2000 was allegedly approved by 99 percent of the country's voters. In June 1996, Karimov resigned as PDP chairman.

Elections to the first post-Soviet legislature were held in three rounds in December 1994 and January 1995. The government curtailed all political opposition preceding the vote, and only pro-government parties were allowed to run. In late 1997, the government stepped up its efforts to eliminate religion as a potential source of political opposition after the murder of several policemen in the Fergana Valley, an area regarded as a center of militant Islam. The authorities arrested hundreds of alleged suspects, many of whom received long prison terms solely for their supposed affiliation with unofficial Muslim groups.

In February 1999, 15 people were killed and more than 100 injured when a series of car bombs exploded near government buildings in Tashkent. The Uzbek leadership called the blasts an assassination attempt on President Karimov carried out by Muslim extremists seeking to overthrow the secular state. Police subsequently arrested thousands of suspects, mostly members of various Islamic groups and political opposition organizations. Takhir Yuldash, leader of the unofficial Uzbekistan's Islamic Movement, and Mohammed Solih were accused of orchestrating the explosions. Both men, who remain in exile outside the country, denied any involvement in the blasts. Uzbek rebel leader Juma Namangoni was also alleged to have been behind the attacks. In a trial of 22 suspects accused of taking part in the bombings, 6 were sentenced to death and the other 16 received lengthy prison sentences. International human rights organizations criticized the widespread arrests and the trials as politically motivated attempts to silence opposition to the regime, particularly before upcoming parliamentary elections in December.

In August, two groups of armed militants crossed from Tajikistan into neighboring Kyrgyzstan, taking several villages hostage. Most of the rebels appeared to be part of a larger group of Uzbeks who had fled to neighboring Tajikistan to escape the government crackdown in February, as well as former members of demobilized military units of Tajikistan's United Tajik Opposition (UTO), which had fought against the government during Tajikistan's 1992-1997 civil war. As part of President Karimov's efforts to portray his country as the leader in Central Asia while reducing Russia's role in the region, Uzbekistan agreed to a request by the Kyrgyzstan government to assist in fighting the rebels, who released the last of their hostages in early October. However, Uzbekistan's superior military power heightened concerns among its neighbors about the country's long-term political and military objectives in the region.

Uzbekistan held its second post-independence parliamentary elections in two rounds on December 5 and December 19. Of the five parties which competed, all supported the president and differed little in their political platforms. The ruling People's Democratic Party captured 48 seats; Fidokorlar (Self Sacrifice Party), 24 seats; Vatan Tarrakiyati (Homeland Progress Party), 20 seats; Adolat (Justice and Social Democratic Party), 11 seats; and Milli Tiklanish (National Renaissance Party), 10 seats. The remaining seats went to candidates representing voters' initiative groups and local authorities. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) refused to send a full electoral observer mission, citing the failure of the campaign process to meet democratic standards, although a small team of the group's representatives were present during the election. According to the OSCE and other monitors, the vote was neither free nor fair. Among the irregularities cited were the interference of local governors in the nomination of candidates and the conduct of the elections, the lack of true opposition parties, and the suspiciously high voter turnout figure of over 90 percent.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Uzbekistan cannot change their government democratically. President Karimov and the executive branch dominate the legislature and judiciary, and the government severely represses all political opposition. The primary purpose of the 250-member rubber-stamp national legislature is to confirm decisions made by the executive branch. The 1994-1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections, in which only pro-government parties could participate, were neither free nor fair.

The government severely restricts freedom of speech and the press, allowing virtually no criticism of the authorities, particularly President Karimov. A provision of the country's media law, which holds journalists responsible for the accuracy of their reporting, potentially subjects them to criminal prosecution if state officials disagree with their news stories. Consequently, self-censorship among print and broadcast journalists is widespread. The majority of newspapers are state-owned, and the content of their programs is strictly controlled. Four state-run television channels dominate television broadcasting. The country's private broadcast media outlets avoid political issues, are generally local or regional in scope, and suffer from administrative and financial constraints. In February, President Karimov signed a decree for all Internet service providers to route their connections through one state-run server, allegedly to prevent the transmission of what the government considers to be "harmful information."

Although religious freedom is formally guaranteed by the constitution, the government intensified its crackdown during 1999 on religious groups, particularly Muslim organizations, not sanctioned by the state. The Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, adopted in May 1998, imposes strict registration criteria and severely restricts proselytizing, the teaching of religious subjects without official permission, and the wearing of religious garments in public. Revisions to the criminal code in May 1998 and May 1999 increased penalties for violating the religion law and other statutes on religious activities. According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, students have been expelled from universities for wearing traditional Muslim attire, such as beards and headscarves. Officially approved Muslim and Jewish communities, the Russian Orthodox Church, and some other Christian denominations face few serious restrictions on their activities.

Permits for public demonstrations, which must be approved by the government,

are not routinely granted. Although five political parties, all created by the government, are officially registered, no genuine opposition groups function legally or participate in the government. A 1997 law prohibits parties based on ethnic or religious lines and those advocating war or subversion of the constitutional order. Members of unregistered opposition groups, including Birlik and Erk, which were banned in 1993, are subject to harassment and discrimination or have gone into voluntary exile abroad.

The country's two leading human rights groups, the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU) and the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan (NOPCHU), have been denied registration repeatedly and have faced ongoing harassment by the authorities. The government registered one human rights nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Committee for Protection of Human Rights, in 1996, which had been formed with the support of the government.

Although a 1992 trade union law guarantees the right of workers to form and join unions, it does not mention the right to strike. The Council of the Federation of Trade Unions (CFTU), which is the successor to the Soviet-era confederation, is the country's sole trade union group and remains dependent on the state.

The judiciary is subservient to the president, who appoints all judges to ten-year terms and can remove them from office at any time. Police routinely physically abuse suspects, and arbitrary arrest and detention are common. Law enforcement authorities reportedly often plant narcotics or weapons on suspected members of Islamic groups or political opponents to justify their arrest. Prisons suffer from severe overcrowding and shortages of food and medicine.

There are no significant restrictions on freedom of movement, emigration, and choice of residence. Property rights are guaranteed by the constitution and a decree on private property. However, widespread corruption and the slow pace of economic reforms limit most citizens' equality of opportunity. Women's educational and professional prospects are restricted by traditional cultural and religious norms.

Vanuatu

Polity: Parliamentary democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 200,000

PPP: \$3,480

Life Expectancy: 65

Ethnic Groups: Melanesian (94 percent), French (4 percent) other (2 percent)

Capital: Port Vila

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Free



Overview:

Presidential elections were held in March 1999, but no candidate obtained the two-thirds majority necessary to form a government. The government and opposition negotiated and

agreed on a candidate for a second poll on March 24, at which Donald Kalpokas was chosen prime minister. By mid-October, Prime Minister Kalpokas' government was threatened by a no-confidence vote. In late October, the Supreme Court dismissed an attempt by the Union of Moderate Parties to suspend 17 party members, including Deputy Prime Minister Willie Jimi, who had refused to resign from the coalition government. On November 25, Barak Tame Sope of the Melanesian Progressive Party replaced Kalpokas by winning 28 votes in the 52-seat parliament. The new government promised to reduce the power of department heads, to review the recruitment of foreign advisers, and to reconsider the value-added tax (VAT).

In April, Ombudsman Marie Noelle Ferrieux Patterson, who has waged many political battles against corruption and abuse of power, called for the dismissal of the minister of new business, Paul Telukluk, for allocating 15 land titles to himself and his extended family. When her five-year term expired and the government replaced her with Hannington Alatoa, Patterson complained that the government's decision was racist and alleged that Alatoa is not fully qualified for the post. In September, Alatoa had to answer charges of misappropriation of \$800 in government funds for a development loan and was acquitted in December.

A trial of 18 paramilitaries accused of staging a coup attempt in October 1996 opened in June 1999. They faced charges of holding officers and the state president captive during the attempted coup. The group said that they only wanted government payments for outstanding allowances. Vanuatu's first prime minister, Father Walter Lini, passed away following an illness.

Located in the southwestern Pacific, this predominantly Melanesian archipelago, formerly the New Hebrides, was an Anglo-French condominium until it became independent in 1980. The condominium agreement divided the islands into English- and French-speaking communities, creating rifts that continue today. In 1999, Prime Minister Donald Kalpokas called on all government ministries to use both English and French, the country's two official languages, in their work. In addition, the Teacher's Union endorsed a World Bank proposal to use vernacular teaching in the first two years of school as a way to promote multilingualism.

The first post-independence government, led by Prime Minister Father Walter Lini's anglophone Vanua'aku Pati (VP) party, largely excluded francophones from key posts. In 1991, a divided VP ousted Prime Minister Lini, who left to form the National United Party (NUP). This split the anglophone vote and allowed the francophone Union of Moderate Parties (UMP) to win a plurality in the December 1991 elections and form a government under Maxime Carlot.

At national legislative elections on November 30, 1995, a four-party opposition coalition headed by VP leader Donald Kalpokas won a plurality with 20 seats. The UMP, itself now divided, formed a coalition government with the NUP headed by Serge Vohor, the new UMP leader. In February 1996, Carlot formed a government that fell after seven months in the wake of a report by Ombudsman Patterson, implicating Carlot in a banking scandal. In May 1997, Vohor reunited the UMP and formed the fourth government since the 1995 elections. On November 27, President Jean Marie Leye dissolved parliament, citing continued instability and corruption allegations, and called for elections in March 1998, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in January 1998. Throughout 1998, Ombudsman Patterson exposed alleged corruption and mismanagement by senior government officials, including reports that several high-ranking politi-

cians had been involved in illegally selling passports to foreign nationals. Patterson issued a report in January charging the Vanuatu National Provident Fund, a national retirement scheme for workers, had improperly issued loans to leading politicians. The disclosure sparked protests on January 12 at the fund's headquarters in the capital, Port Vila, as investors tried to withdraw their savings, and quickly escalated into widespread rioting and looting. President Leye declared a nationwide two-week state of emergency, during which time the police questioned and arrested more than 500 people in connection with the riots.

The March 1998 parliamentary elections produced no clear majority. The VP and NUP formed a coalition government, and parliament elected VP's Kalpokas prime minister. The coalition lasted only seven months. Kalpokas ousted the NUP in October 1998, and a new coalition was formed with the opposition UMP. In December, the opposition's attempt to bring a no-confidence motion against Kalpokas was defeated.

As part of its Comprehensive Reform Program, which includes an overhaul of state administration and increased private sector development, the government began implementing plans to reduce the country's public service sector by about ten percent and enacted a strict leadership code of conduct. It also adopted legislation to establish a special unit to recover and manage more than \$25 million in debts for the Vanuatu National Provident Fund, the Development Bank of Vanuatu, and the National Bank of Vanuatu, which have been plagued by bad loans and political interference. The January 1998 riots and public loss of confidence forced the government to make large payments to members of these three financial institutions, bringing the country to near bankruptcy early in the year.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Citizens of Vanuatu can change their government democratically. The constitution vests executive power in a prime minister. The unicameral, 52-member parliament is directly elected for a four-year term. A largely ceremonial president is elected for a five-year term by an electoral college consisting of the 49 members of parliament and the six provincial council presidents. Although the 1998 national elections were regarded as generally free and fair, there were allegations of voting irregularities. In October, the Supreme Court ruled that a by-election for one seat would be held in January 1999 after a candidate's campaign workers were found breaching election laws by campaigning inside a polling station.

The government owns most of the country's media, including a television station serving the capital, two radio stations, and the *Vanuatu Weekly* newspaper. The smaller private press consists of a growing independent newspaper and political party newsletters. In November 1998, state-owned Television Blong Vanuatu announced that it would screen more locally produced program materials. In April 1999, the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation decided to allow pay television to commence service.

There were some setbacks in press freedom in 1998 although media coverage of politically sensitive issues has improved in recent years. In early 1998, Ombudsman Patterson alleged that the state-owned Radio Vanuatu's Bislama-language service, which is the main source of news outside the country's capital, was not broadcasting her findings of misconduct by government officials; the station resumed airing Patterson's remarks shortly thereafter. There were also allegations that former cabinet minister and parliament member Willie Jimmy had threatened Radio Vanuatu journalists.

Religious freedom is respected in this predominantly Christian country. Freedom of assembly and association is upheld. There are five active, independent trade unions operating under the umbrella of the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions, although more than 80 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and fishing. Unions can exercise their right to organize and bargain collectively.

Although the judicial system is generally independent, the government has, at times, attempted to pressure the largely expatriate judiciary in politically sensitive cases. After the arrest of some 500 suspected rioters in January 1998, there were credible reports that police assaulted or otherwise poorly treated prisoners. In 1999, the Ombudsman's Office said that jails failed to meet the minimum international standards and the constitutional rights of inmates are often violated.

The country's small ethnic-minority communities are discriminated in land ownership. Women have limited opportunities in education and politics. In 1999, Prime Minister Kalpokas urged employers to hire more women.

Venezuela

Polity: Presidential-legislative democracy

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 22,700,000

PPP: \$8,860

Life Expectancy: 73

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (67 percent), European (21 percent), black (10 percent), Indian (2 percent)

Capital: Caracas

Ratings Change: Venezuela's political rights changed from 2 to 4, its civil liberties rating from 3 to 4, and its status from Free to Partly Free, due to the decision of President Hugo Chavez, ratified in a national referendum, to abolish congress and the judiciary, and by his creation of a parallel government of military cronies.

Political Rights: 4*

Civil Liberties: 4*

Status: Partly Free



Overview:

Hugo Chavez, the coupist paratrooper-turned-politician who was elected president in a December 1998 landslide, spent most of 1999 dismantling Venezuela's political system of checks and balances, ostensibly to destroy a discredited two-party system that for four decades presided over several oil booms but has left four out of five Venezuelans impoverished. Early in the year, Congressional power was gutted, the judiciary was placed under executive branch tutelage, and Chavez's army colleagues were given a far bigger say in the day-to-day running of the country. A constituent assembly dominated by Chavez followers drafted a new constitution that would make censorship of the press easier, allow a newly strengthened chief executive the right to dissolve congress, and make it possible for Chavez to retain power until 2013. Congress and the Supreme Court were dismissed after Venezuelans approved the new constitution in a national referendum December 15.

The Republic of Venezuela was established in 1830, nine years after independence

from Spain. Long periods of instability and military rule ended with the establishment in 1961 of civilian rule. Under the 1961 constitution, the president and a bicameral congress are elected for five-year terms. The senate has at least two members from each of the 21 states and the federal district of Caracas. The chamber of deputies has 189 seats.

Until 1993, the social democratic Democratic Action (AD) Party and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) dominated politics. Former President Carlos Andres Perez (1989-93) of the AD was nearly overthrown by Chavez and other nationalist military officers in two 1992 coup attempts in which dozens were killed. In 1993 Perez was charged with corruption and removed from office by congress.

Rafael Caldera, a former president (1969-74) from COPEI and a populist, was elected president in late 1993 at the head of the 16-party National Convergence, which included Communists, other leftists, and right-wing groups. Caldera's term was marked by a national banking collapse (in 1994), the suspension of a number of civil liberties, mounting violent crime and social unrest, and rumors of a military coup.

In 1995, Caldera's reputation for honesty was tarnished by allegations of corruption among his inner circle. With crime soaring, oil wealth drying up, and the country in the worst economic crisis in 50 years, popular disillusionment with politics deepened.

At the beginning of 1998, the early presidential favorite was a former beauty queen whose appeal stemmed largely from her own roots outside the corrupt political establishment famous for its interlocking system of privilege and graft. Chavez's antiestablishment, anticorruption populism also played well in a country whose elites considered politics their private preserve. As his victory appeared more likely, Chavez moved toward the center, abandoning rhetoric in which he criticized the free market and promised to "fry" opposition leaders.

Last-minute efforts to find a consensus candidate against Chavez were largely unsuccessful, and the Yale-educated businessman Henrique Salas, the other leading presidential contender, steered away from association with the old political order. Salas, a respected two-term former state governor, won just 40 percent of the vote, to Chavez's 57 percent. Chavez took power in the world's number three oil exporting country in February 1999.

Upon taking office, Chavez curtailed the opposition-controlled national congress. Critics also charged Chavez with militarizing politics and politicizing the military. Tens of thousands of soldiers were dispatched to build public works, 34 senior military officers were promoted without congressional approval, and regional army commands were given oversight powers of local elected officials. Generals were appointed to senior posts such as presidential chief of staff, head of the secret police, and head of the internal revenue service. In July, 1999, Chavez supporters, including his wife and erstwhile fellow coup plotters, won 121 of the new constituent assembly's 131 seats. In a positive move, the assembly offered the nation's 500,000 Indians constitutional guarantees to conserve their cultures and languages.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens can change their government democratically, although Chavez supporters appear at times on the verge of mob rule, particularly as constitutional checks and balances have been removed and the constituent assembly has approved as many as 47 articles a day

for a new constitution that by the end of 1999 had more than 400 articles. Despite the unusual degree of political polarization and a number of technical difficulties, the regional and presidential elections conducted in 1998 were free and fair.

Until Chavez took power, the judicial system was headed by a nominally independent supreme court, although it was highly politicized, undermined by the chronic corruption—including the growing influence of narcotics traffickers—that permeates the entire political system, and was unresponsive to charges of rights abuses. Chavez, by sacking scores of judges, has successfully subordinated the legal system to his presidency. In August, 1999, Supreme Court President Cecilia Sosa resigned in protest after the court backed the assembly as it moved to give itself the power to dismiss judges and overhaul the country's judicial system. "The court simply committed suicide to avoid being assassinated," Sosa said. "But the result is the same—it is dead."

Citizen security in general remains threatened by a drug-fueled crime wave that has resulted in hundreds of killings monthly in major cities and vigilante mob killings of alleged criminals. A recent study ranked Venezuela as second of the ten most violent nations in the Americas and Europe.

Widespread arbitrary detention and torture of suspects, as well as dozens of extrajudicial killings by military security forces and the police, continue. Since the 1992 coup attempts, weakened civilian governments have had less authority over the military and the police, and rights abuses overall are committed with impunity. Police brutality and murder are rampant as crime increases. A separate system of armed forces courts retains jurisdiction over members of the military accused of rights violations and common criminal crimes, and decisions by these cannot be appealed in civilian court.

Venezuela's 32 prisons, the most violent in the world, hold some 23,000 inmates—of whom less than one-third have been convicted of a crime—even though they were designed to hold no more than 14,000. Deadly prison riots are common, and inmate gangs have a striking degree of control over the penal system.

The press is mostly privately owned, although the practice of journalism is supervised by an association of broadcasters under the government communication industry. Since 1994 the media in general have faced a pattern of intimidation. International media monitors have condemned a constitutional article approved by the constituent assembly that would require journalists to publish or broadcast "truthful information," a move that they say opens the door to government censorship.

Few Indians hold title to their land and indigenous communities trying to defend their legal land rights are subject to abuse, including killing, by gold miners and corrupt rural police. In 1999, the constituent assembly voted to include a chapter in the new constitution that sets forth the legal rights of indigenous peoples and communities in accordance with standards set by the International Labor Organization. Chapter VII would guarantee "the right to exist as indigenous peoples and communities with their own social and economic organization, their cultures and traditions, and their language and religion."

Labor unions are well organized, but highly politicized and prone to corruption. Chavez supporters have sought to break what they term a "stranglehold" of corrupt labor leaders on the job market. Security forces frequently break up strikes and arrest trade unionists.

Vietnam

Polity: Communist one-party
Economy: Statist
Population: 79,500,000
PPP: \$1,630
Life Expectancy: 66
Ethnic Groups: Vietnamese (85-90 percent), Chinese (3 percent), Muong, Tai, Meo, Khmer, Man, Cham
Capital: Hanoi

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free



Overview:

Vietnam has been hard hit by the Asian economic crisis. The country continued to cope with its worst economic downturn since the government initiated economic reform a decade ago.

Direct foreign investments fell 48 percent in the first nine months of 1999 to \$921 million, down from \$1.78 billion in the same period in 1998.

The government introduced new measures to shed itself of money-losing state-owned companies. A new Enterprise Law was passed in May 1999 to simplify the establishment of local private enterprises, and by year's end the government was expected to issue a decree on the sale and leasing out of certain small state-owned enterprises. Caps on share ownership by private investors in state enterprises were also to be eliminated. On August 1, the government introduced registration for housing ownership and land use rights certification by all citizens as a step towards establishing legal ownership and transfer of property rights.

The government also tried to appease public discontent and divert blame for its own economic mismanagement by cracking down on corruption and abuse of power. Actions included heavy sentences for those found guilty of graft and corruption and expanding the penal code to cover economic crimes.

However, not all has gone smoothly. To maintain receipts from licenses and other administrative charges, the Ministry of Trade issued a new decree requiring all locally owned trading and tourism firms to acquire registration certificates for their branches or representative offices. Many wildcat strikes occurred. Most result from employers violating regulations of the Labor Code, such as extra working hours without compensation and refusing to grant annual pay raises. Unemployment remained high—over nine percent in Hanoi. To alleviate the problem, the government signed numerous contracts to send 25,000 workers abroad to Taiwan, Japan, the Middle East, and other places.

There were also many social issues. Drug use and youth crimes have been increasing. In June, the government strengthened cooperation with neighboring countries against drug trafficking and launched a nationwide antidrug campaign. Society-at-large censures the children of rich families who are seen to flaunt their wealth and power. Their illegal motorcycle racing in city streets is a high-profile public nuisance. The government's severe spending cuts on social services in the past decade have forced many children to lose access to public education and health care services, and the number of HIV cases is increasing. In the first three months of 1999, 85 new HIV cases were

confirmed, bringing the total number of government-acknowledged HIV carriers to 500.

The government continues to maintain a strong hand over society. A prominent dissident was released but his home telephone line was cut. In April, a new decree on religious freedom was issued, but police detained 20 evangelical Christians for participating in an "illegal religious event," a three-day spiritual retreat and Bible study session that was organized by the unofficial Vietnam Assemblies of God Church. The police also broke up the first meeting in 17 years between two top leaders of the independent United Buddhist Church of Vietnam. The two were exiled to different parts of the country following the creation of a state-sponsored Buddhist church in 1981. Restrictions on the national media were further tightened in June to prevent journalists from reporting anything that does not benefit the country. In December, the government announced that the customs department will increase seizures of illegally imported publications, and singled out Thailand's *Nation*, Singapore's *Straits Times*, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, and the *Asian Wall Street Journal* for inaccurate portrayals of Vietnam.

Vietnam was colonized by France in the nineteenth century and was occupied by Japan during World War II. It gained independence in 1954 and was divided into the Republic of South Vietnam and the Communist-ruled Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north. After years of fighting, North Vietnam crushed the U.S.-backed South in 1975 and reunited the country under a Communist government in 1976.

In 1986, the government began decentralizing economic decision making, encouraging small-scale private enterprise, and dismantling collectivized agriculture. Economic reforms accelerated as Soviet aid dwindled after 1990, and Vietnam looked increasingly to Asia and the West. The 1992 constitution codified many economic reforms, although it retained the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) as the sole legal party. A president, who is nominally elected, replaced the collective state council. However, in practice, the VCP makes all key decisions.

The unrest and financial turmoil that swept other Southeast Asian countries in 1997 strengthened the position of hardliners and military figures averse to economic reform. Nevertheless in 1998, several thousand prisoners, including political and religious dissidents, were released in two mass amnesties. No official reasons were given for the event. Numerous human rights groups and monitors have complained of government obstacles and harassment in attempts to observe or report on human rights practices in Vietnam.

Prime Minister Phan Van Khai paid an official visit to China in October 1998, the first by a Vietnamese head of state since the two countries normalized relations in 1991. Vietnam has largely adhered to China's strategy of upholding the old political power structure of the Communist Politburo while pursuing economic reform and slowly integrating the economy into Southeast Asia's regional system. Vietnam hosted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit of leaders in December 1998, to mark Vietnam's full integration into the regional group.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Vietnamese cannot change their government democratically. The VCP maintains tight control of all political, economic, religious, and social affairs. The Politburo and its five-member Standing Committee decide important policy and leadership issues. The Fatherland Front, a VCP mass organization, controls candidate selection for the national assem-

bly. New membership in the VCP has been falling in recent years. Today about 2.3 million are members out of a population of 79.5 million.

The judiciary is not independent. The president appoints judges, and the VCP instructs them on rulings. Though somewhat less aggressively than in past years, authorities continue to monitor the population through mandatory household registrations, block wardens, and surveillance of communications, informants, and official peasant associations. A new draft of the criminal code subjects fewer offenses to the death sentence, and the government may switch from shooting to using lethal injections and electrocution as "more civilized ways" of execution.

The media are state-owned, and in recent years, the government has shut down several newspapers for violating the narrow limits on permissible reporting. In a recent case, a prominent newspaper editor was detained for more than a year for reporting on high-level corruption. The government has announced plans to regulate local Internet use, which has been growing at 30 percent annually. It is unclear how this will be carried out in practice.

Assemblies require a permit and are limited to occasional small demonstrations over nonpolitical issues. Vietnamese have some latitude to criticize government corruption and inefficiency, but it is illegal to advocate political reform. Foreign aid money has helped to launch several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Vietnam. Although they are government controlled or licensed, NGOs offer another avenue for assistance to better reach the grassroots communities. There are now around 300 government-approved NGOs.

All clergy must belong to the government-organized Buddhist, Christian, or Roman Catholic churches and must obtain permission to hold meetings or training seminars, operate religious schools, appoint clergy, and repair places of worship. In the central highlands, the government restricts the Protestant religious affairs of the ethnic Montagnards and has arrested clergy and worshippers. Authorities reportedly restrict exit permits for Muslims seeking to make their religious pilgrimages to Mecca.

All unions must belong to the state-controlled Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, and all union leaders are VCP members. The 1994 Labor Code recognizes only a limited right to strike and allows the prime minister or the court to terminate strikes for national good.

Local authorities impose internal travel, education, and employment restrictions on ethnic minorities. Women face social and employment discrimination. Prostitution of women and children and international trafficking for that purpose were reportedly increasing.

Yemen

Polity: Dominant coalition (military-influenced) **Political Rights:** 5
Civil Liberties: 6

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Status:** Not Free

Population: 16,400,000

PPP: \$810

Life Expectancy: 59

Ethnic Groups: Predominantly Arab, some Afro-Arab, South Asian

Capital: Sanaa



Overview: President Ali Abdullah Saleh won 96.3 percent of the vote in Yemen's first direct presidential election on October 23. Most observers called the vote more a referendum than an election, as parliament, which is dominated by Saleh's ruling General People's Congress (GPC) party, barred the sole opposition nominee from standing. Saleh's only opponent was a little-known GPC member, whose campaign was financed by the government in an attempt to impart a degree of credibility. One official from the main opposition Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) called the proceedings "poor stage management," as his party led a coalition of oppositionists urging Yemenis to boycott the polls. Another major opposition party, the Islamic Islah party, backed the president.

After hundreds of years of rule by autocratic religious leaders, the northern Yemen Arab Republic came under military control in 1962. Field Marshall Saleh was elected president by a constituent assembly in 1978. The British controlled the southern People's Republic of Yemen from 1839 to 1967. Hardline Marxist nationals seized power in the southern capital of Aden following the British withdrawal. North and south were unified into the Republic of Yemen in 1990, with the GPC's Saleh as president and southern YSP leader Ali Salim al-Biedh as vice president.

In April 1993 parliamentary elections, Saleh and the GPC won the most seats and formed a coalition with Islah and the YSP. Parliament formally elected Saleh and al-Biedh president and vice president, respectively. But al-Biedh boycotted the new government and called for demilitarization of the former north-south border, decentralization of authority, and investigation into dozens of preelection killings of YSP activists. The south attempted to secede in April 1994, sparking a 70-day civil war. Northern troops prevailed, and al-Biedh and other secessionist leaders fled the country.

Constitutional amendments in 1994 gave the chief executive broad powers and provided for direct presidential elections in 1999. Islah and the GPC formed a governing coalition in October 1994, and 13 opposition groups, led by the YSP, formed the Democratic Opposition Coalition in 1995. April 1997 elections to the 301-seat parliament were generally free and fair, though opposition members denounced the results as a government attempt to legitimize the "unfair" outcome of the civil war.

With the help of the IMF and the World Bank, Saleh has pursued an economic restructuring program since 1995. A small oil producer, Yemen is one of the Arab world's poorest nations. Unemployment is estimated at 35 percent, and some 58 percent of Yemenis are illiterate. While World Bank officials praise Yemen's progress on reduc-

ing inflation and budget expenditures, they emphasize the need to reform the civil service, eliminate corruption, and encourage private investment.

Economists also emphasize the need to expand the rule of law. The influence of the central government is limited. In governorates outside the larger cities, tribal leaders hold sway. Violence is a problem, as illicit guns outnumber Yemenis by three to one, and Kalashnikov rifles are carried openly. Cultural and social mores seem to glorify violence by upholding a tradition of vendettas. Foreigners are skittish about investing in Yemen because of security problems. In a number of well-publicized cases, disgruntled tribesmen have taken foreign tourists or oil workers as hostages in order to press the government into granting development projects or releasing detained fellow tribesmen. To begin rectifying the problem, the government launched a disarmament campaign in 1999, including legislation that restricts the sale and distribution of guns and places a ban on carrying guns in major cities.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The right of citizens to change their government is limited by the concentration of political power in the hands of a few leaders, and particularly the president. The parliament is not an effective lawmaking body; it does little more than debate issues, and its power is limited by the president's authority to rule by decree.

The judiciary is not independent. Judges are susceptible to bribery and government influence, and many are poorly trained. All courts are governed by Sharia (Islamic law), and there are no jury trials. Judicial independence is further hampered by the government's frequent reluctance to carry out sentences. Saleh's first act in his new presidential term was to resign as head of the Supreme Judicial Council, a move that may improve judicial independence. In October, the government announced its intention to set up special courts to deal with kidnappings and acts of sabotage. Local tribal leaders adjudicate land disputes and criminal cases in areas under their authority.

Various branches of the security force carry out arbitrary arrest and detention on political grounds, and often flout due process rights. According to Amnesty International, no effort has been made to end these practices. Torture and death by apparent torture in police custody are also widely reported. A police officer was convicted, fined, and sentenced to prison in June for torturing a criminal suspect to death.

The issue of torture received international attention in 1999 with the trial of eight Britons and two Algerians on charges of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts in connection with the kidnapping of 16 Western tourists by Islamic militants in December 1998. Four of the kidnapped captives had died in a botched rescue attempt by Yemeni troops. Six of the defendants were detained in late December and brought to trial on January 27. Four more went to trial on February 13. The suspects reported that their confessions had been extracted under torture, and a British pathologist reported signs of "serious physical ill-treatment" when he met with some of the prisoners in February. The defendants were convicted in August and sentenced to prison terms ranging from seven months to seven years.

Prisons are overcrowded and their sanitary conditions poor. In October, the government initiated a campaign to eliminate dozens of private prisons run by influential tribal leaders. A presidential decree in 1998 made kidnapping a capital offense. Three Islamic militants were convicted of abducting the Western tourists and sentenced to death in May 1999. One was executed in October. Thirty-two executions were reported by late October.

A press law requires that newspapers reapply annually for licenses and that they show continuing evidence of about \$5,000 in operating capital. The press is allowed a certain degree of freedom to criticize government officials and policies, yet the government restricts this freedom through legal harassment, detention, and prosecution. At least eight journalists were beaten in 1999 by attackers with alleged links to authorities, and six independent and opposition newspapers were brought to trial for political coverage between February and July alone. Journalists with the opposition *al-Jumhuriya* were prosecuted in October for allegedly insulting Saudi Arabia. Broadcast media are government-owned.

Permits are required for public gatherings, which are also monitored by government informers. Associations must register with the government. The independent Yemeni Human Rights Organization operates openly, and international human rights observers are allowed broad access.

Islam is the state religion; about 75 percent of citizens belong to the Shafai order of Sunni Islam, and 25 percent to the Zaydi order of Shia Islam. Followers of other religions may worship freely, but the government forbids proselytizing by non-Muslims, conversions, and the construction of new places of worship without permits. Yemeni Jews, who number about 500, face traditional restrictions on places of residence and employment.

Women face tremendous legal and traditional discrimination, and approximately 80 percent of Yemeni women are illiterate, compared with 35 percent of men. Women convicted of "moral offenses" are arbitrarily detained for indefinite periods under the penal code. In November, the government announced that it would begin recruiting women as police officers.

Workers may form unions, but the government regularly places its own personnel in influential positions inside unions and syndicates. The Yemeni Confederation of Labor Unions is the sole labor federation. Workers have the right to bargain collectively and to strike. Port workers in Aden and Hodeidah went on strike in November seeking higher wages.

Yugoslavia (Serbia & Montenegro)

Polity: Presidential-parliamentary

Political Rights: 5*

Civil Liberties: 5*

Economy: Mixed statist

Status: Not Free

Population: 10,600,000

PPP: \$2,300

Life Expectancy: 72

Ethnic Groups: Serbian (63 percent), Albanian (14 percent),

Montenegrin (6 percent), Hungarian (4 percent), other (13 percent)

Capital: Belgrade

Trend arrow: Yugoslavia's political rights and civil liberties ratings changed from 6 to 5 because Kosovo is no longer under the control of the Milosevic government, and due to the more favorable situation in Montenegro.



Overview:

The year 1999 was perhaps the most dramatic year in the decade-long Yugoslav crisis. The Albanian-Serb struggle for

control over Kosovo became a full-fledged war, provoking a regional crisis, drawing NATO into its first offensive military campaign against a sovereign country and turning the Kosovo conflict into a major source of contention between the great powers. The fortunes of war also swung dramatically, as a campaign unleashed by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic drove hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians from their homes. After Milosevic agreed to terms for a settlement of the conflict in June, a campaign of reverse ethnic cleansing began involving attacks on the Serb, Roma (Gypsy), and other minority populations. Tens of thousands of non-Albanians were subsequently forced from the province, with NATO unable or unwilling to react. With NATO in de facto control of Kosovo, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was split into three distinct political entities, with Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic and his supporters openly contemplating secession from what remained of the Yugoslav federation. Nevertheless, despite these setbacks, Milosevic defied all expectations by staying in power through year's end.

Two rounds of talks, held in Rambouillet, France, in February and March to negotiate a settlement to the Kosovo crisis failed when the Yugoslav delegation refused to accept a U.S. plan for turning over control of the province to NATO. On March 24 NATO began a bombing campaign lasting 79 days. Under cover of the NATO attacks, Serbian paramilitary units began to forcibly expel hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians from possible invasion routes into the country and from areas in which the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had been active. Estimates of the number of people killed during the war (as a result of killings by Serbian paramilitary units and fighting between the KLA and Yugoslav governments, and from the NATO bombing itself) ranged from 5,000 to 10,000.

International outrage at these actions culminated in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) issuing indictments for war crimes against Milosevic and four of his closest associates in May 1999. In the same month, the European Union (EU) instituted a travel ban against 305 of the most important members of Milosevic's regime. In December, the EU sanction on the Milosevic regime was expanded to include a further 383 persons.

On June 9, Milosevic accepted a deal, subsequently codified in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, in which control of the province was handed over to the UN while Yugoslav sovereignty was ostensibly maintained. In the vacuum of authority created by the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, the introduction of NATO troops, and the establishment of a UN governing structure, the KLA swiftly moved in and established de facto authority in many municipalities. A UN attempt to create a multi-ethnic "Kosovo Transitional Council" to govern the province quickly fell apart, and on September 22, 1999, the two main Serbian leaders in Kosovo, Momcilo Trajkovic and Bishop Artemije of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), announced that they were quitting the council to protest the UN's inability to protect Serbs and other minorities. With the withdrawal of Yugoslav government forces from the province, a campaign—described by international organizations as organized and systematic—to forcibly expel non-Albanians from the province was launched, and by year's end the number of Serbs, Roma, Bosniacs, Jews, Turks, and others forced to flee the province was more than 100,000. Human rights organizations also documented numerous incidents of harassment of Kosovo Albanians who were not supporters or members of the KLA.

In Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic managed to hold on to power throughout the year

and to maintain a careful balancing act between forces favoring outright independence for Montenegro (with a population of approximately 650,000) and those wanting to maintain ties with Serbia. Montenegrin society is severely polarized: a majority of the Slavic Orthodox population (approximately 40 percent of the total population) favors continued ties to Serbia, and a minority of the Slavic Orthodox population, supported by Montenegro's Albanian, Croat, and Muslim communities (altogether about 60 percent of Montenegro's population), wants outright independence. Consequently, there is a high potential for violence in the republic should any attempt at secession be made; moreover, Montenegro's economic viability as an independent state is extremely questionable.

Montenegro's conflicts with Serbia cover a wide range of issues; many are legitimate constitutional disputes about how power should be shared in the federation, but much of the problem stems from Milosevic's autocratic style and his refusal to tolerate any show of independence. In general, Djukanovic has favored a more conciliatory stance vis-a-vis the west, and this stance spared Montenegro from the worst of the NATO bombing campaign. Many Kosovo Albanians fled to Montenegro during the worst of the fighting in Kosovo, creating a tremendous burden for the tiny republic.

Djukanovic and his supporters continued throughout 1999 to edge closer to seceding from what remains of the Yugoslav federation. During the course of the year, Montenegro took over some border-control functions from Belgrade and tried to remain aloof from the conflict between NATO and Milosevic. In August, Montenegro offered a set of proposals outlining constitutional changes for a renamed and reshaped Yugoslav federation, but negotiations between the two republics made little progress. In November, Montenegro legalized use of the *deutsche mark* as a legal currency alongside the ailing Yugoslav *dinar*. In December, Montenegrin officials announced that Montenegro would not participate in federal elections organized by Milosevic's government. By year's end, however, with no explicit international support for a Montenegrin declaration of independence forthcoming, Djukanovic had to maintain his careful balancing act between Belgrade and those factions in his government supporting secession.

Despite the fact that Milosevic had become increasingly unpopular with the Serbian population (a public opinion poll carried out in September 1999 showed that 67 percent of the population wanted Milosevic to resign), the disunited Serbian opposition still proved unable to mobilize enough public support to threaten him seriously. In July, the leadership of the SOC publicly called on Milosevic to resign for the good of the country. A round of much-heralded public demonstrations begun in September quickly lost their momentum. Nevertheless, Milosevic was considerably weaker, as many important members of his regime, such as the banker Bogoljub Karic, announced that they were leaving the government. The Milosevic regime also faced significant economic problems due to the destruction caused by the NATO bombing (estimates on the total losses due to the bombing campaign ranged from \$60-\$100 billion), the trade embargo on the country, and Yugoslavia's continued exclusion from international monetary organizations.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The judicial system in the FRY is generally considered to be controlled by the regime, and courts usually bow to the will of the state security apparatus. Judges are often subjected to various forms of intimidation and pressure. The controversial "Act on Lawyers" passed in July 1998 has been criticized by human rights groups for infringing on lawyer-client

relationships. Police units are frequently accused of engaging in various abuses of human rights and civil liberties. Yugoslavia has also refused to cooperate with the ICTY, and many individuals indicted by the court remain at large in the FRY.

The rights of some 700,000 Serb refugees from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo are generally denied, as the FRY government refuses to grant them rights to citizenship, residency, or education. On July 7, 1999, representatives of Kosovo's Serbian teacher's union claimed that the Serbian education ministry was preventing 50,000 Serb children from Kosovo from enrolling in the new school year in Serbia proper. In Kosovo, international organizations criticized NATO and the UN for their inability to create a policing and judicial system capable of defending the rights of the Serb, Roma, and other minority populations, or of protecting Albanians opposed to the KLA, or of stemming the growth of organized crime.

Freedom of the press has been under attack in Yugoslavia since the adoption of a new "Law on Public Information" in October 1998, which allowed individuals or the government to charge reporters or media outlets with defamation, libel, or "spreading lies" and to defend themselves in the courts. Since the law was passed, three independent newspapers and ten radio and television stations have been forced to close. The independent media were further curtailed by the outbreak of war, which the Milosevic government used as an excuse to continue the crackdown. On the day before the NATO bombing campaign began, the well-known Belgrade radio-station B-92 was forced to shut down. (B-92 managed to go on the air again a few months later, under the new title of B2 92.) On April 11, 1999, Slavko Curuvija, the publisher of the anti-regime *Dnevni Telegraf*, was gunned down outside his Belgrade apartment. Several prominent independent journalists have had their vehicles car-bombed. Owners of printing companies have been fined and prosecuted as well. In Kosovo, the Albanian journalist and intellectual Veton Surroi was implicitly threatened with death in a KLA publication after decrying Albanian attacks against the remaining Serb population.

Yugoslavia has not had what could be considered free and fair elections for the past nine years. The U.S. State Department claims that "in practice citizens cannot exercise the right to change their government." Although numerous independent political parties, trade unions, and other organizations exist, members are frequently harassed by the police. Police also frequently disrupt public gatherings of the opposition. Freedom of association is guaranteed under the FRY's constitutions, and several trade unions exist. Independent trade unions have complained about various forms of government harassment. Although strikes and work stoppages are common, the regime often defuses such problems by temporarily acceding to local workers' demands.

Religious freedoms are also guaranteed under the constitution. The vast majority of Serbs are Orthodox Christians, but relations between the SOC and the Milosevic regime have been tense for years, and the church is still trying to reclaim property nationalized by the communists after 1945. Restitution issues remain unresolved for the Roman Catholic and Jewish religious Communities in Yugoslavia as well. Human rights monitors have reported harassment of the Muslim minority in the Sandzak (a mountainous region on the border between Serbia and Montenegro) and of Muslim Albanians in Kosovo. In the fighting between Yugoslav government forces and the KLA, mosques were frequently destroyed or damaged. After NATO assumed control of Kosovo in mid-June, more than 70 churches and monasteries belonging to the SOC were destroyed by Albanian extremists.

Zambia

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 5
Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 4
Population: 9,700,000 **Status:** Partly Free
PPP: \$960
Life Expectancy: 37
Ethnic Groups: African (99 percent), European (1 percent)
Capital: Lusaka



Overview: The year 1999 witnessed a mixed record of political rights and civil liberties. The ruling Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) pursued policies designed to closely control the country's political process by reducing the space in which opposition political parties could operate. The government exercised continuing pressure on the independent press through intimidation of journalists. The son of former President Kenneth Kaunda was murdered, although it is not clear on whose behalf his assailants were acting. The government has remained adamant that because his parents were born outside the country, Kaunda is ineligible to be a candidate in the 2001 presidential elections. Underlying elements of pluralism in the political culture include an activist civil society, limited opposition victories in local elections and a parliamentary by-election, and judicial and press sectors that demonstrate a measure of independence. President Chiluba and the MMD have sent contradictory signals regarding whether Chiluba will seek to circumvent a constitutional bar against running again in 2001.

Zambia was ruled by President Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) from independence from Britain in 1964 until the transition to a multiparty system in 1991. Kaunda's regime grew increasingly repressive and corrupt as it faced security and economic difficulties during the long guerrilla wars against white rule in neighboring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Portuguese-controlled Mozambique. UNIP's socialist policies, combined with a crash in the price of copper, Zambia's main export, precipitated an economic decline unchecked for two decades.

Kaunda permitted free elections in 1991 in the face of domestic unrest and international pressure. Former labor leader Chiluba and his MMD won convincingly. Economic liberalization and privatization have earned Zambia substantial external aid, but rampant corruption has distorted the economy and blocked sustainable growth. The country is among those suffering most from the AIDS pandemic; it is estimated that the country will need to care for well over 600,000 AIDS orphans within a few years.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Zambia's president and parliament are elected to serve concurrent five-year terms by universal adult suffrage. Zambians' constitutional right to change their government freely was honored in 1991 elections. However, the November 1996 presidential and parliamentary polls were neither free nor fair. State resources and state media were mobilized extensively to support Chiluba and the ruling MMD. Serious irregularities plagued election preparations. Voters' lists were incomplete or otherwise suspect; independent monitors estimated that more than two million people were effectively disenfranchised.

The election was conducted under a new June 1996 constitution shaped to bar the election of Kaunda, the most credible opposition candidate. Most opposition parties boycotted the polls, and the MMD also renewed its parliamentary dominance. International observer groups that did monitor the polls, along with independent domestic monitors and opposition parties, declared the process and the results to be fraudulent.

Some of Zambia's jurists retain a stubborn independence while others are subservient to Chiluba and the MMD. The court system is severely overburdened. Pretrial detainees are sometimes held for years under harsh conditions before their cases reach trial. The Magistrates and Judges Association identified congestion in prisons and delayed trials as extremely serious problems. Malnourishment and poor health care in Zambia's prisons cause many deaths. Many civil matters are decided by customary courts of variable quality and consistency whose decisions often conflict with both national law and constitutional protections.

Wiretapping, both legal and illegal, is reportedly routine. The government dominates broadcasting, and the few independent radio stations offer little political reporting. The Preservation of Public Security Act of 1960 is among many statutes used to harass and intimidate journalists. Security forces maintain surveillance of independent media and frequently arrest journalists. In one case, 12 journalists were charged with espionage after writing about Zambia's lack of military preparedness. Other tools of harassment include criminal libel suits and defamation suits brought by MMD leaders in response to stories on corruption. The Zambia Independent Media Association launched public appeals on several cases of the government attempting to intimidate the press.

Constitutionally protected religious freedom has been respected in practice. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in human rights promotion, such as the Zambian Independent Monitoring Team, the Zambian Civic Education Association, and the Law Association of Zambia, operate openly. In 1999, however, the government drafted a policy that would closely regulate NGOs. The government human rights commission investigated frequent complaints about police brutality and denounced the torture of coup suspects, but has no power to bring charges against alleged perpetrators.

Societal discrimination remains a serious obstacle to women's rights. A 1998 regional human development report noted that Zambia was one of the lowest performing countries in southern Africa in terms of women's empowerment. Women are denied full economic participation and are discriminated against in rural lands allocation. A married woman must have her husband's permission to obtain contraceptives. Discrimination against women is especially prevalent in traditional tribunals that are courts of first instance in most rural areas. Spousal abuse and other violence against women are reportedly common.

Zambia's trade unions remain among Africa's strongest, and union rights are constitutionally guaranteed. The Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, an umbrella for Zambia's 19 largest unions, operates democratically without government interference. Collective bargaining rights are protected by the 1993 Industrial and Labor Relations Act, and unions negotiate directly with employers. About two-thirds of the country's 300,000 formal-sector employees are union members.

Development is burdened by high levels of corruption and inflation. The official Anti-Corruption Commission showed few results, and a public sector reform program also had little effect. Privatization of state enterprises continued slowly. There was limited progress on sale of immense state-owned copper mines. New business formation is slowed by the country's weak financial structures.

Zimbabwe

Polity: Dominant party **Political Rights:** 6*
Economy: Capitalist-statist **Civil Liberties:** 5
Population: 11,200,000 **Status:** Partly Free
PPP: \$2,350

Life Expectancy: 40

Ethnic Groups: Shona (71 percent), Ndebele (16 percent), other African (11 percent), white (1 percent), mixed and Asian (1 percent)

Capital: Harare

Ratings Change: Zimbabwe's political rights rating changed from 5 to 6 due to increased government repression of the media and the muzzling of the constitutional reform process.



Overview:

Zimbabwe in 1999 continued its descent towards increased political authoritarianism, which raises the specter of sustained civil strife and deepened economic hardship. Despite widespread sentiment for a more open political system, President Robert Mugabe attempted to manipulate a constitutional review process to ensure continued dominance of his ruling ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African People's Union—Patriotic Front) party. His government repeatedly sought to intimidate and silence critics in the press and in civil society. Zimbabwe forces were engaged in a Vietnam-style morass in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which provided commercial and economic benefits for Mugabe's cronies. Economic decline also fueled growing opposition to Mugabe's rule.

Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 after a violent guerrilla war against a white minority regime that had declared unilateral independence from Britain in 1965 in what was then Northern Rhodesia. From 1983 to 1987, a civil war suppressed resistance on the part of the country's largest minority group, the Ndebele, to dominance by Mugabe's majority ethnic Shona group. Severe human rights abuses accompanied the struggle, which ended with an accord that brought Ndebele leaders into the government.

Zimbabwe is facing its worst crisis since achieving independence in 1980. The country is arguably a de facto one-party state, reflecting ZANU-PF's grip on parliament, the security forces, and much of the economy. The party has dominated Zimbabwe since independence, enacting numerous laws and constitutional amendments to strengthen its hold on power. Yet Mugabe cannot yet exercise unfettered power. The judiciary remains largely independent and trade unions powerful. Corruption among senior officials is reported by a small independent media. Massive protests by war veterans and trade unionists have challenged the regime and been met with deadly violence by security forces.

A key issue is constitutional reform. The government created a constitutional commission, which reported its findings to President Mugabe late in 1999, prior to the national elections scheduled for April, 2000. The official commission faced a counterpart organization, the National Constitutional Assembly, which was formed by a coalition of nongovernmental groups including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Legal Resources Foundation, women's organizations and the powerful Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. The process of

providing Zimbabwe with a new national constitution became a farce, however, when the head of the government-organized commission abruptly declared a draft version approved, and presented it to President Mugabe. In effect, the government gave the country two choices: to endorse a government-sponsored but largely flawed draft constitution or face the continuation of the present, deeply unpopular national constitution.

In recent years Mugabe has turned against white landowners, student groups, labor unions, and homosexuals. Inflation rages at 65 percent, unemployment stands at more than 50 percent, corruption is rampant, and living standards are dropping. The country is also mired in an unpopular war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Zimbabwe's problems were compounded when ministers and members of parliament awarded themselves 182 percent pay increases. Mugabe faces increasing resistance to his deployment of 8,000 soldiers to back Kabila in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The potential for Zimbabwe's citizens to elect their representatives and change their government through democratic means has become increasingly distant as President Mugabe's nearly two decades of rule have worn on. Since 1987 there have been 15 amendments to the constitution by ZANU-PF which have made the constitution less democratic and have given the government, and particularly members of the executive, more power. These include the scrapping of the post of prime minister in favor of an executive president in 1987 and the abolishment of the upper chamber of parliament, the senate.

ZANU-PF swept nearly all the seats contested in parliamentary elections and local polls in April and October 1995, entrenching its de facto one-party rule. Mugabe won another six-year term of office in 1996, tallying nearly 93 percent of votes cast. Fewer than one-third of those eligible voted in a noncompetitive contest in which the opposition had no real hope of victory. Voter registration and identification procedures and tabulation of results were judged by independent observers to have been highly irregular. The heavily state-controlled or influenced media offer very limited coverage of opposition viewpoints, and ZANU-PF uses state resources heavily in its campaigning.

Serious concerns exist about the current voter-registration system and an apparently biased system of election administration. In 1999, a human rights group, the Foundation for Democracy in Zimbabwe, conducted a survey of eight voting wards. In the homes it visited—75 percent of the total of registered voters—it found that 25 percent of those listed on the rolls were dead, unknown or else were registered several times. In recent urban-council elections, many recently registered voters said they were not allowed to cast their ballot because their names had not been included in the electoral rolls.

Political unrest has led to the creation of new political parties. For example, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has been created. The party has sprung from a newly dynamic trade union movement, which has called, successfully, two general strikes in the past year to protest against government policies. The new party's leader is Morgan Tsvangirai, a long-time union leader whose opposition to Mugabe has landed him in jail and resulted in beatings.

The judiciary remains largely independent and has repeatedly struck down or disputed government actions. The Public Order and Security Bill, however, restricts rights, limiting public assembly and allowing police to impose arbitrary curfews. Intelligence

agencies are included among law enforcement agencies empowered to disperse "illegal" assemblies or to arrest participants. Security forces, particularly the Central Intelligence Organization, often ignore basic rights regarding detention, search, and seizure.

Judicial rulings are at times ignored by the government. In addition, the right of free assembly is constitutionally guaranteed but generally respected only for groups that the government deems non political. For example, Zimbabwean police violently repressed a demonstration protesting intimidation of the media, although a high court judge had approved the march.

Mugabe has made increasing use of legislation that grants him authority to undertake arbitrary action in what are supposed to be exceptional situations. He invoked the Presidential Powers Act twice in three weeks, for example, for matters relating to prisoner accommodations and capital gains taxation.

Several groups, including the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organization (Zimrights), and the Legal Relief Fund focus on human rights. A 1997 report detailed the officially sanctioned brutality of the repression of Ndebele rebels in the mid-1980s, in which thousands of people were murdered by government forces, but perpetrators of the violence still enjoy impunity. Mugabe has continued his verbal attacks on homosexuals.

Prison conditions are harsh. Amnesty International reported in 1997 that Zimbabwean prisoners on death row sleep shackled and naked. The report argued that the dreadful conditions and psychological torment endured by death row inmates violated the right to be free from cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment.

The government directly controls all broadcasting and several newspapers, including all dailies; it indirectly controls most others. A small independent press is overshadowed by state-run media. The Parliamentary Privileges and Immunities Act has been used to force journalists to reveal their sources regarding reports on corruption before the courts and parliament. A publisher whose newspaper reported on a suspected coup plot in Zimbabwe was arrested the day after two of his employees were released from detention after having been tortured. Three supreme court justices subsequently called on Mugabe to affirm the rule of law by reminding the army that it had no right to arrest civilians and that torture by anyone was unacceptable. Instead, Mugabe defended the military's conduct, denounced the press, and called on the justices to resign.

Women's rights enjoy extensive legal protection, but de facto societal discrimination persists. Women have few legal rights outside of formal marriage. The supreme court issued a ruling relegating African women to the status of "junior males" within the family, declaring that African women who marry under customary law leave their original families behind and therefore cannot inherit property. Married women still cannot hold property jointly with their husbands. Especially in rural areas, access to education and employment for women is difficult. Domestic violence against women is common; a 1997 survey by a women's organization found that more than 80 percent of women had been subjected to some form of physical abuse. Zimbabwe has signed international human rights treaties, such as the Women's Convention.

Zimbabwe's once lively economy is now in precipitous decline. The manufacturing sector has shrunk by about 40 percent while per capita income per month continues to slide in a country where unemployment is pegged above 50 percent. The economy registered an outflow of nearly \$430 million between January and October, leading to a significant shortage of foreign exchange. Inflation exceeds 70 percent.

Armenia/Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh

Polity: Presidential
Economy: Mixed statist
Population: 150,000
Ethnic Groups: Armenian (95 percent), Assyrian, Greek, others

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Overview: Despite improved prospects for resolving the decade-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, the end of 1999 saw no breakthrough in negotiations regarding the status of the disputed territory. The assassination of Armenia's prime minister in October delayed any subsequent discussions, and a serious outbreak of violence in June further underscored the shakiness of the 1994 cease-fire.

The region of Nagorno-Karabakh, whose population was overwhelmingly ethnic Armenian, was transferred from Armenian to Azerbaijani jurisdiction in 1923. The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region was subsequently created, with a narrow strip of land, the Lachin Corridor, bordering Armenia proper. In 1930, Moscow permitted Azerbaijan to establish and resettle the border areas between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

With the start of greater openness and freedom in the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev's rule, the Nagorno-Karabakh's Supreme Soviet in the capital city of Stepanakert adopted a resolution in 1988 calling for independence from Azerbaijan. That announcement and the February demonstrations in Yerevan over Nagorno-Karabakh's status triggered violent attacks against Armenians in the Azerbaijan city of Sumgait shortly thereafter, as well as in Baku in January 1990. During the late 1980s, skirmishes broke out along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Following multiparty elections for a new legislature, Nagorno-Karabakh's parliament adopted a declaration of sovereignty at its inaugural session on January 6, 1992. From 1991 to 1992, Azerbaijan besieged Stepanakert and occupied most of Nagorno-Karabakh. A series of counter-offensives by Karabakh Armenians, assisted by Armenia proper in 1993 and 1994 resulted in the capture of essentially the entire territory, as well as six Azeri districts surrounding the enclave, representing 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory. A Russian-brokered cease-fire was finally signed in May 1994, although not before more than 30,000 people had died and nearly one million were made refugees as a result of the years of fighting.

In December 1994, the Karabakh Supreme Council, the executive body of parliament, elected the head of the state defense committee, Robert Kocharian, to the post of president for a five-year term. Parliament member Leonard Petrossian was subsequently chosen by Kocharian to be prime minister. In 1995, President Kocharian created a government structure consisting of nine ministries, seven state departments, and five state enterprises. Generally free and fair elections to the 33-member parliament were held in April and May, with a reported 80 percent voter turnout. Prior to the poll,

the public organization *Democratia* had been formed to assist all political parties, unions, and other groups in preparation for the elections. President Kocharian was reelected to his post in November 1996.

In September 1997, Foreign Minister Arkady Ghukasian was elected president with a reported 89.3 percent of the vote, replacing Kocharian, who had been named prime minister of Armenia in March of that year. The poll was deemed free and fair by international observers, although the election was considered invalid by most of the international community who did not recognize the independence of the territory.

President Ghukasian reshuffled the government in June 1998, replacing Prime Minister Petrossian with Deputy Prime Minister Zhirayr Pogosian, reportedly amid disagreements over economic policy. During the same month, Ghukasian issued a decree modifying the governmental structure into a system of 11 ministries and four state departments.

Despite the occurrence of periodic ceasefire violations since 1994, a shootout between Armenian and Azerbaijani troops along the Nagorno-Karabakh border in June 1999, which left at least two dead and several wounded, represented the most serious outbreak of fighting in two years. That same month, President Ghukasian dismissed Prime Minister Pogosian, along with the entire cabinet, without warning. Although the official explanation for their removal was Pogosian's failure to improve the territory's economy, some analysts speculated that the move was the result of the discovery of a surveillance device in the president's office allegedly planted on Pogosian's orders. The following month, Pogosian was arrested, reportedly on charges of illegally storing firearms. Anushavan Danielian, a former deputy parliamentary speaker in Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea, was named as the new prime minister.

In an unprecedented development, Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharian, now president of Armenia, conducted several high-level meetings throughout 1999 to discuss Nagorno-Karabakh's status. According to many analysts, the promise of U.S. political and economic support, as well as President Aliyev's declining health and his apparent wish to see his son succeed him without the burden of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue hampering his rule, were making Azerbaijan's leadership more receptive to reaching a settlement.

However, despite initial hopes for a settlement, the last talks in 1999 ended without any substantial progress in resolving the longstanding dispute. A peace plan originally unveiled in November 1998 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation's Minsk Group, which is co-chaired by Russia, the United States, and France, to help broker a peace deal for Nagorno-Karabakh, called for giving the territory greater autonomy within Azerbaijan by creating a "common state" between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. While the proposal met with approval from both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan rejected the plan for not guaranteeing it a restoration of its sovereignty over the disputed enclave. Although some mediators subsequently suggested making amendments to address Baku's concerns, the Armenians have continued to assert that possible changes would be acceptable only if they do not require making additional concessions to Azerbaijan. In addition, the murders in late October of Armenia's Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, a strong supporter of a settlement, and other top officials, reportedly pushed back the negotiating process by several months as Armenia's government struggled to address the subsequent domestic political crisis.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Residents of Nagorno-Karabakh technically have the means to change their government democratically, and the enclave has had what amounts to de facto independence since military victories in 1994. Parliamentary elections in 1995 were generally free and fair, as were the 1996 and 1997 presidential votes.

Although there are independent newspapers, journalists often practice self-censorship, particularly on subjects dealing with policies related to Azerbaijan and the peace process. The government controls most of the broadcast media.

With Christian Armenians constituting more than 95 percent of the territory's population, the Armenian Apostolic Church is the predominant religion. Years of conflict have constrained the religious rights of the few Muslims remaining in the region. Freedom of assembly and association is restricted, although political parties and unions are allowed to organize and operate without significant impediments.

The judiciary, which is not independent in practice, is influenced by the executive branch and powerful political and clan forces. Azeri homes and businesses have been expropriated, confiscated, or destroyed. Equality of opportunity is limited by the fact that economic activity remains largely in the hands of powerful elites and clans.

China Hong Kong

Polity: Appointed governor and partly-elected legislature
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 6,700,000
Ethnic Groups: Chinese (98 percent)

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free



Overview: In 1999, Beijing made its first major intervention in Hong Kong's legal affairs, while the territory continued to recover from its worse recession since World War II.

Hong Kong consists of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula, both ceded in perpetuity by China to Britain in the mid-1800s, and the mainland New Territories, which Britain "leased" for 99 years in 1898. The British ruled the colony through an appointed governor. The 60-seat Legislative Council (Legco) consisted of gubernatorial appointees, senior civil servants, and members chosen by "functional constituencies" representing business, the professions, and labor.

Under the 1984 Joint Declaration, Britain agreed to transfer sovereignty over Hong Kong to China in 1997, and China pledged to maintain the territory's political, legal, and economic autonomy for 50 years. In 1990, Britain and China agreed to introduce the first-ever direct elections for 18 Legco seats in 1991, followed by elections for 20 seats in 1995, 24 in 1999, and 30 in 2003. China subsequently incorporated these plans into the 1990 Basic Law, Hong Kong's post-1997 constitution.

The last colonial governor, Christopher Patten, instituted reforms for the 1995 elections that for the first time made all of the Legco seats either directly or indirectly elected. Most importantly, Patten granted nearly 2.7 million workers a second vote for the 30

functional constituency seats. Pro-democracy candidates won 16 of the 20 directly elected seats, led by the Democratic Party with 12. China claimed that the changes violated the Basic Law and stated as early as 1994 that it would consequently dissolve all elected bodies after the handover.

In December 1996, a Beijing-organized selection committee chose shipping tycoon Tung Chee-hwa, China's preferred candidate, as the post-handover chief executive and appointed a post-handover provisional legislature. Immediately after the June 1997 handover, China replaced Legco with the provisional legislature, pending new elections. In the May 1998 elections for a new Legco, held under a 53 percent turnout despite torrential rains, pro-democracy candidates won more than 60 percent of the popular vote and took 16 of the 20 directly elected seats. However, under new, post-handover electoral laws, which restricted the franchise for the indirectly elected seats, pro-democracy parties won only 20 of 60 seats overall.

On January 26, 1999, Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal (CFA) handed down a broad interpretation of the Basic Law regarding residency for mainland children of Hong Kong parents and added that it could declare invalid laws enacted by China's National People's Congress (NPC) relating to Hong Kong if they contravene the Basic Law. The Hong Kong government made an unprecedented request for the CFA to clarify its judgment regarding the power of interpretation. On February 26, the CFA stated that it accepted that it could not question the NPC's authority. The government also said the immigration ruling could lead to an influx of 1.67 million mainlanders within 13 years, a figure challenged by some groups, and in May announced it would ask the rubber-stamp NPC's Standing Committee to interpret the Basic Law concerning the right of abode.

On June 26, the NPC's Standing Committee handed down a restrictive interpretation of the Basic Law's provisions on residency. Critics charged that the government's appeal to the NPC, and the NPC's ruling, undermined the rule of law and raised doubts over whether any CFA decision is truly final. On December 3, the CFA ruled that the NPC's interpretation of the Basic Law regarding the immigration case was valid and binding on Hong Kong.

In a July poll by Baptist University's Hong Kong Transition Project, 52 percent of those questioned said they were dissatisfied with the government. Respondents appeared less concerned that Beijing would undermine the territory's autonomy than they had been during the handover, but cited new issues including the recession, pollution, overcrowding, and a perception that tycoons have too much influence on Tung.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Hong Kong citizens cannot change their government democratically and had no role in the drafting of the Basic Law, the territory's constitution. There are relatively few institutional checks on the appointed chief executive, as was the case under the appointed colonial governor. The Legislative Council (Legco) has 20 directly elected seats, 30 chosen by functional constituencies representing business, professional, labor, and other groups, and 10 chosen by an electoral college. The Tung government restricted the franchise for Legco's indirectly elected seats, scrapped the single-member district, plurality system in favor of proportional representation for the 20 directly elected Legco seats (which critics charged would favor smaller, pro-business and pro-Beijing parties), reintroduced some appointed district council seats, and planned to abolish the second-tier municipal councils in 2000. The Basic Law allows for direct elections for all Legco

seats and for the chief executive after 2007. However, China's NPC, Hong Kong's chief executive, and Legco would have to approve these arrangements, the latter by a two-thirds majority at a time when only half of its members would be directly elected. Legco elections are scheduled for September 2000.

Human rights activists and pro-democracy politicians say several judicial and executive decisions since 1997 have undermined the rule of law, which is widely viewed as the *sine qua non* that sets Hong Kong apart from other Chinese cities. The CFA stated in early 1999 that it had the power to interpret the Basic Law, but in a December ruling it accepted the NPC's right to interpret the Basic Law and the Hong Kong courts' duty to accept these interpretations. While Article 158 of the Basic Law vests the power of interpretation of the Law in the NPC's Standing Committee, the nongovernmental Human Rights Monitor argued that a reading of the Basic Law as a whole suggests that the intention was to delegate the power of interpretation to the Hong Kong courts except in certain specified circumstances.

In 1998, pro-democracy politicians criticized authorities for declining to prosecute both the China-run Xinhua news agency, for allegedly breaching privacy laws by missing a deadline to respond to a freedom of information request, and the owner of the *Hong Kong Standard*, after the prosecution had named her as a coconspirator in fraud. Critics also charged that the government failed to defend its legal jurisdiction by not seeking the extradition from China of Cheung Tze-keung, a Hong Kong resident accused of gangland crimes in Hong Kong and on the mainland for which he was executed.

Despite these concerns, the judiciary is generally independent, and trials are open and fair. An independent commission nominates judges. Police abuse of suspects is a continuing problem.

Article 23 of the Basic Law requires Hong Kong to enact laws on treason, secession, sedition, and subversion. The pre-handover Legco amended and liberalized existing laws on sedition and treason, and passed the controversial Official Secrets Ordinance, to comply with Basic Law requirements and preempt harsher post-handover legislation. The Tung administration plans to introduce new legislation on sedition and treason, along with secession and subversion laws.

Hong Kong citizens largely continued to enjoy the basic freedoms they had before the handover, although the legal basis for these rights is less clear. In 1997, the provisional legislature weakened several provisions of Hong Kong's 1991 Bill of Rights, amended the Societies Ordinance to permit authorities to deny registration or to deregister existing nongovernmental organizations on broad "national security" grounds, and amended the Public Order Ordinance to require organizers to obtain police permission to hold demonstrations, which officials can deny on national security grounds. In 1997, the Tung administration banned demonstrations advocating Taiwanese or Tibetan independence. In December 1999, the CFA upheld statutory provisions criminalizing desecration of the Chinese and Hong Kong flags.

Hong Kong is a regional media center, although its dozens of domestic newspapers and magazines practice some self-censorship regarding Beijing and local businessmen. The state-run Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) is editorially independent. Private television and radio stations also operate.

Unions are independent. The Trade Union Ordinance places some restrictions on organizing and allows authorities to monitor union administration. In 1997, the provi-

sional legislature repealed five laws on collective bargaining, anti-union discrimination, and the right to associate with unions abroad without first notifying the government. Workplace antidiscrimination legislation is inadequate, and women face discrimination in employment matters. In addition to trying to limit the right of abode, the government has also insisted that immigrants from China obtain valid Chinese exit permits. Critics say people with the right to live in Hong Kong should not have to remain in China until Chinese authorities grant them permission to leave.

Macao

Polity: Appointed governor and partially elected legislature
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 447,000
Ethnic Groups: Chinese, Macanese, Portuguese

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free



Overview: China regained sovereignty over Macao on December 20, 1999, ending 443 years of both Portuguese rule in the enclave and European colonialism in Asia. Many residents expressed optimism that the new local government would restore order in a territory wracked by gangland crime, but democracy advocates noted warily that Macao lacked the strong civil society and outspoken democratic opposition that have robustly defended civil liberties in nearby Hong Kong since that territory reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

Under the Portuguese, Macao became the first European outpost in the Far East in 1557, the leading entrepot for European trade with China until the 1770s, and more recently a bawdy city of casinos and prostitution. The 1976 Organic Statute, or local constitution, vested executive power in a Lisbon-appointed governor and granted legislative power to both the Portuguese government (acting through the governor) and Macao's legislative assembly. The assembly has eight directly elected members, eight named by businesses and other interest groups, and seven appointed by the governor all for four-year terms.

The 1987 Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration called for China to assume sovereignty over Macao in 1999 and for the enclave to maintain its legal system and capitalist economy for 50 years. Beijing subsequently announced that the legislature elected in 1996 would serve through the handover. The last Portuguese governor, General Vasco Rocha Viera, took office in 1991.

The September 1996 legislative elections centered around the depressed property market, a recession that began in 1995, and the need to diversify an economy in which the \$3 billion gambling industry provides 55 percent of the government's revenues and tourism accounts for more than 40 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Under a record 64.4 percent turnout, pro-China businessmen defeated leftist union and neighborhood association candidates to win seven directly elected seats, with democratic activist Ng Kuok-cheong winning the eighth.

Since 1996, Macao triads, or criminal gangs, have waged violent battles for control of illicit activities associated with the legal casino industry. Effects of the violence on tourism, and the regional financial crisis that began in 1997, contributed to a 3.3 percent decline in the GDP in 1998.

On May 15, 1999, a 199-member, Beijing-appointed selection committee chose Edmund Ho, 44, as the first post-colonial chief executive. The Canadian-educated banker pledged to make fighting organized crime the first priority. Ho also faces a key decision over whether to renew the gaming monopoly held by tycoon Stanley Ho (no relation) since 1962 when it expires in 2001. In November, the superior court sentenced gang boss Wan "Broken Tooth" Kuok-koi to a 15-year jail term as part of a last-minute crackdown on crime on both sides of the border. Following the handover, Beijing sent in the first 500 troops of an anticipated 1,000-strong garrison.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Citizens of Macao lack the democratic means to change their government and had no input in the 1987 Joint Declaration ceding control to China or in the drafting of the 1993 Basic Law, Macao's postcolonial constitution. Amnesty International noted in December that the Basic Law is "riddled with ambiguities," fails to guarantee several basic rights, and grants Beijing vaguely defined emergency powers. Moreover, the organization noted that Macao's legal system contains weak safeguards for the rights and freedoms ostensibly protected by the Basic Law. Beijing appeared to undermine the Basic Law in June when it passed a law creating the legal basis for a Chinese army garrison in Macao and giving the troops police powers when requested by the chief executive, even though the Basic Law contains no provision for a garrison.

Numerous delays in the transition process raised further questions about Macao's autonomy. The colonial government proceeded slowly in translating legal documents and in replacing Portuguese expatriates and Macanese (people of mixed Chinese and Portuguese descent) in the 17,000-member civil service with ethnic Chinese. The Macanese constitute just five percent of the population but play a leading economic role.

The unelected, post-1999 chief executive holds broad powers with few checks on his authority, a situation that is similar to the case under Portuguese rule. Portugal never developed the legislature into an effective body. Only one-third of the seats are directly elected, although the Basic Law provides for the number of directly elected seats to increase gradually in future elections. After 2009, the legislature will be able to change its composition under a two-thirds voting rule, subject to the chief executive's approval. Political parties are legal, but no true parties exist. Corruption is rife in the police force and civil service.

The judiciary is independent. The Basic Law guarantees continuity in the legal system, which is based on Portuguese metropolitan law. However, the United States Department of State noted in its human rights report for 1998 that delays in translating laws and judgments and a severe shortage of local bilingual lawyers and magistrates could present problems for the continuation of the current system. Agence France-Presse reported in December that of Macao's 22 judges, the three from Portugal will probably leave after the handover, while the longest-serving Chinese judge is due to become the head of the new Court of Final Appeal despite having only three years' experience. The Basic Law stipulates that the post-1999 chief executive appoint judges on the rec-

ommendation of an "independent commission composed of local judges, lawyers and eminent persons."

The government owns controlling interests in the television and radio stations, which present diverse viewpoints. The press is private. Print journalists practice self-censorship regarding Beijing and Macao's triads, and newspapers offer limited coverage of liberal views. According to the Associated Press, the pro-Beijing *Macao Daily* newspaper has a nearly 90 percent market share. In the final days of Portuguese rule, police detained nearly 40 members of China's banned Falun Gong sect and deported at least three pro-democracy activists. On December 20, the first day of Chinese rule, police detained nine pro-democracy demonstrators.

Increasingly, women hold senior government posts but are underrepresented in politics and the civil service. The United Nations has raised concern over the trafficking of women from China, often by criminal gangs, into Macao for prostitution.

Macao has several independent human rights groups, but overall, civil society is underdeveloped and Beijing controls many ostensibly nongovernmental groups. Nearly all private sector workers belong to the pro-Beijing General Association of Workers, a confederation that is more of a political organization than a labor advocate. Several small private sector unions and two of the four public sector unions are independent. Legislation protecting striking workers from dismissal is inadequate, and government enforcement of labor laws is lax. Foreign workers often work for less than half the wages of Macao citizens, live in controlled dormitories, and owe substantial money to proxies for the purchase of their jobs.

Tibet

Polity: Communist one-party
Economy: Statist
Population: 4,590,000*
Ethnic Groups: Tibetan, Han Chinese

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

This figure from China's 1990 census includes 2.096 million Tibetans living in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and 2.494 million Tibetans living in areas of Eastern Tibet which, beginning in 1950, were incorporated into four Chinese provinces. Independent observers estimate that there are at least 6 million Tibetans under Chinese rule.



Overview:

In 1999, the year marking the fortieth anniversary of an aborted Tibetan uprising for independence, Chinese authorities in Tibet continued to tighten their control over monastic affairs, restrict fundamental freedoms, facilitate the resettlement of Han Chinese into traditional Tibetan areas, and marginalize the Tibetan language in education.

Tibet has a distinct national history dating back more than 2,000 years. Beijing's modern-day claim to Tibet is based solely on Mongol and Manchu imperial influence over Tibet in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. China invaded Tibet in late 1949 and in 1951 formally annexed the country.

In 1959, Chinese troops suppressed a Tibetan uprising, killing an estimated 87,000 Tibetans in the Lhasa region alone and forcing the Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, to flee to Dharamsala, India, along with 80,000 supporters. In 1960, the International Commission of Jurists called the Chinese occupation genocidal and ruled that between 1911 and 1949, the year China invaded, Tibet had possessed all the attributes of statehood as defined under international law. In 1965, China created the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) encompassing only half the territory of preinvasion Tibet. Beijing had already incorporated the rest of Tibet into four southwestern Chinese provinces beginning in 1950. During the Cultural Revolution, China imprisoned thousands of monks and nuns, destroyed nearly all of Tibet's 6,200 monasteries, and burned numerous sacred texts. By the late 1970s, an estimated 1.2 million Tibetans had died as a result of the occupation.

Between 1987 and 1990 Chinese soldiers forcibly broke up peaceful demonstrations throughout Tibet. Beijing imposed martial law on Lhasa and surrounding areas in March 1989 following three days of anti-Chinese riots during which police killed at least 50 Tibetans. Authorities lifted martial law in May 1990.

In 1995 the Dalai Lama identified six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the eleventh reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's second highest religious figure. Chinese authorities detained the child and his family and orchestrated the selection of another six-year-old boy as the eleventh Panchen Lama. Since the Panchen Lama identifies the reincarnated Dalai Lama, Beijing can potentially control the identification of the fifteenth Dalai Lama.

In June 1999, the World Bank approved a \$ 160 million loan for the China Western Poverty Reduction Project, which includes a controversial plan in Qinghai province to move 58,000 poor Han and Hui Muslim Chinese farmers into an area traditionally occupied by Tibetans and Mongolians. However, the bank postponed disbursement of funds for the \$40 million Qinghai component pending a determination of whether the loan breaches bank guidelines requiring it to take into account the views of indigenous people who are affected by a project.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Tibetans lack the right to self-determination and cannot change their government democratically. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rules Tibet through compliant government officials whose ranks include some Tibetans in largely ceremonial posts. China's People's Liberation Army plays a significant administrative role and maintains tens of thousands of troops in Tibet.

Chinese authorities deny Tibetans nearly all basic rights including freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion. Security forces routinely resort to arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, and torture in response to nonviolent protests, which include displaying Tibetan flags or symbols of cultural identity, holding peaceful demonstrations, possessing a photograph of the Dalai Lama, forming prisoner lists, putting up posters, and distributing leaflets. The Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reported in September that international human rights groups have documented at least 60 police killings of peaceful demonstrators in Tibet since 1987.

The CCP uses the judiciary as an instrument of political control. The ICT reported in September that the average sentence for Tibetan political prisoners is 6.5 years, with some sentences as long as 19 years. Authorities also frequently bypass the judiciary

and use administrative regulations to detain political prisoners without charge or trial for up to four years. In March, the London-based Tibet Information Network (TIN) reported that between 1987 and 1998 authorities arrested Tibetans on political grounds over an increasingly wide geographical area. The group cited an increase in the number of counties in Tibetan areas outside the TAR, from which political prisoners originated, and a sharp increase in the overall rate of political detentions in Tibetan areas outside the TAR. The TIN also reported that among the roughly 550 known Tibetan political prisoners, two-thirds of males are monks and 80 percent of females are nuns.

Authorities routinely torture detainees and inmates at police holding centers, prisons, and labor camps. In December, the TIN reported that 1 in 32 political prisoners held in Drapchi prison since 1987 died either in custody or shortly after release as the result of abuse during detention. Authorities responded to protests at Drapchi prison in May 1998 with torture and beatings that led to the deaths of 11 prisoners, including 6 nuns. Officials reportedly sexually abuse female prisoners and subject political prisoners to forced labor.

Authorities permit some religious practices within the context of tight official control over monastic affairs. In 1994 the Chinese government held the Third National Forum on Work in Tibet in Beijing, which imposed a moratorium on the building of new monasteries and nunneries without official permission and placed stricter limits on the number of monks and nuns permitted in each monastery. State-organized "democratic management committees" in each monastery and nunnery monitor compliance with Beijing's decrees and identify alleged dissidents. Authorities have closed numerous monasteries and nunneries, demolished several others, and interfered with the choice of monastic leaders.

Since 1996, Beijing has orchestrated a "patriotic education campaign" aimed largely at undermining the Dalai Lama's influence as a religious and political leader. Government-organized "work teams" have conducted political indoctrination sessions in hundreds of monasteries aimed at coercing monks and nuns into opposing Tibetan independence, recognizing the Beijing-appointed Panchen Lama as the true Panchen Lama, and denouncing the Dalai Lama. Authorities have arrested dozens of monks and nuns for refusing to renounce their beliefs and expelled hundreds more from their monasteries. As part of this campaign, in 1996 Beijing banned all photographs of the Dalai Lama from monasteries and residences. In 1994, authorities had banned the sale of the Dalai Lama's photograph and displays of his photograph in state offices. The boy the Dalai Lama identified as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama is believed to be under house arrest in Beijing.

According to the TIN, in November at least 300 Tibetans reportedly participated in a demonstration in a town in Kandze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province following the arrest of three Buddhist religious figures. Troops forcibly dispersed what was one of the largest demonstrations in a Tibetan area since the late 1980s and detained at least 50 Tibetans.

Since the mid-1980s, Beijing has induced and facilitated the resettlement of Han Chinese into traditional Tibetan areas by providing individual benefits and building infrastructure projects. The resettlement and rapid modernization have altered the demographic composition of the region, displaced Tibetan businesses, reduced employment opportunities for Tibetans, and further marginalized Tibetan cultural identity. According to the ICT, authorities offer Han Chinese incentives including higher wages, improved pensions, low taxes and land rates, assured employment for family members,

quicker promotions, hardship allowances for people living in remote areas, readily available credit, better housing and health-care, and longer vacation periods. Tibetan employees receive less extensive benefits. Moreover, the CCP regularly favors Han Chinese over Tibetans for both skilled jobs and manual labor. Tibetans also face widespread discrimination in private-sector employment. In the early 1990s, Beijing implemented large-scale infrastructure and development projects that further facilitated the mass resettlement of Han Chinese into Tibet.

According to the U.S. Department of State, in recent years Chinese officials have downgraded the use of Tibetan as a language of instruction in education. Tibetans are caught between undermining their cultural autonomy by an increasing use of Mandarin and needing to speak Mandarin to gain preferences in government and factory employment and university admission. Although Beijing's draconian family planning policy ostensibly does not extend to Tibetans and other minorities, authorities frequently enforce the one-child rule in Tibet and in some cases reportedly use the threat of fines to coerce women into undergoing abortions and sterilizations. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, some 3,000 Tibetans flee to Nepal as refugees each year.

Georgia

Abkhazia

Polity: Presidential **Political Rights:** 6
Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 5
Population: 380,000 **Status:** Not Free
Ethnic Groups: Pre-war: Georgians, Abkhaz, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and others. Since 1993, most ethnic Georgians have fled or been expelled from the territory.



Overview:

In 1999, Abkhazia continued its efforts to achieve legal recognition of its de facto independence from Georgia. Abkhazia has effectively run its own affairs since a war with Georgia in 1992 and 1993, but Georgia has refused to recognize the province's separatist ambitions. In contrast with 1998, when fighting in the Gali region along the Georgia-Abkhazia border led to the deaths of Russian peacekeepers and civilians, in 1999 both Georgians and Abkhazians used mostly diplomatic and legal means to deal with each other. Low-level guerilla activity in Abkhazia nevertheless continued throughout the year.

In June, Georgian leadership lobbied for international condemnation of alleged ethnic cleansing in Abkhazia as a result of the 1992-93 war, and launched a campaign to bring Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba before the International Court in The Hague on charges of genocide. The United Nations Security Council, however, refused to label wartime attacks by the Abkhaz on ethnic Georgians as ethnic cleansing, effectively ending Georgian hopes that the UN would sanction the use of force against Abkhazia. Despite branding the Abkhazian leader a "war criminal," Georgia sent its representative to Moscow to negotiate with Ardzinba during the Abkhazian leader's visit to the Russian capital in August. Similar negotiations took place in June in Istanbul.

In October, presidential elections were held in Abkhazia. Incumbent President Vladislav Ardzinba was the only candidate running for office. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as other international organizations, refused to recognize the election as legitimate. Simultaneously with the elections, a referendum on independence was held in Abkhazia, in which 98 percent of voters were said to have supported independence. No state, however, has recognized the results of the referendum. Georgia denounced the polls as illegal and as an attempt to sabotage the peace talks. Nevertheless, the parliament of Abkhazia declared the region's independence from Georgia and called on the UN and other international organizations to recognize Abkhazia's sovereignty. In December, the inauguration ceremony of Ardzinba as Abkhazia's president was held in the regional capital Sukhumi.

Abkhazia, strategically located on Georgia's Black Sea coast, was an "autonomous" administrative unit during the Soviet period. Its borders were drawn to include not only the Abkhaz, who were native to the region, but also a large ethnic Georgian population. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Abkhaz officials pressed Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia for greater autonomy from Georgia. Gamsakhurdia agreed to a compromise, and a conflict between Abkhazia and Georgia eventually ensued.

As a result of the 1992-93 war, some 200,000 Georgian refugees fled Abkhazia. An estimated 20,000 civilians were killed in the fighting. In 1994, Georgian and Abkhaz representatives signed an agreement in Moscow agreeing to a ceasefire. Despite flare-ups, a shaky ceasefire has generally held since 1994.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Residents of Abkhazia can elect government officials, but approximately 200,000 displaced Georgians could not vote in the 1999 presidential elections or in parliamentary and local elections in previous years.

There are a handful of independent newspapers; electronic media are controlled by the government and generally reflect government positions.

Freedom of religion is respected for Muslims, but Christian Georgians and Armenians face harassment, intimidation, and persecution. President Ardzinba issued a decree in 1995 banning Jehovah's Witnesses in Abkhazia. Abkhaz authorities reportedly detained Maxim Harizia, a local representative of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and five other members of the sect in April 1999 for violating the decree. They were released in early May after their counsel argued that their detention violated a freedom of speech clause in the Abkhaz constitution.

Although the November 1994 constitution established a presidential-parliamentary system, the president exercises almost complete control of the region.

Trade unions are former affiliates of the Georgian Confederation of Trade Unions. Freedom of assembly is restricted.

The constitution purports to establish an independent judiciary, but the judicial system still includes Soviet-era practices. Most judges are nominated by the president and appointed with parliamentary approval. Georgians, Armenians, and certain Abkhaz clans face persecution. In July, a group of more than 30 officials and journalists was kidnapped and subsequently released in Abkhazia. In October, a group of UN officials was seized by unidentified gunmen and held for ransom for several days.

Large segments of the economy, which has been enfeebled by the war, are con-

trolled by criminal organizations and clans, and corruption is rife. Normal business activity has been impeded.

India

Kashmir

Polity: Indian-administered

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 7,700,000

Ethnic Groups: Muslim majority, Hindu minority

Trend Arrow: Kashmir receives a downward trend arrow due to an increase in political violence.

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free



Overview:

In 1999, armed conflict between India and Pakistan-backed infiltrators over strategic heights in Kashmir killed dozens of civilians and displaced thousands more, and insurgents and security forces continued to commit abuses against civilians.

After centuries of rule by Afghan, Sikh, and local strongmen, in 1846 the British seized control of the Himalayan region of Kashmir and sold it to the Hindu maharajah of the neighboring principality of Jammu. The maharajah subsequently incorporated Ladakh and other surrounding Himalayan areas into the new princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. At the partition of British India in August 1947, Maharajah Hari Singh attempted to preserve Jammu and Kashmir's independence. Pakistani tribesmen invaded, and the maharajah agreed to allow Jammu and Kashmir to accede to India in return for promises of autonomy and eventual self-determination. In October 1947, India and Pakistan went to war in Kashmir.

A United Nations-brokered ceasefire in January 1949 established the present-day boundaries, which a UN Military Observer Group monitors. Pakistan retained control of roughly one-third of Jammu and Kashmir, including the far northern and western areas. India retained most of the Vale of Kashmir (Kashmir Valley), a Muslim-majority region with a distinct language and culture, along with predominantly Hindu Jammu and Buddhist-majority Ladakh.

Article 370 of India's 1950 constitution and a 1952 accord granted the territory substantial autonomy. However, successive Indian governments largely annulled the autonomy guarantees, and in 1957 New Delhi formally annexed the two-thirds of Jammu and Kashmir under its control, creating India's only Muslim-majority state. In 1959, China occupied a portion of Jammu and Kashmir. India and Pakistan fought a second, inconclusive war over the territory in 1965. In the 1972 Simla Accord, New Delhi and Islamabad agreed to respect the 450-mile ceasefire line, known as the Line of Control, and to resolve Kashmir's status through negotiation.

In 1987, the pro-India National Conference party won state elections marred by widespread fraud, and authorities began arresting members of a new Muslim-based

opposition party. Militant groups responded by assassinating National Conference politicians and attacking government targets. In January 1990, New Delhi placed Jammu and Kashmir under federal rule. In the ensuing months atrocities by insurgents and brutal reprisals by security forces escalated in the Kashmir Valley. The militant groups included the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and other pro-independence groups composed largely of indigenous Kashmiris, as well as Islamist groups seeking incorporation into Pakistan and backed by Islamabad.

By the mid-1990s, the Indian army had greatly weakened the JKLF and other indigenous groups and secured most large Kashmir Valley towns and villages. The JKLF abandoned its armed struggle in 1994, and since then the insurgency has been controlled by Pakistani-backed fundamentalist groups composed largely of fighters from Pakistan and other countries. While militants continued to carry out assassinations and bombings in Srinagar and other Kashmir Valley towns, much of the heavy fighting shifted to Doda and other southern districts.

The October 1996 state elections returned Jammu and Kashmir to local rule for the first time since 1990. The National Conference, the only Kashmir-based party to contest the elections, won 57 of the 87 assembly seats and formed a government under party leader Farooq Abdullah.

In May 1999, India began air and ground attacks to dislodge hundreds of infiltrators who had seized strategic heights in the Kargil-Dras region on the Indian side of the Line of Control. New Delhi charged that the infiltrators were Pakistani troops and Pakistani-backed mercenaries. Islamabad alleged that the fighters were indigenous Kashmiris. In early July, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif defused the crisis by withdrawing the militants. Separatist violence escalated before and during India's national elections, in which Jammu and Kashmir chose six representatives to the federal parliament in staggered balloting in September and October.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: India has never held a referendum on Kashmiri self-determination, as called for in a 1948 UN resolution. Violence by militants and security forces has killed an estimated 25,000 people since 1989.

The All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), an umbrella group of pro-independence political and militant organizations, urged voters to boycott the September-October 1999 Indian parliamentary elections. Authorities detained at least 12 APHC leaders and forcibly broke up at least four pro-boycott rallies in the Kashmir Valley. Militant groups threatened to kill voters, assassinated two National Conference politicians and a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate, and carried out bombings and other attacks prior to and during the elections. Turnout was minimal in the Kashmir Valley, but higher in predominantly Buddhist Ladakh and other areas. Some residents in the Baramulla constituency told Agence France-Presse that soldiers had ordered villagers to vote. During the year, militants also killed at least two other National Conference politicians and a Congress party leader.

Militants had also enforced boycotts and threatened election officials and candidates during the 1996 national and state elections, and had killed at least 20 people during the October state vote. Soldiers and state-backed militias coerced some Kashmiris into voting.

Indian and Pakistani troops regularly trade artillery fire across the Line of Control. Human Rights Watch/Asia reported that during the May-July conflict, artillery fire killed

more than 1,200 people, many of them civilians. By early November, many of the more than 30,000 people who had fled their homes in Kargil, Poonch, and other areas remained displaced as a result of intermittent shelling.

The 1990 Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act and the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act allow security forces to search homes and arrest suspects without a warrant, shoot suspects on sight, destroy structures believed to house militants or arms, and detain suspects for two years without trial. The latter act also requires the central government to approve any prosecution of a security force member. In practice, authorities have rarely investigated and prosecuted members of the security forces for human rights violations.

Indian soldiers, federal paramilitary troops, and the police are responsible for arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, "disappearances," and summary killings of suspected militants and alleged civilian sympathizers. Amnesty International reported in February that while fewer people disappeared in 1998 than in previous years, since 1990 up to 800 people have disappeared in Jammu and Kashmir after having been arrested by police or the security forces. According to a July report by Human Rights Watch/Asia, local human rights groups estimate that security forces have committed several thousand summary executions since the insurgency began.

The Human Rights Watch/Asia report noted that as Indian security forces consolidated their hold over the Kashmir Valley in the mid-1990s, they largely ended the brutal reprisals against civilians that were fairly common early in the decade but that such abuses have increased in the southern border districts. The Indian army responded to killings of civilians by militants by conducting cordon-and-search operations in Muslim neighborhoods in southern districts during which they detained young men, beat and otherwise abused residents, damaged or destroyed property, and summarily executed suspected militants. Some Indian troops reportedly raped women during these operations. Human Rights Watch reported that army authorities have initiated a number of courts-martial of soldiers for rape, but that many reports of rape, in particular by federal or local police forces, are never investigated.

The security forces have also recruited former servicemen for Village Defense Committees that assist the army in security operations and have been responsible for extrajudicial executions, assaults, and other abuses. Since the mid-1990s, security forces have also organized and armed militias composed of former militants that reportedly carry out extrajudicial executions, disappearances, torture, and other abuses against pro-Pakistani militants as well as journalists and other civilians.

The judiciary barely functions. Militants routinely threaten judges, witnesses, and the families of defendants, and security forces frequently ignore court orders regarding detainees and human rights petitions. Although detentions under the security laws are nonrenewable, authorities frequently re-arrest suspects on new charges and impose a new two-year detention. Since 1998, a State Human Rights Commission has been investigating human rights complaints, but it cannot directly investigate abuses by the army or other federal security forces.

Militant groups are responsible for killing politicians, party workers, public employees, suspected informers, members of rival factions, and ordinary Hindu and Muslim civilians. Separatists have also kidnapped numerous government officials, politicians, and businessmen. They frequently resort to extortion and looting to raise money and are accused of using rape to deter women from acting as informants for security

forces. Since 1990, militants have killed dozens of Pandits, or Kashmiri Hindus. Tens of thousands of Pandits have fled the Kashmir Valley and live in camps in Jammu and Delhi. The July Human Rights Watch/Asia report estimated that between 1997 and mid-1999, militants massacred more than 300 mainly Hindu civilians in southern Kashmir.

In recent years, militant groups have kidnapped, tortured, killed, or otherwise harassed and threatened numerous journalists, and occasionally coerced newspapers into suspending publication. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists reported in 1998 that at least eight journalists have been murdered in Kashmir since 1989. Authorities occasionally beat, detain, and harass journalists. India's 1971 Newspaper Incitements to Offenses Act (in effect only in Jammu and Kashmir) authorizes district magistrates to censor publications in certain circumstances. The press occasionally reports on human rights violations by security forces, but journalists generally practice self-censorship.

Several human rights activists have been killed since the conflict began, and only a few individuals and groups continue to do human rights work. In recent years, authorities have briefly arrested APHC leaders either before or during peaceful protests. In September, Indian officials in New Delhi prevented two APHC members from traveling to New York to hold meetings at the opening of the UN General Assembly.

Indonesia

West Papua (Irian Jaya)

Polity: Dominant party (military-dominated) **Political Rights:** 6*

Economy: Capitalist-statist **Civil Liberties:** 5*

Status: Partly Free

Population: 1,700,000

Ethnic Groups: Papuan

Ratings change: West Papua's political rights rating changed from 7 to 6, its civil liberties rating from 6 to 5, and its status from Not Free to Partly Free, due to political liberalization and a decrease in abuses by security forces against civilians.



Overview:

In 1999, West Papuans increasingly participated in pro-independence activities in their resource-rich territory in the context of both a more liberal political atmosphere provided by Indonesia's democratic transition and an August referendum in East Timor in which the population voted overwhelmingly for independence from Jakarta.

The Dutch established the first European outpost in New Guinea in 1828 and signed an agreement with Britain in 1848 dividing the island into western and eastern sections. Britain and Germany colonized the eastern part, which today is the independent state of Papua New Guinea. The Japanese occupied the Dutch-controlled western part during World War II. Allied troops that landed in the territory in 1944 brought geologists who confirmed the existence of huge deposits of copper, nickel, gold, and other resources. In 1963, the Netherlands ceded administrative responsibility for the terri-

tory to Indonesia under a 1962 United Nations agreement mandating that a referendum on self-determination be held by 1969.

In the mid-1960s the Free Papua Movement (OPM) began waging a low-grade insurgency against Indonesian rule. Rather than hold a popular referendum, in the summer of 1969 Jakarta organized a tightly controlled "Act of Free Choice," in which 1,025 traditional leaders voted unanimously for Indonesia to annex the territory. The Indonesian military had a heavy presence in the territory and reportedly coerced the traditional leaders, and the UN special observer reported that "the administration exercised at all times a tight political control over the population." Nevertheless, the UN accepted the referendum. In 1973 Indonesia renamed the land, known locally as West Papua, "Irian Jaya."

In 1984 an army offensive against the OPM drove hundreds of villagers into neighboring Papua New Guinea, and security forces murdered the prominent anthropologist Arnold Ap. In 1989 the army conducted further anti-OPM offensives.

In the mid-1990s, the army committed a series of human rights violations near the giant Grasberg copper and gold mine in the central highlands owned by Freeport Indonesia, the local subsidiary of the U.S.-based Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold company. In 1995, Indonesia's official National Commission on Human Rights reported that the army had killed 16 civilians and caused 4 "disappearances" since October 1994, shortly after suspected OPM guerrillas killed a Freeport employee. The OPM abducted hostages on several occasions and reportedly killed several civilians. In 1995, the military freed a group of hostages seized by the OPM and subsequently carried out reprisals that local church groups said killed 13 people by October 1997.

In May 1998, Indonesia's longstanding, authoritarian president, Suharto, resigned under pressure from student-led protesters and the armed forces. Many West Papuans took advantage of the ensuing political liberalization to join pro-independence demonstrations. In July, troops forcibly dispersed several demonstrations. In the worst incident, soldiers killed at least 11 civilians when they opened fire on hundreds of tribesmen on Biak island who had raised the West Papuan flag.

In February 1999, some 100 West Papuan tribal and religious leaders met with Indonesian President B. J. Habibie in Jakarta. The leaders reportedly protested that the territory had not received a greater share of mining revenues and asked for genuine autonomy or independence for West Papua. During the year, Indonesian soldiers forcibly dispersed pro-independence demonstrators on several occasions. The OPM killed 4 plantation workers and held 11 others hostage for nearly four weeks in May. On December 1, an estimated 800,000 pro-independence supporters held peaceful demonstrations throughout the territory on the thirty-eighth anniversary of a Papuan declaration of independence under Dutch rule.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: West Papuans were not permitted to participate in the negotiations leading to the transfer of their land from Dutch to Indonesian rule in 1963, and they lack the right to self-determination. As residents of Indonesia's twenty-sixth province, they can participate in Indonesian elections. Papuans say authorities have expropriated their ancestral lands for development projects without adequate consultation or compensation and have denied them a fair share of the profits from the territory's resources. Papuans have also largely been excluded from employment in local government agencies and private mining

operations in favor of migrants from other parts of the archipelago who dominate the local economy.

The judiciary is not independent. In recent years, courts have convicted Papuans of subversion and rebellion for raising the West Papuan flag and for other peaceful pro-independence activities. Authorities have also imprisoned several OPM guerrillas and suspected supporters under Indonesia's harsh ant subversion laws. Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported in May that authorities had detained 74 persons, who had been meeting in a house in the city of Fakfak, for suspected independence activities. In December, AFP reported that Indonesian authorities had released what they described as the last 105 political prisoners in the country's jails, including 61 West Papuan political prisoners convicted for separatist activities.

In 1995, Indonesia's official National Commission on Human Rights accused the military of extrajudicial killing, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, disappearances, widespread surveillance of the local population, and destruction of property in the territory. Many abuses took place in Timika and other towns around Freeport's Grasberg mine. In 1999, the level of human rights abuses by the armed forces appeared to decline somewhat, but soldiers continued to enjoy impunity for past abuses. The few soldiers whom courts convicted of human rights abuses in recent years received relatively light sentences.

Since Suharto's ouster in 1998, Indonesian authorities have eased somewhat the tight restrictions they had maintained for years on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and association. The two main local newspapers reported more openly on political developments. Numerous West Papuan political groups also emerged. Indonesian authorities at times permitted residents to fly the West Papuan Morning Star flag, a separatist symbol, and in Jayapura, the provincial capital, residents often flew independence banners. Several nongovernmental organizations are active, including some that monitor human rights and provide legal aid.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. Most West Papuans follow either indigenous beliefs or Christianity. Since the 1970s, Indonesian authorities have resettled more than 170,000 residents of Java and other overcrowded islands into West Papua under a controversial transmigration program that critics charge jeopardizes local employment opportunities, expropriates traditional lands, and threatens to marginalize the indigenous culture. Many more migrants arrived on their own. In recent years, Bugis, Javanese, and other migrants and indigenous groups have had several clashes, leading to a number of deaths. During the year, there were several reports of harassment by West Papuans against migrants.

Iraq Kurdistan

Polity: Dual leadership
Economy: Capitalist-statist
Population: 4,000,000
Ethnic Groups: Kurdish majority, Assyrian

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Overview:

Despite international efforts at mediation, leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) failed to implement the provisions of the Washington Agreement signed in September 1998. Part of a U.S.-sponsored effort to unite Kurdish leaders against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, the agreement called for the establishment of an elected government after a transitional period of power sharing, arrangements for the equitable distribution of revenues from cross-border trade with Turkey, and the elimination of checkpoints to allow for freedom of movement throughout the region. While the KDP's Massoud Barzani and the PUK's Jalal Talabani continued to profess their commitment to the agreement, they have done little more than trade accusations. However, the intermittent military conflict between the two sides appeared to have subsided during 1999.

In April 1991, the United States, Britain, France, and Turkey established a secure region with a U.S.-enforced no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. Following the collapse of an autonomy agreement with the Iraqi government, the 105-member Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly was created in 1991. After a 1992 vote produced no clear winner, the KDP and the PUK agreed to fill 50 seats each. The remaining five seats were reserved for Christian Assyrians. Disputes over power and revenue sharing erupted into civil war in 1994, precluding operation of the government and any further elections. Frequent clashes occurred up until the Washington Agreement in 1998.

Aside from U.S. delegations to Iraqi Kurdistan in January and September, British and Turkish representatives joined the KDP and the PUK in Washington for nine days of negotiations under U.S. State Department auspices in June. Kurdish leaders were unable to agree on the details of revenue sharing or formation of a joint regional government. They did agree on establishing party representative offices in each other's territory, facilitating the return of internally displaced persons, and exchanging prisoners. They also agreed to refrain from attacking each other in the regional media, and the PUK agreed to deny sanctuary to Turkish Kurd rebels who had allegedly used PUK territory as a base from which to attack the KDP. By year's end, all agreements remained unimplemented, save for one prisoner exchange.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Iraqi Kurds cannot change their government democratically. Though reasonably free and fair elections were held in 1992, the post of president was never filled, and factional strife has precluded parliamentary activity since 1995. Currently, the KDP and PUK have separate administrations and cabinets for the territories under their control. In December,

the KDP declared that it had formed a new government led by Najervan Barzani, nephew of the KDP leader. Reportedly, Kosrat Rassul leads the administration under PUK control.

No independent judiciary exists in Kurdistan. Hearings are conducted, adjudicated, and enforced by local officials of the KDP and the PUK. The two groups run separate prisons and detention centers where human rights violations occur. The Kurdish administration of northern Iraq has been accused of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture of detainees, summary trials, and extrajudicial executions of prisoners of war, political opponents, and demonstrators. An unknown number of political prisoners have been released during the past year as part of reconciliation efforts.

Political chaos has allowed the Turkish rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to use Iraqi Kurdistan as a base for its military insurgency against Turkey. Efforts by the PKK to maintain control of territorial bases have led to political killings, terrorist actions, and the deaths of local residents. In turn, Turkish operations against the PKK in northern Iraq continue to result in civilian deaths and the destruction of residences.

Observers report a generally open climate for discussion of political issues. Many independent newspapers and opposition television and radio broadcasts are widely available. The absence of a governing authority has allowed free expression to flourish, though many journalists have ties to political organizations. The KDP launched a satellite television station in December 1998, allegedly with Turkish assistance, to counterbalance the pro-PKK MED-TV. MED-TV had been the only Kurdish-language television station in the world. Numerous political parties, social organizations, and cultural associations operate freely.

Kurds are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim. Ethnic and religious minorities face discrimination and harassment at the hands of Kurds in northern Iraq. According to the Assyrian International News Agency, killings of Assyrians by Kurds go uninvestigated and unpunished, Kurdish authorities and their associates expropriate historically Assyrian lands, and Assyrian churches, convents, and clergy have been attacked. Teaching of the Assyrian language is restricted. The case of a murdered Assyrian woman who was employed as a housekeeper by a KDP bureaucrat brought increased attention to tensions between Assyrians and Kurds in June. In August, KDP forces reportedly blockaded eight Assyrian villages because PKK guerrillas were allegedly benefiting from food supplies entering the villages. The Turkoman minority in northern Iraq complains of a policy of "ethnic cleansing" being implemented against them by Kurdish authorities.

Israel

Israeli-Administered Territories^a & Palestinian Authority-Administered Territories^b



Polity: Military and PLO administered

Economy: Capitalist

Population: 2,184,000

Ethnic Groups: Palestinian, Jewish, Bedouin

Political Rights: 6^a

Civil Liberties: 5^a

Status: Not Free

Political Rights: 5^b

Civil Liberties: 6^b

Status: Not Free

Overview:

While a resumption of the peace process in 1999 resulted in tangible gains for the Palestinians, accusations of autocratic leadership, mismanagement, and political corruption against Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat continued throughout the year. The United Nations called the Palestinian Authority's adherence to the rule of law "substantially underdeveloped." Arafat has yet to sign a Basic Law, or constitution, that would develop a system of checks and balances between the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and the executive leadership. Arafat is in failing health, and no clear successor is evident. The Middle East peace process, revived with the May election of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, has allowed the Palestinians greater freedom of movement and has brought about the return of more West Bank land. Armed shootouts between Palestinian police and demonstrators also took place during the year.

The West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem came under the British Mandate in 1920. Jordan seized East Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1948, while Egypt took control of Gaza. In the 1967 Six Day War, Israel took the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, which had been used by Syria to shell towns in northern Israel. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967 and the Golan Heights in 1981.

Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza began attacking mainly military targets in 1987 to protest Israeli rule in what became known as the intifada (uprising). A series of secret negotiations between Israel and Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) conducted in Oslo, Norway, produced an agreement in August 1993. The Declaration of Principles provides for three Israeli troop withdrawals and gradual Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. Negotiations on the final status of East Jerusalem and the fate of refugees are to be completed by the end of the year 2000.

Elections for the first Palestinian Legislative Council and head of the council's executive authority were held in January 1996 and were considered to be generally free and fair. Independents won 35 of the 88 council seats, while Arafat's Fatah movement won the remainder. Arafat won the leadership of the executive authority with 88 percent of the vote.

The election of Labor Party (One Israel) leader Ehud Barak as Israeli prime minister in May 1999 reinvigorated the Oslo agreement. Israeli-Palestinian talks had languished since the election of Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud government

in 1996. Under the provisions of Oslo implemented so far, the Palestinians have full autonomy in three percent of the West Bank, with another 31 percent jointly controlled. Most of Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho were turned over to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in May 1994, and in late 1995, Israel began redeploying its forces in the West Bank. An interim agreement concluded in January 1997 provided for Israeli redeployment in Hebron, a West Bank town with Jewish and Muslim holy sites.

In September, under American and Egyptian auspices, the Palestinians and Israelis recommitted themselves to the Wye River interim agreement, crafted initially in October 1998 at Wye River Plantation, Maryland. The original agreement calls for Israeli redeployment from 13.1 percent of the West Bank and provides for the transfer of 14.2 percent of jointly controlled land to Palestinian control in exchange for Palestinian security guarantees. Implementation of the accords stalled during Benjamin Netanyahu's term. Following the re-signing, Israel transferred seven percent more of the West Bank to Palestinian civil control, released 350 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, allowed the opening of an airport in Gaza, and established a safe passage route, allowing Palestinians freer movement between autonomous zones. As part of the accords, the CIA monitors Palestinian antiterrorism measures.

Allegations of corruption and abuse of power have been increasingly problematic for Arafat's government. His autocratic tendencies have put him at odds with the PLC. In early 1998, he announced an indefinite freeze on local elections, and he frequently scuttles the legislative process or refuses to sign PLC rules into law.

Government corruption and popular disaffection with the peace process have benefited Hamas, an Islamic group whose military wing is largely responsible for terrorist attacks against Israel. Vocal opposition to Israel and to Oslo has turned Hamas into a political alternative to Arafat's Fatah even as the Palestinian leader, under Western pressure, routinely jails Hamas activists.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Palestinian residents of the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem chose their first popularly elected government in 1996. Despite some irregularities, international observers regarded the vote as reasonably reflective of the will of the voters. The PLC has complained of being marginalized by executive authority; though it has debated hundreds of draft laws, only one has been signed into law. The Palestinian government indefinitely postponed local elections in May 1998, citing the threat of Israeli interference. However, most believe that democratic municipal elections would reflect widespread Palestinian disillusionment both with Oslo and with Arafat's leadership.

Although the PLC passed a Basic Law in 1997, the government has not approved it. Such a law would outline the separation between legislative and executive authority and presumably curtail Arafat's authority.

The PNA judiciary, consisting of criminal, civil, and state security courts, is not independent. Zuheir Sourani was appointed attorney general in June. The post had been vacant for 13 months after Fayez Abu Rahma resigned in April 1998 because of what he called continuous intervention by the minister of justice and the security services in judicial matters. In June 1999, LAW (Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights) published a study charging interference of the executive branch into the Palestinian judiciary, citing the dismissal of judges critical of the executive branch.

Palestinian judges lack proper training and experience. Israeli demands for a Palestinian crackdown on terrorism have given rise to state security courts, which lack almost all due process rights. Suspected Islamic militants are rounded up en masse and often held without charge or trial. There are reportedly hundreds of administrative detainees currently in Palestinian jails and detention centers. In January the PLC passed a resolution calling on the PNA to cancel political detention. Trials are conducted in secret, and sentences are often issued only hours after arrest. The same obtains for criminal cases; in February a Palestinian police officer accused of raping a 5-year-old boy was executed after a quick trial. In a separate case, a suspected Hamas member charged with killing a Palestinian police officer was sentenced to death. Arafat rescinded the death sentence in March in the wake of violent protests against the verdict. During the demonstrations, Palestinian security forces killed two teenagers in Gaza. In May Palestinian police arrested Saad al-Arbaidi, a leading Hamas activist.

Palestinian security forces routinely abuse, and sometimes torture, detainees. This practice is not prohibited under Palestinian law.

Palestinians accused by Israel of security offenses in Israeli-controlled areas are tried in Israeli military courts. Security offenses are broadly defined. Some due process protections exist in these courts, though there are limits on the right to counsel, bail, and the right to appeal. Administrative detention is widely used. Most convictions in military courts are based on confessions, which are often obtained through torture. Confessions are usually spoken in Arabic and translated into Hebrew for official records. Palestinian detainees seldom read Hebrew and thus sign confessions that they cannot read.

In September the Israeli supreme court outlawed the routine use of torture by the Israeli General Security Services (GSS) while interrogating suspected terrorists. Pursuant to the Wye Accords, Israel released over 350 Palestinian prisoners in 1999.

Israel continued with its policy of destroying Palestinian structures built without permits. Building permits are difficult for West Bank Palestinians to obtain. In May the Israeli army destroyed Palestinian reservoirs in Hebron, claiming they were built illegally.

In October Israel ended its policy of revoking residency rights of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem who could not prove that their "center of life" was within the city's municipal boundaries for seven consecutive years. After 1967 Israel had stripped the residency permits of approximately 5,400 Palestinians, many of whom had gone to work or study in the West Bank or abroad. The policy restricted their entry to the city and deprived them of health insurance and social security benefits.

In June 1999, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak declared his government would provide no new financial incentives to Jewish settlements and that new settlements were not to be established in the West Bank. Meanwhile, by September, Israel's housing ministry, controlled by the pro-settler National Religious Party, had authorized new construction in West Bank settlements located mostly around Jerusalem. The pace of authorizations exceeded that of the previous right-wing government. Barak ordered a review of the housing ministry's plans. While Barak convinced settlers to dismantle 12 illegal hilltop outposts in October, he also agreed to legalize 30 others.

Clashes between Palestinians, who often throw stones, and Israeli soldiers erupted in Bethlehem in October after the shooting death of a Palestinian merchant by an Israeli soldier. Israeli soldiers shoot rubber-coated bullets indiscriminately at Palestinian

demonstrators. An Israeli soldier at a military checkpoint in the West Bank killed one Palestinian, a 17-year-old boy. A 1997 draft law limits the right of Palestinians to claim compensation for wrongful injury or death caused by Israeli soldiers.

Under a 1995 Palestinian press law, journalists may be fined and jailed and newspapers closed for publishing "secret information" on Palestinian security forces or news that might harm national unity or incite violence. Several small private radio and television stations are pressured by authorities to provide favorable coverage of Arafat and the PNA. Official Palestinian radio and television are government mouthpieces. In May Palestinian security forces arrested three journalists working for an Islamic weekly who reported on instances of alleged torture by the Palestinian police. In September, Palestinian police arrested Maher Dasuki, a television talk-show host at a Ramallah-based television station, for hosting a guest who criticized Yassir Arafat. Upon his release 20 days later, Dasuki charged his jailers had tortured him.

Newspapers are subject to Israeli censorship on security matters, though such control has eased since 1993. Israeli authorities prohibit expressions of support for Hamas and other groups that call for the destruction of Israel. In May, Reporters Sans Frontieres protested the beating by Israeli police of 12 Palestinian and Israeli journalists covering Palestinian demonstrations at a proposed Jewish settlement site in East Jerusalem.

The Israeli government limits freedom of assembly; military orders ban public gatherings of ten or more persons without a permit, though they are generally only enforced with regard to Palestinians. The PNA requires permits for rallies and demonstrations and prohibits violence and racist sloganeering. Private Palestinian organizations must register with Israeli authorities. In the PNA, Palestinian and pro-Islamic organizations that oppose Arafat's government have been harassed and detained. In December, eleven Palestinian intellectuals were arrested and eight were jailed after signing a manifesto that held Arafat personally responsible for corruption in the PNA. A number of Palestinian legislators also signed the manifesto, two of whom were attacked by Palestinian police. One was shot and wounded. By late December six of the prisoners were released.

Palestinians gained a measurable improvement in their freedom of movement after Israel authorized a safe passage route connecting Gaza with the West Bank in October. Israel controls the route, and Palestinians must have valid permits to travel along it. All West Bank and Gaza residents must have identification cards in order to obtain entry permits into Israel and Jerusalem. Israel often denies permits to applicants with no explanation. Even senior Palestinian officials are subject to long delays and searches at Israeli West Bank checkpoints. Israel continued to impose curfews in areas of the West Bank during Israeli and religious holidays, which are considered high-risk periods. During curfews, Israelis are generally free to move about while Palestinians are confined to their homes. Israel frequently seals off the West Bank and Gaza in response to terrorist attacks, preventing tens of thousands of Palestinians from traveling to their jobs in Israel and causing economic hardship.

Palestinian women are underrepresented in most professions and encounter discrimination in employment. Under Sharia (Islamic) law, women are disadvantaged in marriage, divorce, and inheritance matters. Rape, domestic abuse, and "honor killings," in which unmarried women thought not to be virgins are murdered by male relatives, continue. Since societal pressures prevent reporting of such incidents, the exact frequency of attacks is unknown. Labor affairs in the West Bank and Gaza are governed

by a combination of Jordanian law and PNA decisions pending the enactment of new Palestinian labor codes. Workers may establish and join unions without government authorization. Palestinian workers seeking to strike must submit to arbitration by the PNA ministry of labor. There are no laws in the PNA-ruled areas to protect the rights of striking workers. Palestinian workers in Jerusalem are subject to Israeli labor law.

Moldova

Transdniester

Polity: Presidential
Economy: Statist (transitional)
Population: 700,000
Ethnic Groups: Ukrainian and Russian (60 percent),
 Moldovan-Romanian (40 percent)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Overview:

In 1999, international efforts continued to mediate the status of the self-proclaimed republic of Transdniester (DMR), the largely ethnically Slavic sliver of land in Moldova bordering

Ukraine.

In 1990, Slavs in the Transdniester, a narrow strip of land that was part of Ukraine until 1940 and joined to Moldova after Soviet annexation, proclaimed DMR. Fighting in Transdniester, where local Slavs were supported by Russian mercenaries and elements of Russia's 14th Army, ended with a cease-fire in mid-1992. In 1994, Russia and Moldova agreed to a three-year timetable for withdrawing the 14th Army. In 1996, President Smirnov was re-elected to another five-term.

Throughout 1999, high-level officials from Moldova, Transdniester, the international community, Russia and Ukraine met, but there was little progress. In March 1998 Ukraine agreed to send Ukrainian peacekeepers into a security zone already patrolled by Moldovan, Russian, and Transdniester forces. All questions other than the DMR's political status were resolved within a framework of 3 countries (Moldova, Russia, Ukraine) and the DMR. Moldova has offered to grant "the highest degree of autonomy" but the DMR has insisted on a confederation of two sovereign states. A joint statement of all 4 sides called in July for Moldova and the DMR to work towards reuniting into a single state with a single economic, defence, and legal framework.

The OSCE and Western governments have accused Russia of failing to live up to the December 1998 OSCE Oslo decision to provide a "feasible" schedule to remove their troops from the DMR. Ten Western governments agreed to finance the rapid removal and conversion of Russian troops and destruction of military stocks from the DMR in less than the five-year timetable provided by Russia.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Residents of Transdniester cannot elect their leaders democratically. In the 1996 presidential elections, incumbent Igor Smirnov defeated challenger Vladimir Malakhov, a businessman, 72 percent to 20 percent. Turnout was 57 percent, the lowest for the republic since its proclamation of sovereignty. The DMR authorities prevent citizens from tak-

ing part in Moldovan. In the March 1998 Moldovan parliamentary elections only 1-2 percent of DMR residents were able to take part.

The print and local electronic media are pro-government, though citizens have access to Moldovan, Ukrainian, and Russian radio as well as television broadcasts and print media. There are a number of political parties coalesced around the left-wing Bloc of Patriotic Forces as well as the moderate Movement for the Development of Dniester, which has backed the ruling Labor Movement of Dniester. Unions are remnants of Soviet-era labor organizations. The United Council of Labor Collectives works closely with the government.

The local judiciary is based on the Soviet-era model and is not independent. Economic rights have been circumscribed by the lack of reform, high-level corruption, and criminal activity. Conditions of incarceration are poor and often makeshift and prisoners report beatings. Political prisoners are denied access to lawyers and human rights activists and Presidential Decree No. 222 on the Introduction of a State of Emergency is used to arrest political suspects.

Freedom of conscience is prescribed in the DMR. Non-Orthodox groups are under pressure and are not tolerated. The DMR favors the Besarabian Orthodox Church which falls under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. DMR authorities have refused to register Jehovah's Witnesses and local Baptist parishes citing their conscientious objection. Members of both protestant churches have been arrested for the distribution of religious literature and their premises raided.

Ethnic Moldovans (41 percent of the DMR) are discriminated against in education with the Latin script banned from schools. All DMR schools continue to use cyrillic as the alphabet for Moldovan instruction, as in the Soviet era. Private schools using the Latin script were forced to close.

Morocco

Western Sahara

Polity: Appointed governors
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 228,000
Ethnic Groups: Arab, Sahrawi

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free



Overview:

The year 1999 saw a Saharan independence referendum further postponed by disagreement between the Moroccan government and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario) over the issue of who is entitled to Sahrawi citizenship, and thus to vote in the referendum. By year's end, however, Morocco's new king demonstrated a more humanitarian approach to the territory, diverging from his father's repressive policies and possibly paving the way for an eventual settlement.

Morocco and Mauritania partitioned Western Sahara in 1976 under a tripartite agreement with Spain, which had ruled the territory as a colony for 92 years. The Algerian-based Polisario opposed the partition with guerrilla units recruited largely from

nomadic tribes indigenous to the region. The weaker of the two occupying forces, Mauritania signed a peace agreement with the Polisario in 1979, prompting Morocco to seize Mauritania's section of the territory. The Polisario continued its guerrilla war against Morocco until 1991, when the UN Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was established to oversee the details of an independence referendum. Since then, progress on voter identification and registration has been hindered by disagreement over the electoral lists. Morocco has been accused of padding voter lists with its own citizens in order to influence the referendum result.

Morocco has ignored the International Court of Justice's 1975 finding against its claim to the territory and affirmation of the Sahrawis' right to self-determination. Under King Hassan, Moroccan security forces have responded to political opposition in Western Sahara with severe human rights abuses. In 1984, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, the Polisario's government-in-exile, prompting Morocco to withdraw from the organization.

In May 1999, revised arrangements for the identification of eligible voters called for a July 2000 referendum after the preparation of lists by MINURSO and an appeals procedure to handle potential voter claims. Voter identification resumed in June. By December, MINURSO had identified some 190,000 eligible voters, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees began preparing for the repatriation of about 100,000 Sahrawi refugees living in Algeria. However, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed a two-year referendum delay because the UN mission was inundated by nearly 79,000 appeals by individuals claiming to have been wrongly excluded from voter lists.

Mohammad XI succeeded Hassan as king upon the latter's death in July. With a reputation as an advocate of social change, the new king gradually adopted a gentler approach to Western Sahara. After initiating the establishment of an advisory council on the territory, he created a special fund to finance projects in Western Sahara aimed at easing unemployment and other social problems. In November, he sacked his interior minister, a longtime Hassan loyalist responsible for the brutal administration of Western Sahara, following a brutal crackdown on Sahrawi protesters by Moroccan security forces in Laayoune. King Mohammad apparently prefers to try to rule the Sahrawis through legitimacy rather than fear. With an independence referendum at least two years off, he may succeed.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sahrawis have never been allowed to elect their own government. The four provinces of Western Sahara have held local elections organized and controlled by the Moroccan government, and pro-Moroccan Sahrawis fill the seats reserved for Western Sahara in the Moroccan legislature.

Sahrawis are subject to Moroccan law. In a June 1999 report, Amnesty International stated that the human rights situation in Western Sahara continues to lag behind that in Morocco itself, particularly with regard to critics of the government. Arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, and torture by Moroccan security forces occur, though less frequently than in the past. The legal maximum limit of 72 hours' incommunicado detention is not always respected. Amnesty cites numerous cases of political prisoners detained for years following unfair trials, including Mohamed Daddach, a Sahrawi who has been in prison since 1979 for attempting to desert the Moroccan security forces, into which he had reportedly been forcibly enlisted.

More than 900 people "disappeared" at the hands of Moroccan security forces between the mid-1960s and the early 1990s. Though the government has released hundreds of Sahrawis after keeping them for years in secret detention centers, some 450 more remain unaccounted for. Another 70 are known by international human rights groups to have died in detention, but their deaths have not been acknowledged by the government. According to Amnesty International, many of those formerly disappeared are denied compensation or means of redress for their treatment by the government and are often intimidated or re-arrested by security forces.

Freedom of expression, association, and assembly are severely restricted in Western Sahara, where criticism of the government and opposition activities are not tolerated. Political parties, nongovernmental organizations, and private media are virtually nonexistent, and suspected pro-independence activists and opponents of the government, including former political prisoners, are subject to surveillance and harassment. Beatings and ill-treatment of demonstrators have also been reported. In September, Moroccan police violently repressed former phosphate company employees who were peacefully protesting against having been sacked and replaced by Moroccan workers. Between two and five protesters were reportedly killed in the crackdown, which prompted further clashes in Laayoune between security forces and Sahrawis. The Polisario reported in November that 26 Sahrawis were sentenced to up to 15 years' imprisonment for taking part in demonstrations.

Torture and other abuses by Polisario forces, including arbitrary killings, have been reported. However, verification of these reports is difficult because of scant access to areas under Polisario control. According to a UN special representative in Western Sahara, 191 Moroccan prisoners of war taken between 1975 and 1989 were released by the Polisario in November for humanitarian reasons.

Russia

Chechnya

Polity: Presidential **Political Rights:** 7*
Economy: Mixed statist **Civil Liberties:** 7*
Population: 500,000 **Status:** Not Free
 [rough estimate]

Ethnic Groups: Chechen majority

Ratings Change: Chechnya's political rights and civil liberties ratings changed from 6 to 7 due to the effects of Russia's attacks on the breakaway territory, including the lack of an effective elected political authority, the almost complete breakdown of rule of law, and the creation of a large refugee population.



Overview:

Three years after signing a peace agreement with Chechnya which ended a bloody two-year war, Russia launched a new military offensive against the breakaway territory in Septem-

ber. The renewed conflict closely followed incursions led by a Chechen warlord into neighboring Dagestan in August, and subsequent bomb attacks in Russia proper which Moscow blamed on Chechen rebels. As the Russian campaign intensified, mounting civilian casualties and a mass exodus of refugees brought growing international condemnation, although Russian public support for the war remained high. Having faced limited resistance in the early months of the war, Russian troops had yet to control the center of the heavily defended capital of Grozny by year's end.

A small Northern Caucasus republic covered by flat plains in the north-central portion and by high mountains in the south, Chechnya has been at war with Russia almost continuously since the late 1700s. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Chechnya engaged in a succession of anti-Soviet uprisings. In February 1944, the Chechens were deported en masse to Kazakhstan under the pretext of having collaborated with Germany during World War II. Although rehabilitated by Nikita Khrushchev in 1957 and allowed to return to their homeland, they continued to be politically suspect and were excluded from the region's administration.

In late 1990, the republic's Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration of sovereignty. Shortly after the aborted August 1991 coup in Moscow, a series of progressively larger and sometimes violent protest rallies broke out in Grozny, increasing tensions with Russia. In early September, Doku Zavgayev, who had served as head of the republic's Communist Party since 1989, was forced to resign, and the Supreme Soviet was dissolved. In his first decree as head of state after his election as Chechnya's president on October 27, 1991, Soviet Air Force Commander Dzhokhar Dudayev proclaimed Chechnya's independence on November 1. Moscow responded by increasing its political intimidation of the republic and instituting an economic blockade.

Following clashes with parliament in June 1992, to which elections had been held in October 1991, Dudayev announced the introduction of direct presidential rule. Parliament was dissolved in June 1993, sparking a battle between parliamentary supporters and Dudayev's national guard. Although the legislature was eventually restored, power remained largely in the hands of Dudayev, whose rule was marked by corruption and the rise of powerful clans and criminal gangs.

In 1994, Russia began overtly to assist Chechen figures opposed to Dudayev with the aim of overthrowing the territory's president. Low-intensity conflicts developed in July, and fighting escalated in September. Citing the need to protect Moscow's national security and important economic interests, such as railways and energy pipelines connecting Russia and Azerbaijan through Chechnya, Yeltsin sent 40,000 Russian troops into Chechnya by mid-December 1994 and attacked the capital city on New Year's Eve.

As Chechen resistance stiffened, Russian forces intensified the shelling of Grozny and other population centers throughout 1995, with civilians becoming frequent targets. Chechen forces regrouped, making significant gains against ill-trained, undisciplined, and demoralized Russian troops. Russian public opposition to the war increased, as did criticism from the country's media and most political groups. In June, Chechen commander Sharnil Basaev led an attack on the southern Russian city of Budyonnovsk, taking 2,000 civilians hostage in a local hospital. After two unsuccessful attempts by Russian troops to storm the hospital, negotiations between Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and the rebels resulted in the release of those hostages still alive and the safe passage of the rebels to Chechnya. In July, Russia and Chechnya signed an agree-

ment calling for an immediate cease-fire and demilitarization of the republic. However, the shaky truce failed to hold as clashes continued.

In April 1996, President Dudayev was reportedly killed by a Russian missile. With mounting Russian casualties, successful Chechen raids into Russia proper, and no imminent victory for Moscow, a peace deal was signed in August 1996. While calling for the withdrawal of most Russian forces from the breakaway territory, the document postponed a final settlement on the republic's status until 2001. Russia had suffered a humiliating defeat against the much smaller Chechen forces, while Chechnya's formal economy and infrastructure were virtually destroyed. The war had been marked by gross human rights violations by Russian government forces, including the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians. Abuses by armed Chechen opposition groups were also reported, including deliberate and arbitrary killings, torture, and ill-treatment of prisoners.

On January 27, 1997, moderate Chechen Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov was elected president over 12 other candidates, including his principal rival, field commander Shamil Basaev. Concurrent national legislative elections ushered in the fifth parliament since 1990, as none of the previous ones had lasted their full term. Maskhadov, who subsequently named Basaev acting prime minister, sought to maintain Chechen sovereignty while pressing Moscow to help rebuild the republic. On May 12, Yeltsin and Maskhadov signed an accord which included a reference to Moscow's recognition of Maskhadov as Chechnya's legitimate president.

Throughout 1998, Basaev and other former field commanders formed an unruly opposition of often competing warlords, removing large areas of Chechnya from Maskhadov's control. Maskhadov's weakness was illustrated by a series of kidnappings and hostage-takings of foreign nationals, culminating in the murder and decapitation of three Britains and a New Zealander in December. Some of the attacks were conducted by criminal gangs and others by militia groups attempting to discredit Chechnya's president.

In early August 1999, Chechen guerillas led by Basaev crossed into the neighboring republic of Dagestan, seizing several towns and declaring their intention to establish an Islamic state. Russian troops claimed to have driven the guerillas out of Dagestan and back into Chechnya by late September. During two weeks in late August and early September, a series of bomb blasts in Moscow and two other Russian cities killed nearly 300 people. The Kremlin blamed Chechen militants for the bombings, although both the Chechen government and rebel groups denied any involvement.

Using both the Dagestan incursion and the bombings as a pretext, Russia ordered air strikes on key Chechen military installations and economic targets in late September and the subsequent commencement of a ground offensive. According to many analysts, Moscow's primary objectives were to attract public support in Russia ahead of upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections by conducting a swift and decisive military campaign, and to regain control of a key oil pipeline crossing Chechen territory, which had been shut down for most of the year due to illegal tapping by Chechen rebels. After a rapid advance over the largely flat terrain in the northern third of the republic, which Chechen fighters surrendered with little opposition, Russian troops proceeded slowly toward the capital of Grozny, a key focus of the country's military campaign. In a notable policy shift, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in early

October effectively withdrew Moscow's longstanding recognition of President Maskhadov as the republic's main legitimate authority.

The Russian assault, in which civilians were increasingly becoming targets, led to the eventual flight of over 200,000 people, most to the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. Tiny and impoverished, Ingushetia struggled to cope with the massive influx of refugees who nearly doubled the republic's own population and were forced to live in tent camps or railway cars. Despite repeated warnings by international human rights organizations of an impending humanitarian crisis, Moscow denied the severity of the problem, only reluctantly allowing the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to send teams to Ingushetia to provide assistance.

As the number of civilian casualties and refugees continued to grow, Russia came under increasing criticism from Western governments and international political organizations, most of which had initially been largely silent on the issue. Moscow dismissed the criticism as interference in Russia's domestic affairs, claiming that it was hitting primarily Islamic rebels and that the number of civilian deaths was exaggerated. In contrast to the 1994-1996 conflict, the 1999 offensive enjoyed broad popular support in Russia. The bombings in August and September had heightened fears of further terrorist attacks and led to demands for more decisive action, while the Russian media largely reported the Russian government's official version of the war.

Some refugees began returning to villages under Russian military control in late November after receiving assurances that they would not come under attack. In an attempt to secure the Chechens' loyalty, the Russian army promised to restore vital services, such as gas and electricity, to captured towns. However, winning the long-term allegiance of most Chechens is likely to prove extremely difficult.

In early December, a Russian ultimatum, which was ultimately rescinded, to civilians to evacuate Grozny or risk death in the face of intensified air and artillery strikes attracted particularly broad condemnation. However, Russian shelling of the capital continued, despite the fact that an estimated 40,000 residents, most of whom were elderly or infirm, were unable to leave and were forced to take shelter in the cellars of bombed-out buildings. The same month, Asian Maskhadov fled Grozny for an undisclosed location. After entering Grozny in mid-December, where they faced intense resistance from highly-motivated and experienced rebel forces, Russian troops did not yet control the center of the city at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: With the resumption of war in Chechnya, residents of the republic currently do not have the means to change their government democratically. The 1997 presidential elections were characterized by international observers to have been reasonably free and fair. President Asian Maskhadov fled the capital city in December 1999, and the parliament elected in 1997 has ceased to function. Russia has placed Moscow loyalists or Chechens opposed to Maskhadov's central government in various administrative posts throughout the republic. In mid-November, the Kremlin chose Bislan Gantamirov to head the pro-Moscow Chechen State Council, a group of Chechens elected under Russian military occupation in June 1996, which was disbanded after Russian troops withdrew later that year. The recently reestablished Council, whose members opposed the breakaway territory's leadership, is portrayed by Moscow as the legitimate representative of Chechnya. Gantamirov, who was pardoned by Yeltsin a week earlier on charges of

embezzling funds meant for rebuilding the republic, replaced the Council's previous leader who had resigned in protest over the bombing of civilians.

The Russian authorities have severely limited international and local journalists' access to Chechnya through strict and sometimes arbitrary regulations. Few foreign reporters are allowed into the breakaway republic. The threat of kidnapping for ransom, which had emerged after the first war in Chechnya, had already discouraged many journalists from traveling to the republic several years ago. Russian journalists face both official and informal restrictions on their coverage of the war, and most allowed entry into Chechnya report the official Russian government position. The disruptive effects of the war, including limited electricity and other vital services and the displacement of large number of persons, severely hinders news production and the flow of information to the general public. A state of emergency announced by President Maskhadov in August included a ban on all media except for state-owned television. Grozny's television station was damaged by Russian bomb attacks in late September. An information service, *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, and a Web site with news articles about developments in Chechnya provide the viewpoint of separatist Chechen rebels.

Muslims enjoy freedom of worship, although the Wahhabi sect, a group with roots in Saudi Arabia and characterized by a strict observance of Islam, was banned in July 1998. Most religious Chechens practice Sufiism, a mystical form of Islam characterized by the veneration of local saints and by groups practicing their own rituals.

In February, President Maskhadov suspended constitutional law and declared the introduction of Islamic Sharia law, effectively removing the territory's legislature of most of its authority. On February 10, the legislature reportedly was replaced by a 34 member *shura* (council) with the responsibility of "consulting" with the president. However, the *shura* apparently did not meet during 1999. In July, the government announced the formation of a national council to include Maskhadov and rival field commanders. Since the resumption of war, the rule of law has become virtually nonexistent. Civilians have been subject to harassment and violence, including extrajudicial executions, at the hands of Russian soldiers. Refugees who have returned to their homes have reported widespread looting by Russian troops and confiscation of their personal belongings, while Russian military authorities have shown general disregard for these abuses. Citizens continue to face threats from rival warlords and criminal gangs, most of whom operate with impunity.

Travel both within and outside of the republic is severely restricted. Moscow officially closed the territory's borders following the resumption of war, and Russian troops effected a full blockade of Grozny in early December. The Russian military consistently failed to provide safe exit routes for many civilians out of the conflict zones. Most of the routes were not fully functioning or proved too dangerous to use because of continued artillery fire along the way. In addition, refugees often faced long waits at border checkpoints or were forced to pay bribes to cross. Human Rights Watch reported that some refugee camp authorities in Ingushetia were forcibly repatriating people to Chechnya by depriving them of food rations. Many Chechens, including those in Russian-occupied areas, fear to travel even short distances because of landmines and reports of Russian pilots shooting randomly at passing civilians.

Widespread corruption and the economic devastation caused by the war severely limit equality of opportunity. Ransoms obtained from kidnapping, counterfeiting, and

the production of low-quality fuel from oil stolen from pipelines provide money for guerillas and criminal elements. Residents of Russian-occupied areas report that promised pensions and other social welfare payments, gas, and electricity have not resumed for the most part, and that schools remain closed. Women continue to face discrimination in a traditionally male-dominated culture.

Turkey Cyprus (T)

Polity: Presidential parliamentary democracy (Turkish-occupied) **Political Rights:** 4
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 178,000

Ethnic Groups: Turkish Cypriot, Turkish, Greek Cypriot, Maronite



Note: See Cyprus (Greek) under country reports

Overview: Proximity talks between Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash resumed in December after a two-year suspension. Negotiations about the future of the divided island broke down in 1997 when the European Union announced its decision to open accession negotiations with the Greek Cypriot republic. Having been overlooked as a possible candidate for EU membership, Turkey strongly opposed accession talks with Cyprus, while Greece vowed to block any EU expansion that did not include Cyprus. But by the end of 1999, goodwill between Greece and Turkey following recent devastating earthquakes in both countries, and EU acceptance of Turkey as an official candidate for membership, brought the two sides to New York City under UN auspices.

Annexed to Britain in 1914, Cyprus gained independence in 1960 after a ten-year guerrilla campaign demanding union with Greece. In July 1974, Greek Cypriot national guard members, backed by the military junta in power in Greece, staged an unsuccessful coup aimed at unification. Turkey invaded five days later, seized 37 percent of the island, and expelled 200,000 Greek Cypriots from the north. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) declared its independence in 1982, but so far has been recognized only by Turkey, which maintains more than 35,000 troops in the territory and provides an estimated \$200 million in annual assistance. The Green Line, a buffer zone controlled by a 1,200-strong UN peacekeeping force, has partitioned Cyprus since 1974. The capital, Lefkosa (Nicosia), remains the world's only divided capital city. Tensions and intermittent violence between the two populations have plagued the island since independence.

The north is far less prosperous than the south. An embargo by Greek Cypriots significantly hampers the northern economy. Turkish Cypriots' standard of living is roughly a third that of Greek Cypriots, and the north is almost totally reliant on the

Cypriot Republic for a free but insufficient power supply that suffers frequent outages from 12 to 14 hours per day. However, a vibrant black market economy provides for a great deal of unaccounted wealth.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan mediated 12 days of proximity talks between Clerides and Denktash in December. Denktash refuses to meet Clerides face to face until the international community recognizes him as a head of state equal in status with Clerides. Annan said that the first round of talks, aimed at laying the groundwork for direct negotiations, addressed a range of issues dividing the two communities, but he also warned against "unrealistic expectations." A second round of talks is scheduled for late January 2000.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Turkish Cypriots can change their government democratically. The TRNC's presidential-legislative system of government calls for the election of a leader and a national assembly every five years or less. Rauf Denktash was elected in April 1995 in elections considered free and fair by observers. Following December 1998 elections, the National Unity Party (UBP) took the most seats in the 50-member national assembly. At least six other parties participated in those elections, four of them winning seats. Some 1,000 Greek and Maronite residents in the north are disenfranchised in Turkish Cypriot elections, but may vote in Cypriot Republic elections.

The judiciary is independent, and trials generally meet international standards of fairness. Civilians suspected of violating military zones are tried in military courts, which respect due process but have been accused of pro-military bias. Turkish Cypriot police sometimes flout due process rights and abuse and intimidate detainees. Detainees are generally not held longer than 24 hours without charge.

Private newspapers and periodicals offer a wide range of views, while at least eight new private radio and three private television stations broadcast alongside government stations. International broadcasts are available without interference. Turkish Cypriot officials have been known to file cases against journalists for "damaging the prestige of the state," but cases are often dropped before coming to trial.

Advocates for Greek Cypriots living in the northern city of Karpassia claim that these individuals are denied freedom of movement, speech, property ownership, and access to Greek media. Outstanding property claims arising from the 1974 division and population exchange remain an obstacle to a final peace and demilitarization settlement on the island. Approximately 85 percent of the land in the north is claimed by its original Greek Cypriot owners. In 1996, the European Court for Human Rights held Turkey directly responsible for denying a Greek Cypriot refugee access to her property since 1974. In 1998, the court ordered Turkey to pay her approximately \$574,000 in compensation. However, Turkey has not implemented the decision.

About 99 percent of Turkish Cypriots are Sunni Muslim. There is a small Bahai community, and there are some 650 Greek Orthodox and Maronite residents in the north. All reportedly worship freely. Turkish Cypriots have difficulty traveling to other countries because travel documents issued by the TRNC are recognized only by Turkey, and some restrictions exist on travel to and from the south. A 1998 law improves women's rights in matters of marriage and divorce. Turkish Cypriot women may now marry non-Muslim men and expect a fair distribution of assets in case of divorce. Le-

gal provisions that require equal pay for equal work are not respected in all sectors. Workers may form independent trade unions, bargain collectively, and strike.

United Kingdom Northern Ireland

Polity: British administration and elected local councils
Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free

Economy: Mixed capitalist

Population: 1,630,000

Ethnic Groups: Protestant [mostly Scottish and English], (57 percent), Irish Catholic (43 percent)



Overview:

On December 1, the new Northern Ireland Assembly based in Belfast was officially handed power by the British parliament, marking the end of 27 years of direct rule from London and ushering in a new era of Protestant-Catholic relations in North Ireland. The inauguration of a shared-power arrangement between the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, stems from the Good Friday Agreement, of April 10, 1998. The convening of the assembly came more than a year after its representatives were elected. Delaying implementation of the new executive were continuing disputes between the Protestants and Catholics over the Good Friday Agreement. Central to the disputes was the Irish Republican Army's refusal to commit itself to surrendering its arms before establishment of the assembly. Intervention by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, who presided over weeks of secret talks between the two sides, finally resulted in a compromise agreement in late November 1999 in which the Ulster Unionists agreed to let Sinn Fein sit on the executive prior to IRA disarmament. For its part, Sinn Fein conceded that arms decommissioning was an essential component of establishing a lasting peace and the IRA pledged to agree to a disarmament timetable.

Northern Ireland comprises six of the nine counties of the Irish province of Ulster. At the insistence of the locally dominant Protestants, these counties remained part of the United Kingdom after the other 26 predominantly Catholic Irish counties gained independence in 1921. Catholics now constitute a majority in four of the six counties. The demographic trends have aroused anxiety within the Protestant population, which is largely descended from seventeenth-century Scottish and English settlers. Britain's 1920 Government of Ireland Act set up the Northern Irish parliament, which functioned until the British imposed direct rule in 1972.

Disorder resulting from a nonviolent Catholic civil rights movement in the 1960s prompted the deployment of British troops that have occupied Northern Ireland ever since. Amid sectarian violence beginning in the 1970s, division grew within both the primarily Protestant unionist and Catholic nationalist communities. In addition to numerous political factions including the conservative Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the

hardline Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the interdenominational unionist Alliance Party, the moderate pro-nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the pro-nationalist Sinn Fein, there are also paramilitary groups on both sides that continue to engage in terrorism.

Negotiations for a peace settlement began in June 1996, with Sinn Fein banned by Prime Minister John Major pending a cessation and renunciation of violence by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). British general elections in May 1997 brought significant gains for republicans and a new Labour government with a mandate to bolster the peace process. Sinn Fein took 17 percent of the Northern Ireland vote, while Tony Blair's Labour Party won an overwhelming majority in the Commons, and thus the freedom to make concessions to republicans in the interests of peace. Prime Minister Blair immediately began to undertake confidence-building measures, such as reinstating official contacts between his government and Sinn Fein and repatriating republican prisoners from Northern Irish to Irish prisons. His efforts helped secure an IRA ceasefire in July 1997.

Intense determination by Blair and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland kept negotiations on track despite numerous incidents of sectarian violence. Paramilitary groups that had not declared ceasefires carried out car bombings, mortar attacks, and shootings, killing at least ten people between Christmas 1997 and March 1998. Blair intervened personally when talks reached crisis proportions, appealing for a settlement before the summer marching season, when Protestant parades through predominantly Catholic neighborhoods have in the past sparked violent unrest. Former Senator Mitchell, who chaired the talks, presented an urgent compromise plan in April 1998. A marathon negotiating session including Blair and Ahern, with phone calls from U.S. President Bill Clinton, culminated in the Good Friday Agreement.

Elections to the new 108-member assembly took place in June 1998. Of almost 300 candidates representing 12 political parties, pro-agreement moderates and nationalists were the big winners. The UUP took 28 seats, while the Progressive Unionists, aligned with the UUP, took 2. The SDLP took 24, and Sinn Fein 18. Anti-agreement parties took 28 seats, not enough to hinder political progress. The Alliance Party won six seats. Women candidates, including the Women's Coalition party, won just 12 seats. At the first session of the new legislature on July 1, David Trimble of the UUP and Seamus Mallon of the SDLP were elected first minister and deputy first minister, respectively.

Devolution of power from London to Belfast officially took place in December 1999. The new assembly features a democratically elected legislature in Belfast with full executive and legislative authority and a weighted voting system giving Catholics substantial power; a north-south council of Irish and Northern Irish officials to develop consultation, cooperation, and action on matters of mutual interest; and a council of British, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish, and Welsh representatives to meet twice a year to discuss particular policy issues. Perhaps most significantly, the Good Friday Agreement recognizes the "principle of consent," that is, that a united Ireland will not come about without the consent of a majority of people in both jurisdictions.

In May, Protestant loyalists clashed with nationalists during a junior Orange Order march through a mostly Catholic nationalist area in Portadown. Protestants stage about 2,500 marches every year to observe ancient military victories against Catholics. About 12 of the parades have been disputed because their routes take them through Catholic

neighborhoods. A decision by the new Northern Ireland Parades Commission to re-route a contentious parade led to rioting and firebombings in July 1998.

Paramilitaries, particularly extremist splinter groups on both sides, engaged in terrorist acts with the intention of derailing the peace process. Internecine violence continued in 1999, with several attacks and murders carried out by paramilitary squads in control of working-class neighborhoods throughout Northern Ireland. The groups carry out so-called punishment beatings against members of their own kind over perceived grudges and displays of disrespect to paramilitary leaders. Many of the squads answer directly to political groups, be they Sinn Fein or the Progressive Unionists. According to the U.S. State Department, there was a total of 73 shootings (47 loyalist, 26 republican) and 132 paramilitary-style assaults (91 loyalist, 26 republican) in 1999. Both Catholic and Protestant churches were the targets of 72 sectarian attacks during the year.

In March, the Red Hand Defenders, a loyalist paramilitary group, claimed responsibility for the car-bombing death of Rosemary Nelson, a prominent Ulster civil rights lawyer. The continuation of sectarian violence forced hundreds of people, both Protestant and Catholic, from their homes. Despite fears of a breakdown in the peace agreement, many argue that widespread revulsion triggered by the attacks has helped isolate splinter groups by undermining their support.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The people of Northern Ireland elected a 108-member legislature in June 1998, the first since the 1972 suspension of a regional parliament and the imposition of direct British rule. The new assembly has full executive and legislative power, though Britain maintains responsibility for defense and security.

The Good Friday Agreement specifically addresses a number of human rights issues. It requires that the British government incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into Northern Irish law, so that aggrieved parties may take alleged violations of the ECHR to Northern Irish courts. It also requires Britain to promote equality in employment, to preserve and promote the Irish language, to reduce the number of British soldiers deployed in Northern Ireland to peacetime levels, to establish an independent commission on police reform, and to appoint a body to review the criminal justice system. Human Rights Watch has expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of such provisions, but has cautioned that some of them are too vague to be effective.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act, which is renewed every two years, allows the police to arrest without a warrant persons believed to be involved in terrorism, and to detain and interrogate such persons for up to 48 hours without legal representation or judicial review. The Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act (EPA) allows for the arrest and detention for up to four hours of an individual suspected of committing or believed about to commit any offense. Under the EPA, individuals suspected of terrorist offenses are tried in "Diplock courts" without a jury. Diplock courts have been widely criticized by human rights groups for compromising internationally recognized standards for due process. Antiterrorism laws passed in the wake of a bombing in Omagh, Northern Ireland, in August 1998 make it possible to jail suspected terrorists on the word of a senior police officer and allow security forces to seize the property and money of known terrorists. Two dozen arrests were made in Ireland and Northern Ireland in

1999 in connection with the Omagh bombing. In November 1999, British Home Secretary Jack Straw announced a set of proposals to "modernize and make permanent" the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Included in the proposals was a move to broaden the definition of terrorism, which could implicate those who propose the political use of violence. Civil rights leaders decried the new proposals, fearing they would curtail legitimate political activity.

In September, the Policing Commission, established by the Good Friday Agreement, released its report on police reform. The report called for "a human rights-based approach" to policing and suggested renaming the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) the "Northern Ireland Police Service." The report also calls for a pledge to uphold fundamental human rights and for new codes of ethics and practice based on the ECHR. It also recommends human rights training for officers and the establishment of a civilian oversight police board.

Human Rights Watch criticized the report, saying it failed to address several key human rights concerns, among them, new allegations of police involvement in the 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Patrick Finucane and concerns over the investigation into the March 1999 murder of civil rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson. Nelson's murder came months after a January 1999 report, issued by Param Cumaraswamy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, charged the RUC with "complete indifference" to the harassment of defense lawyers in Northern Ireland. In April 1999, the European Parliament issued a resolution that pointedly called for an independent police investigation of Nelson's murder without RUC involvement.

Human Rights Watch also criticized the RUC for using excessive force against nationalist demonstrators during a junior Orange Order march in May. Criticism of the RUC follows a report, issued in April 1998 by a UN special rapporteur, which cited evidence of systematic harassment by the RUC of lawyers representing republican and loyalist terrorist suspects. In July, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to stop funding RUC training and exchange programs in the United States.

According to the Good Friday Agreement, prisoners convicted of paramilitary offenses could be free within two years if their affiliate groups maintain a ceasefire. As of December 1999, 310 paramilitary prisoners, including 157 republicans and 143 loyalists were paroled. The release of some 400 paramilitary inmates is scheduled to be completed by July 2000.

In January 1998, the British government launched an inquiry into the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre in Londonderry, in which 14 unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers were shot to death by British paratroopers. The inquiry is chaired by three judges and has the power to subpoena witnesses and compel the disclosure of documents. While the inquiry initially intended to satisfy demands for accountability and was not supposed to protect the identities of soldiers involved in the incident, those who opened fire won anonymity in June 1999. A British high court ruling reasoned that the former paratroopers faced a significant threat of reprisal if their identities were revealed.

United States

Puerto Rico

Polity: Elected governor and legislature
Economy: Capitalist
Population: 3,900,000
Ethnic Groups: Hispanic

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free



Overview:

The major issue confronting Puerto Rico was the controversy over the use of the island of Vieques as a bombing target range by the U.S. Navy. In April, a Puerto Rican civilian was killed accidentally during a bombing exercise, an incident that triggered protests by Puerto Ricans and ignited a debate over American policy towards Puerto Rico in the U.S.

Puerto Rico acquired the status of a commonwealth of the U.S. following approval by plebiscite in 1952. Under its terms, Puerto Rico exercises approximately the same control over its internal affairs as do the 50 U.S. states. Though U.S. citizens, residents cannot vote in presidential elections and are represented in the U.S. Congress by a delegate to the House of Representatives who can vote in committee but not on the floor. The Commonwealth constitution, modeled after that of the U.S., provides for a governor and a bicameral legislature, consisting of a 28-member senate and a 54-member house of representatives, elected for four-year terms. A supreme court heads an independent judiciary and the legal system is based on U.S. law.

Pedro Rosello of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) was elected governor in 1992, defeating Victoria Munoz Mendoza of the incumbent Popular Democratic Party (PPD). The PNP also won majorities in the House and Senate. The election reflected anti-incumbency sentiment and immediate concerns over rising crime, high unemployment, government corruption, and education. At the November 5, 1996 elections, Rosello won reelection with 51.2 percent of the vote, defeating the PPD's Hector Luis Acevedo, who took 44.4 percent. David Noriega Rodriguez of the Puerto Rico Independence Party (PIP) took 3.8 percent. In the house, the PNP won 37 seats; the PPD, 16; and the PIP, 1. In the senate, the PNP won 19 seats; the PPD, 8; and the PIP, 1.

The island's relationship with the U.S. remains a fundamental issue. In a nonbinding 1993 referendum, voters narrowly opted to retain commonwealth status. Commonwealth status received 48.4 percent of the vote, statehood 46.3 percent, and independence 4.4 percent. The vote indicated significant gains for statehood, which in the last referendum, in 1967, received only 39 percent of the vote. Voters also opted for the status quo in a 1998 referendum. Although many more voters chose statehood over independence, the percentage who voted for no change in the island's status was greater than it had been in the 1993 referendum.

Any vote to change the island's status would have to be approved by the U.S. Congress. As Washington seeks to cut the federal deficit, the benefits the island receives under Section 936 of the Internal Revenue Code will be phased out over the next ten years. This fundamental change in U.S.-Puerto Rican economic relations means

the eventual end to a system in which income tax and wage credits to subsidiaries of U.S. companies operating on the island will be eliminated, as will the tax-free status of interest earned on income.

The bombing at Vieques led to the most serious clash between Puerto Rican and American officials in many years. After protest demonstrations and statements urging that the bombing site be returned to Puerto Rican control issued by leading Puerto Rican political figures, President Clinton issued a decision calling for the military to gradually withdraw from the bombing range over a five-year period.

Clinton provoked another controversy when he released eleven Puerto Rican nationalists who had been sentenced to long prison terms for their involvement in terrorist activities. The decision was made despite the strong objections of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Although Puerto Ricans generally supported the clemency move, the release of the prisoners did not spark renewed interest in national independence on the island.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans are guaranteed all civil liberties granted in the U.S. The press and broadcast media are well developed, highly varied, and critical. In recent years, the Puerto Rican Journalists' Association has charged successive governments with denying complete access to official information. During 1998, a major controversy broke out between the Rosello administration and the island's largest newspaper, *El Nuevo Dia*. In March, the Inter-American Press Association urged the government to end an "ugly campaign of harassment" against the newspaper. In May, the controversy was resolved when the government agreed to end the practice of using advertising to influence news coverage. Labor unions are well organized and have the right to strike.

The greatest cause for concern is the steep rise in criminal violence in recent years, much of which is drug related, and the Rosello government's response to it. Puerto Rico is now the Caribbean's main drug transshipment point. Since mid-1993, about 80 public housing projects, or about two-fifths of the total, have been under the control of the National Guard, the first time U.S. military units have been routinely deployed to fight crime.

Yugoslavia

Kosovo

Polity: Internationally-administered autonomous province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Political Rights: 6*

Civil Liberties: 6*

Status: Not Free

Economy: Mixed-statist

Population: 2,100,000 (approximate est.)

Ethnic Groups: Albanians (over 90 percent), Serbs and Montenegrins (6 percent), others [Roma, Bosniacs, Turks, Gorani] (4 percent)

Ratings Change: Kosovo's political rights and civil liberties ratings changed from 7 to 6 due to the introduction of international administration, which ended several years of arbitrary rule by the Milosevic regime.



Overview:

The year 1999 may have been the most dramatic year in the tiny Serbian province's history, when it became the focus of world attention because of a conflict between the Yugoslav government, the local Albanian population, and NATO. In January 1999, the relative lull in the previous year's fighting between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Yugoslav government was broken after a battle between the KLA and Yugoslav government forces in the village of Racak left some 30 to 40 civilians dead. Western governments, together with Russia, thereupon embarked upon an effort to find a formula for mediating the conflicting demands between the two sides, culminating in a series of meetings held in Rambouillet, France, in February and March, aimed at finding a military and political solution to Kosovo's status. The first round of talks failed when neither the Albanian nor the Yugoslav side was willing to sign on to a settlement proposed by the Western powers. A second round of talks held in March succeeded in getting Albanian support when Albanian negotiators were promised that if they agreed to the Western plan and the Yugoslav government did not, NATO would begin a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

The NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia commenced on March 24 and lasted 78 days. The Yugoslav army and Serbian paramilitary units began an extensive campaign of forcibly expelling the Kosovo Albanian population in areas where the KLA had been active and from likely invasion routes into the country. At the height of the conflict, more than 1.4 million Kosovo Albanians were in refugee camps in neighboring Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, or hiding in the mountains and forests of Kosovo. Many were forced to turn over their identity documents before leaving or to sign over their property to local Serb officials. Widespread destruction and looting of Albanian property by Serb paramilitary units also ensued.

Although a definitive count of the number of Albanians killed as a result of fighting between the KLA and Yugoslav forces, summary executions by Serb paramilitary units, and the NATO bombing itself may never be known, the most reliable estimates put the figure somewhere around 5,000. Several prominent Kosovo Albanian leaders, such as Fehmi Agani, were apparently killed by Yugoslav security personnel. In May, Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and four of his colleagues were indicted by

the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes committed in Kosovo.

NATO itself came under considerable criticism for the way in which it was conducting the air war against Yugoslavia. Many human rights groups especially singled out NATO's indiscriminate use of cluster bombs across many parts of Kosovo. In September 1999, four children were killed by an unexploded NATO cluster bomb. It is estimated that thousands of such bombs are scattered throughout Kosovo.

A settlement to the conflict was agreed upon on June 3; Yugoslav forces withdrew from Kosovo and NATO troops moved in. According to the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, Kosovo was to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, albeit with wide-ranging autonomy. The resolution deliberately left the province's ultimate status vague. Within weeks, the vast majority of the Kosovo Albanian refugees in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro made their way back to the province.

After the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, however, neither NATO nor the UN were able to normalize the situation in Kosovo or to bring a satisfactory degree of security to its population. In the ensuing power vacuum, the KLA quickly moved to assume power throughout the province. According to U.S. media reports, KLA leader Hashim Thaci tried to consolidate his grip on power by authorizing an assassination campaign of his political opponents within the Albanian community. On a broader scale, the KLA and organized crime syndicates from Albania proper quickly began a campaign to expel all non-Albanian ethnic groups from the province. Killing, kidnapping, arson, and other forms of intimidation against Serbs, Roma (Gypsies), Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, and even Catholic Albanians repeatedly occurred. In October, a UN official was murdered in one of Pristina's main streets after replying to a question in Serbian. In October, an international advocacy group reported that the level of violence in Kosovo had remained almost constant.

NATO and the UN proved unable to stem the chaos and violence in Kosovo. In August, NATO adopted a policy giving itself the right to deport anyone from Kosovo suspected of causing trouble, without initiating any judicial proceedings. By the end of the year, fewer than 150,000 non-Albanians lived in Kosovo. Most non-Albanians were concentrated in small, isolated enclaves protected by NATO. Of the estimated 20,000 Serbs who had lived in Pristina prior to March 24, by year's end fewer than 500 were left, almost all of whom had round-the-clock NATO protection in front of their apartments and NATO troops bringing them food and other necessities.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The human rights situation did not qualitatively improve after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, the deployment of NATO troops, and the creation of a UN civilian administration. Prior to June 1999, attacks against Albanians were widespread; after June 1999, attacks against non-Albanian ethnic groups began in similar fashion. The typical methods of such harassment included murder, arson, kidnapping, and theft of property. Journalists and human rights groups have also reported an increase in the trafficking of women, as organized crime groups from Albania infiltrated the province and began kidnapping women.

The vacuum in authority that developed in Kosovo after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and the deployment of NATO forces left a legal limbo in which Kosovo's judi-

cial system completely broke down. Although according to the terms of UNSCR1244 Yugoslav law still applied throughout the province, Albanian judges refused to use it, and the UN was reluctant to impose Yugoslav law because of inconsistencies with various human rights norms. Consequently, conducting almost any type of legal proceeding in the province became impossible. According to Bernard Kouchner, the chief UN official in the province, in the UN's first five months more than 400 murders had occurred, yet only four people had been brought to trial. A report by a western nongovernmental organization noted reluctance on the part of Albanian judges to prosecute individuals accused of violent crimes due to various forms of pressure and harassment. Although the UN had planned to have 6,000 international police personnel in the province, by year's end only 1,600 had been deployed.

Freedom of the press came under significant attack throughout the year. Yugoslav security forces frequently raided Albanian media outlets at the beginning of the year, confiscating equipment and harassing journalists. During the war, many Albanian media outlets went underground. After Yugoslav forces withdrew, Albanian media were sometimes subjected to attacks by Albanian extremists. In one instance, an armed group of men broke into a radio station and broadcast an appeal to Albanians to attack the Serbs left in the province. In protest against the campaign of violence against non-Albanians, a prominent Kosovo Albanian activist, Veton Surroi, published an article criticizing the persecution of minorities and calling for tolerance. In response, a local newspaper affiliated with the KLA called Surroi a traitor and a spy for Milosevic, effectively sentencing him to death.

Throughout the year, religious objects frequently came under attack. Numerous mosques were destroyed during the period of hostilities between NATO and Yugoslavia from March-June. After June, Serbian Orthodox religious sites became frequent targets for destruction; according to one report issued by Serbian Orthodox Church itself, over 80 churches, monasteries, and other church property were destroyed after NATO assumed control of Kosovo. Roman Catholics and their holy sites have also come under increasing attack.

The Comparative Survey of Freedom—1999-2000

Survey Methodology

Since its inception in the 1970s, Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* survey has provided an annual evaluation of political rights and civil liberties throughout the world. The *Survey* attempts to judge all countries and territories by a single standard and to emphasize the importance of democracy and freedom. At a minimum, a democracy is a political system in which the people choose their authoritative leaders freely from among competing groups and individuals who were not designated by the government. Freedom represents the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination.

The *Survey* rates countries and territories based on real world situations caused by state and nongovernmental factors, rather than on governmental intentions or legislation alone. Freedom House does not rate governments per se, but rather the rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals in each country or territory. The *Survey* does not base its judgment solely on the political conditions in a country or territory (i.e., war, terrorism, etc.), but by the effect which these conditions have on freedom.

Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of democracy. The *Survey* demonstrates that, in addition to countries in Europe and the Americas, there are free states with varying forms of democracy functioning among people of all races and religions in Africa, the Pacific, and Asia. In some Pacific islands, free countries can have political systems based on competing family groups and personalities rather than on European- or American-style political parties. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of democracies in developing countries, and the *Survey* reflects their growing numbers. To reach its conclusions, the *Survey* team employs a broad range of international sources of information, including both foreign and domestic news reports, NGO publications, think tank and academic analyses, and individual professional contacts.

DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES OF THE SURVEY

The *Survey's* understanding of freedom encompasses two general sets of characteristics grouped under political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, which is the system by which the polity chooses authoritative policy makers and attempts to make binding decisions affecting the national, regional, or local community. In a free society, this represents the right of all adults to vote and compete for public office, and for elected representatives to have a decisive vote on public policies. Civil liberties include the freedoms to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state.

The *Survey* employs two series of checklists, one for questions regarding political rights and one for civil liberties, and assigns each country or territory considered a numerical rating for each category. The political rights and civil liberties ratings are then averaged and used to assign each country and territory to an overall status of "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free." (See the section below, "Rating System for Political Rights

and Civil Liberties," for a detailed description of the *Survey's* methodology.)

Freedom House rates both independent countries and their territories. For the purposes of the *Survey*, countries are defined as internationally recognized independent states whose governments are resident within their officially claimed borders. In the case of Cyprus, two sets of ratings are provided, as there are two governments on that divided island. This does not imply that Freedom House endorses Cypriot division. We note only that neither the predominantly Greek Republic of Cyprus, nor the Turkish-occupied, predominantly Turkish territory of the Republic of Northern Cyprus, is the *de facto* government for the entire island. This year, East Timor moved from the disputed territory to country category following the region's successful referendum on independence in August 1999. The referendum, which was widely recognized by the international community, led to East Timor being placed under United Nations administration during its transition to full sovereignty.

Freedom House divides territories into two categories: related territories and disputed territories. Related territories consist mostly of colonies, protectorates, and island dependencies of sovereign states which are in some relation of dependency to that state and whose relationship is not currently in serious legal or political dispute. Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, and French Guiana are three examples of related territories. Since most related territories have a broad range of civil liberties and some form of self-government, a higher proportion of them have the "Free" designation than do independent countries. Disputed territories represent areas within internationally recognized sovereign states which are usually dominated by a minority ethnic group and whose status is in serious political or violent dispute. This group also includes territories whose incorporation into nation-states is not universally recognized. In some cases, the issue of dispute is the desire of the majority of the population of that territory to secede from the sovereign state and either form an independent country or become part of a neighboring state. Tibet, Kashmir, and Abkhazia are examples falling within this category.

Freedom House assigns only designations of "Free," "Partly Free," and "Not Free" for the eight related territories with populations under 5,000, designated as "microterritories," without corresponding category numbers. However, the same methodology is used to determine the status of these territories as for larger territories and independent states. The microterritories in the *Survey* are Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Rapanui (Easter Island), Falkland Islands, Niue, Norfolk Island, Pitcairn Islands, Svalbard, and Tokelau. The *Survey* excludes from its consideration uninhabited territories and such entities as the U.S.-owned Johnston Atoll, which has only a transient military population and no native inhabitants.

POLITICAL RIGHTS CHECKLIST

1. Is the head of state and/or head of government or other chief authority elected through free and fair elections?
2. Are the legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
3. Are there fair electoral laws, equal campaigning opportunities, fair polling, and honest tabulation of ballots?
4. Are the voters able to endow their freely elected representatives with real power?
5. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

6. Is there a significant opposition vote, de facto opposition power, and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?
7. Are the people free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?
8. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups have reasonable self-determination, self-government, autonomy, or participation through informal consensus in the decision-making process?

Additional discretionary Political Rights questions:

- A. For traditional monarchies that have no parties or electoral process, does the system provide for consultation with the people, encourage discussion of policy, and allow the right to petition the ruler?
- B. Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?

To answer the political rights questions, Freedom House considers the extent to which the system offers the voter the chance to make a free choice among candidates, and to what extent the candidates are chosen independently of the state. Freedom House recognizes that formal electoral procedures are not the only factors that determine the real distribution of power. In many Latin American countries, for example, the military retains a significant political role, and in Morocco the king maintains considerable power over the elected politicians. The more that people suffer under such domination by unelected forces, the less chance the country has of receiving credit for self-determination in our *Survey*.

THE CIVIL LIBERTIES CHECKLIST

- A. Freedom of Expression and Belief
 1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression? (Note: in cases where the media are state-controlled but offer pluralistic points of view, the *Survey* gives the system credit.)
 2. Are there free religious institutions and is there free private and public religious expression?

- A. Association and Organizational Rights
 1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?
 2. Is there freedom of political or quasi-political organization? (Note: this includes political parties, civic organizations, ad hoc issue groups, etc.)
 3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

A. Rule of Law and Human Rights

1. Is there an independent judiciary?
2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Is the population treated equally under the law? Are police under direct civilian control?
3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture,

whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies? (Note: freedom from war and insurgencies enhances the liberties in a free society, but the absence of wars and insurgencies does not in and of itself make a not free society free.)

4. Is there freedom from extreme government indifference and corruption?

D. Personal Autonomy and Economic Rights

1. Is there open and free private discussion?

2. Is there personal autonomy? Does the state control travel, choice of residence, or choice of employment? Is there freedom from indoctrination and excessive dependency on the state?

3. Are property rights secure? Do citizens have the right to establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, or organized crime?

4. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?

5. Is there equality of opportunity, including freedom from exploitation by or dependency on landlords, employers, union leaders, bureaucrats, or other types of obstacles to a share of legitimate economic gains?

When analyzing the civil liberties checklist, Freedom House does not mistake constitutional guarantees of human rights for those rights in practice. For states and territories with small populations, particularly tiny island nations, the absence of trade unions and other types of association is not necessarily viewed as a negative situation unless the government or other centers of domination are deliberately blocking their formation or operation. In some cases, the small size of these countries and territories may result in a lack of sufficient institutional complexity to make them fully comparable to larger countries. The question of equality of opportunity also implies a free choice of employment and education. Extreme inequality of opportunity prevents disadvantaged individuals from enjoying full exercise of civil liberties. Typically, very poor countries and territories lack both opportunities for economic advancement and other liberties on this checklist. The question on extreme government indifference and corruption is included to highlight that the human rights of a country's residents suffer when governments ignore the social and economic welfare of large sectors of the population. Government corruption can pervert the political process and hamper the development of a free economy.

RATING SYSTEM FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The *Survey* rates political rights and civil liberties separately on a seven-category scale, 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. A country is assigned to a particular numerical category based on responses to the checklist and the judgments of the *Survey* team at Freedom House. According to the methodology, the team assigns initial ratings to countries by awarding from 0 to 4 raw points per checklist item, depending on the comparative rights or liberties present. (In the *Surveys* completed from 1989-90 through 1992-93, the methodology allowed for a less nuanced range of 0 to 2 raw points per question.) The only exception to the addition of 0 to 4 raw points per checklist item is additional discretionary question B in the political rights checklist, for which 1 to 4

raw points are subtracted depending on the severity of the situation. The highest possible score for political rights is 32 points, based on up to 4 points for each of eight questions. The highest possible score for civil liberties is 56 points, based on up to 4 points for each of fourteen questions.

After placing countries in initial categories based on checklist points, the *Survey* team makes minor adjustments to account for factors such as extreme violence, whose intensity may not be reflected in answering the checklist questions. These exceptions aside, the results of the checklist system reflect real world situations and allow for the placement of countries and territories into their respective categories.

Freedom House assigns upward or downward trend arrows to countries and territories to indicate general positive or negative trends that may not be apparent from the ratings. Such trends may or may not be reflected in raw points, depending on the circumstances in each country or territory. A country cannot receive both a numerical ratings change and a trend arrow in the same year, nor can it receive trend arrows in the same direction in two successive years. Distinct from the trend arrows which appear before the name of a country above its respective country report, the triangles located next to the political rights and civil liberties ratings (see accompanying tables of comparative measures of freedom for countries and related and disputed territories) indicate changes in those ratings caused by real world events since the last *Survey*.

Without a well-developed civil society, it is difficult, if not impossible, to have an atmosphere supportive of democracy. A society that does not have free individual and group expression in nonpolitical matters is not likely to make an exception for political ones. There is no country in the *Survey* with a rating of 6 or 7 for civil liberties and, at the same time, a rating of 1 or 2 for political rights. Almost without exception in the *Survey*, countries and territories have ratings in political rights and civil liberties that are within two ratings numbers of each other.

Political Rights

Category Number	Raw Points
1	28-32
2	23-27
3	19-22
4	14-18
5	10-13
6	5-9
7	0-4

Civi Liberties

Category Number	Raw Points
1	50-55
2	42-49
3	34-41
4	26-33
5	17-25
6	9-16
7	0-8

EXPLANATION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES RATINGS

Political Rights

Countries and territories which receive a rating of 1 for political rights come closest to the ideals suggested by the checklist questions, beginning with free and fair elections. Those who are elected rule, there are competitive parties or other political groupings, and the opposition plays an important role and has actual power. Citizens enjoy self-determination or an extremely high degree of autonomy (in the case of territories), and minority groups have reasonable self-government or can participate in the government through informal consensus. With the exception of such entities as tiny island states, these countries and territories have decentralized political power and free subnational elections.

Countries and territories rated 2 in political rights are less free than those rated 1. Such factors as gross political corruption, violence, political discrimination against minorities, and foreign or military influence on politics may be present and weaken the quality of democracy.

The same conditions which undermine freedom in countries and territories with a rating of 2 may also weaken political rights in those with a rating of 3,4, or 5. Other damaging elements can include civil war, heavy military involvement in politics, lingering royal power, unfair elections* and one-party dominance. However, states and territories in these categories may still enjoy some elements of political rights, including the freedom to organize quasi-political groups, reasonably free referenda, or other significant means of popular influence on government.

Countries and territories with political rights rated 6 have systems ruled by military juntas, one-party dictatorships, religious hierarchies, or autocrats. These regimes may allow only a minimal manifestation of political rights, such as competitive local elections or some degree of representation or autonomy for minorities. Some countries and territories rated 6 are in the early or aborted stages of democratic transition. A few states are traditional monarchies that mitigate their relative lack of political rights through the use of consultation with their subjects, toleration of political discussion, and acceptance of public petitions.

For countries and territories with a rating of 7, political rights are absent or virtually nonexistent due to the extremely oppressive nature of the regime or severe oppression in combination with civil war. States and territories in this group may also be marked by extreme violence or warlord rule which dominates political power in the absence of an authoritative, functioning central government.

Civil Liberties

Countries and territories which receive a rating of 1 come closest to the ideals expressed in the civil liberties checklist, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion. They are distinguished by an established and generally equitable system of rule of law and are comparatively free of extreme government indifference and corruption. Countries and territories with this rating enjoy free economic activity and tend to strive for equality of opportunity.

States and territories with a rating of 2 have deficiencies in three or four aspects of civil liberties, but are still relatively free.

Countries and territories which have received a rating of 3,4, or 5 range from those that are in at least partial compliance with virtually all checklist standards to those with a combination of high or medium scores for some questions and low or very low scores on other questions. The level of oppression increases at each successive rating level, particularly in the areas of censorship, political terror, and the prevention of free association. There are also many cases in which groups opposed to the state engage in political terror that undermines other freedoms. Therefore, a poor rating for a country is not necessarily a comment on the intentions of the government, but may reflect real restrictions on liberty caused by nongovernmental terror.

Countries and territories rated 6 are characterized by a few partial rights, such as some religious and social freedoms, some highly restricted private business activity, and relatively free private discussion. In general, people in these states and territories experience severely restricted expression and association, and there are almost always

political prisoners and other manifestations of political terror.

States and territories with a rating of 7 have virtually no freedom. An overwhelming and justified fear of repression characterizes these societies.

FREE, PARTLY FREE, NOT FREE

The *Survey* assigns each country and territory the status of "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free" by averaging their political rights and civil liberties ratings. Those whose ratings average 1-2.5 are generally considered "Free," 3-5.5 "Partly Free," and 5.5-7 "Not Free." The dividing line between "Partly Free" and "Not Free" usually falls within the group whose ratings numbers average 5.5. For example, countries that receive a rating of 6 for political rights and 5 for civil liberties, or a 5 for political rights and a 6 for civil liberties, could be either "Partly Free" or "Not Free." The total number of raw points is the definitive factor which determines the final status. Countries and territories with combined raw scores of 0-30 points are "Not Free," 31-59 points are "Partly Free," and 60-88 are "Free." Based on raw points, this year there is one unusual case: Mali's ratings average 3.0, but it is "Free."

It should be emphasized that the "Free," "Partly Free," and "Not Free" labels are highly simplified terms that each cover a broad third of the available raw points. Therefore, countries and territories within each category, especially those at either end of each category, can have quite different human rights situations. In order to see the distinctions within each category, one should examine a country or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings.

The differences in raw points between countries in the three broad categories represent distinctions in the real world. There are obstacles which "Partly Free" countries must overcome before they can be called "Free," just as there are impediments which prevent "Not Free" countries from being called "Partly Free." Countries at the lowest rung of the "Free" category (2 in political rights and 3 in civil liberties, or 3 in political rights and 2 in civil liberties) differ from those at the upper end of the "Partly Free" group (e.g., 3 for both political rights and civil liberties). Typically, there is more violence and/or military influence on politics at 3, 3 than at 2, 3.

The distinction between the least bad "Not Free" countries and the least free "Partly Free" may be less obvious than the gap between "Partly Free" and "Free," but at "Partly Free," there is at least one additional factor that keeps a country from being assigned to the "Not Free" category. For example, Lebanon, which was rated 6,5 "Partly Free" in 1994, was rated 6,5, but "Not Free," in 1995 after its legislature unilaterally extended the incumbent president's term indefinitely. Though not sufficient to drop the country's political rights rating to 7, there was enough of a drop in raw points to change its category.

Freedom House does not view democracy as a static concept, and the *Survey* recognizes that a democratic country does not necessarily belong in our category of "Free" states. A democracy can lose freedom and become merely "Partly Free." Sri Lanka and Colombia are examples of such "Partly Free" democracies. In other cases, countries that replaced military regimes with elected governments can have less than complete transitions to liberal democracy. Guatemala fits the description of this kind of "Partly Free" democracy. Some scholars use the term "semi-democracy" or "formal democracy," instead of "Partly Free" democracy, to refer to countries that are democratic in form but less than free in substance.

The designation "Free" does not mean that a country enjoys perfect freedom or lacks serious problems. As an institution which advocates human rights, Freedom House remains concerned about a variety of social problems and civil liberties questions in the U.S. and other countries that the *Survey* places in the "Free" category. An improvement in a country's rating does not mean that human rights campaigns should cease. On the contrary, the findings of the *Survey* should be regarded as a means to encourage improvements in the political rights and civil liberties conditions in all countries.

Democracy's Century

Political scientists who point to the proliferation of democratically elected governments around the world since the mid-1970s refer to ours as the "democratic age." But the data presented in this end-of-the-century report make it clear that this century has not only been one of struggle between peoples and ideologies, but that it has also been a century of struggle for national sovereignty and for the individual's democratic sovereignty within the state. In a very real sense, the twentieth century has become the "Democratic Century."

The findings here are significant. They show a dramatic expansion of democratic governance over the course of the century. This political trend has been matched by significant economic progress associated with the expansion of market economies. Like economic progress, political progress has been uneven. But the general trends are hard to ignore. They reinforce the conclusion that humankind, in fits and starts, is rejecting oppression and opting for greater openness and freedom.

As depicted in the accompanying graphs and charts, the twentieth century has seen a significant expansion of democratically elected governments and a dramatic expansion in the number of sovereign states. In 1900, there were no states that could be judged to be electoral democracies by the standard of universal suffrage for competitive multiparty elections. The United States, Britain, and a handful of other countries possessed the most democratic systems, but their denial of voting rights to women, and in the case of the United States to black Americans, meant that they were countries with restricted democratic practices. Those states with restricted democratic practices were 25 in number and accounted for just 12.4 percent of the world population. In 1900 monarchies and empires predominated.

By 1950, the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism, the postwar momentum toward decolonization, and the postwar reconstruction of Europe and Japan resulted in an increase in the number of democratic states. At midcentury, there were 22 democracies accounting for 31 percent of the world population

THE FATE OF EMPIRES			
(Number of today's countries under imperial rule in 1900 and their Freedom House ratings in 2000)			
	Free	Partly Free	Not Free
<i>Austro-Hungarian Empire</i>	2	3	0
<i>Belgian Empire</i>	0	0	1
<i>British Empire</i>	18	14	7
<i>Chinese Empire</i>	1	0	0
<i>Dutch Empire</i>	0	2	0
<i>French Empire</i>	2	7	9
<i>German Empire</i>	5	2	3
<i>Italian Empire</i>	0	0	2
<i>Japanese Empire</i>	2	0	1
<i>Ottoman Empire</i>	2	3	5
<i>Portuguese Empire</i>	2	3	1
<i>Russian Empire</i>	5	5	5
<i>Spanish Empire</i>	0	0	1

Tracking Polity in the Twentieth Century

	Sovereign States and Colonial Units			Population (millions)		
	2000	1950	1900	2000	1950	1900
DEM	120 (62.5%)	22 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3,439.4 (58.2%)	743.2 (31.0%)	0 (0.0%)
RDP	16 (8.3%)	21 (13.6%)	25 (19.2%)	297.6 (5.0%)	285.9 (11.9%)	206.6 (12.4%)
CM	0 (0.0%)	9 (5.8%)	19 (14.6%)	0 (0.0%)	77.9 (3.2%)	299.3 (17.9%)
TM	10 (5.2%)	4 (2.6%)	6 (4.6%)	58.2 (1.0%)	16.4 (0.7%)	22.5 (1.3%)
AM	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.3%)	5 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	12.5 (0.5%)	610.0 (36.6%)
AR	39 (20.3%)	10 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1,967.7 (33.3%)	122.0 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)
TOT	5 (2.6%)	12 (7.8%)	0 (0.0%)	141.9 (2.4%)	816.7 (34.1%)	0 (0.0%)
C	0 (0.0%)	43 (27.9%)	55 (42.3%)	0 (0.0%)	118.4 (4.9%)	503.1 (30.2%)
P	2 (1.0%)	31 (20.1%)	20 (15.4%)	4.8 (0.1%)	203.3 (8.5%)	26.5 (1.6%)
TOTAL	192 (100.0%)	154 (100.0%)	130 (100.0%)	5,909.6 (100.0%)	2,396.3 (100.0%)	1,668.0 (100.0%)
DEM = Democracy RDP = Restricted Democratic Practice CM = Constitutional Monarchy TM = Traditional Monarchy AM = Absolute Monarchy				AR = Authoritarian Regime TOT = Totalitarian Regime C = Colonial Dependency P = Protectorate		

and a further 21 states with restricted democratic practices, accounting for 11.9 percent of the globe's population.

By the close of the century, liberal and electoral democracies clearly predominate, and their numbers have expanded significantly in the Third Wave, which has brought democracy to much of the post-Communist world and to Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa. Electoral democracies now represent 120 of the 192 existing countries and constitute 62.5 percent of the world's population. At the same time liberal democracies—that is, countries Freedom House regards as free and respectful of basic human rights and the rule of law—are 85 in number and represent 38 percent of the global population.

The growth in the political autonomy of the individual (usually accompanied by a broader expansion of freedom) is reflected in the adoption of key post-World War II international documents, particularly the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. A growing global human rights and democratic consciousness is reflected in the expansion of democratic practices and in the extension of the democratic franchise to all parts of the world and to all major civilizations and religions.

At the same time as the individual has gained greater sovereignty, so too have many formerly disenfranchised peoples and nations attained statehood. The second major trend of the century is the proliferation of sovereign states. In 1900, there were 55 sovereign states; in 1950, 80; and today there are 192. Of the 55 sovereign states existing in 1900, 13 were extensive empires, the largest of which were the British, the Russian, the French, the Austro-Hungarian, and the Ottoman. Thirty-three of today's countries were parts of other states, and 113 were under imperial and colonial rule.

Sovereignty, of course, is no guarantee of democracy. Nor is democracy an absolute guarantee of respect for human rights. But the three trends—a tendency for governments to become democracies, for individuals to gain greater recognition of their human rights, and for peoples to acquire statehood—have generally progressed together in this century. Still, because democracy has expanded rapidly over the last 20 years, many new democracies are fragile and the gains could well be reversed.

And while this past century's clamor for democracy and freedom has not always been peaceful (regrettably, it has frequently met with brutal repression), it has contributed to the prospect of a more peaceful world, for history indicates that stable and established democracies rarely war with one another.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the political typology of the world in 1900 and 1950 have been assembled by Freedom House researcher Jason Muse and reviewed by Freedom House's senior staff. The data for the year 2000 are the product of Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World* survey.

The findings were reviewed by a team of scholars that consisted of Professor Orlando Patterson of Harvard University; Professor Seymour Martin Lipset and Professor Francis Fukuyama, both of George Mason University; Dr. Fareed Zakaria, the managing editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine; and Dr. Marc Plattner, co-director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies and the editor of the *Journal of Democracy*. Adrian Karatnycky, president of Freedom House, and Arch Puddington, vice president for research, also took part in the review of the data. This report is available on our Web site (www.freedomhouse.org).

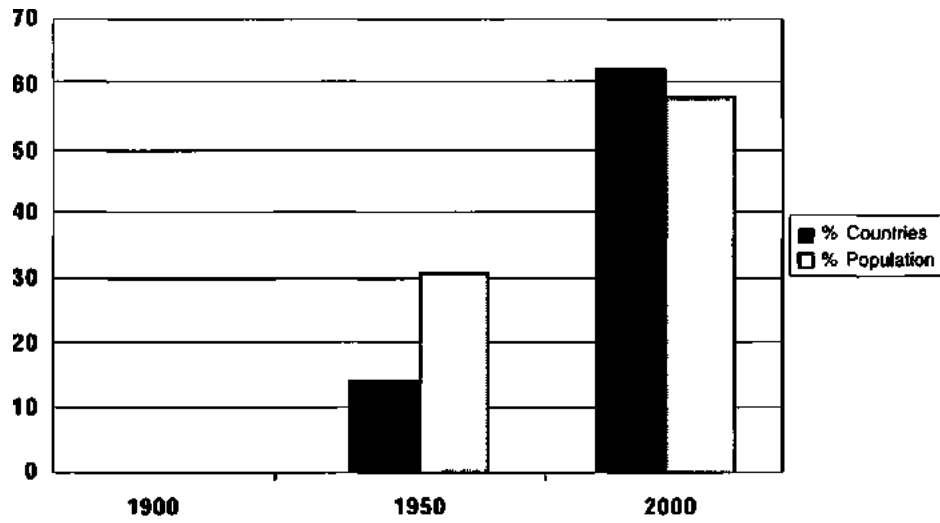
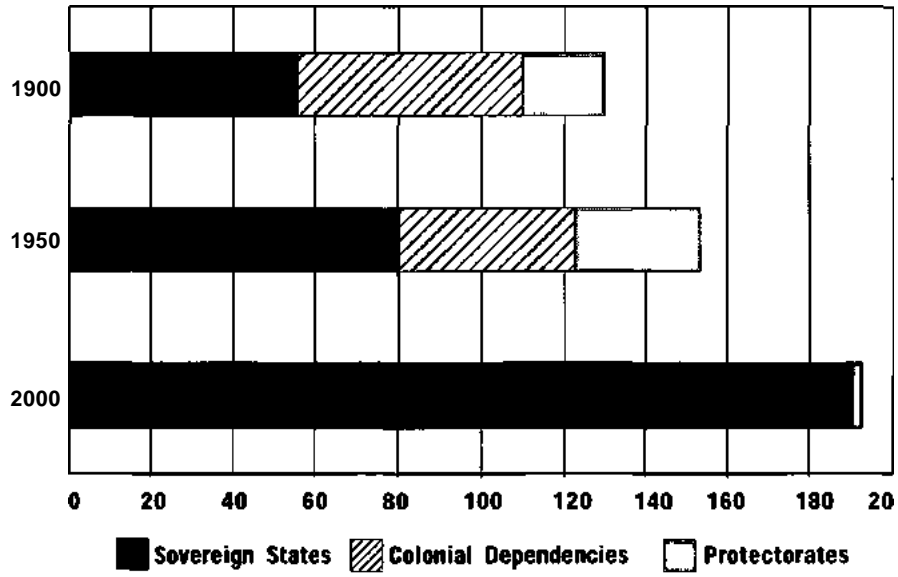
COUNTRY	2000	1950	1900	COUNTRY	2000	1950	1900
Afghanistan	TOT	TM	TM	Ecuador	DEM	DEM	RDP
Albania	DEM	TOT	E	Egypt	RDP	CM	C
Algeria	AR	C	C	El Salvador	DEM	RDP	RDP
Andorra	DEM	P	P	Equatorial Guinea	AR	C	C
Angola	AR	C	P	Eritrea	AR	P	C
Antigua and Barbuda	RDP	C	C	Estonia	DEM	TOT	E
Argentina	DEM	AR	RDP	Ethiopia	AR	CM	P
Armenia	DEM	TOT	E	Fiji	DEM	C	C
Australia	DEM	DEM	C	Finland	DEM	DEM	E
Austria	OEM	P	CM	France	DEM	DEM	RDP
Azerbaijan	AR	TOT	E	Gabon	AR	C	C
Bahamas	DEM	C	C	The Gambia	AR	C	C
Bahrain	TM	P	P	Georgia	DEM	TOT	E
Bangladesh	DEM	RDP	C	Germany	DEM	P/TOT	CM
Barbados	DEM	C	C	Ghana	DEM	C	C
Belarus	AR	TOT	E	Greece	DEM	CM	CM
Belgium	DEM	DEM	CM	Grenada	DEM	C	C
Belize	DEM	C	C	Guatemala	DEM	RDP	RDP
Benin	DEM	C	C	Guinea	AR	C	C
Bhutan	TM	TM	P	Guinea-Bissau	DEM	C	C
Bolivia	DEM	RDP	RDP	Guyana	DEM	C	C
Bosnia-Herzegovina	P	TOT	E	Haiti	DEM	AR	RDP
Botswana	DEM	C	C	Honduras	DEM	RDP	RDP
Brazil	DEM	AR	RDP	Hungary	DEM	TOT	CM
Brunei	TM	P	P	Iceland	DEM	DEM	P
Bulgaria	DEM	TOT	E	India	DEM	DEM	C
Burkina Faso	AR	C	C	Indonesia	DEM	RDP	C
Burma	AR	RDP	C	Iran	AR	CM	AM
Burundi	AR	P	C	Iraq	AR	CM	E
Cambodia	RDP	C	C	Ireland	DEM	DEM	CM
Cameroon	RDP	P	C	Israel	DEM	DEM	E
Canada	DEM	DEM	RDP	Italy	DEM	DEM	CM
Cape Verde	DEM	C	C	Jamaica	DEM	C	C
Central African Republic	DEM	C	C	Japan	DEM	P	CM
Chad	RDP	C	C	Jordan	RDP	CM	E
Chile	DEM	DEM	RDP	Kazakhstan	AR	TOT	E
China	AR	TOT	AM	Kenya	AR	C	C
Colombia	DEM	RDP	RDP	Kiribati	DEM	C	P
Comoros	RDP	C	P	Korea, North	TOT	TOT	C
Congo (Brazzaville)	AR	C	C	Korea, South	DEM	P	C
Congo (Kinshasa)	AR	C	C	Kuwait	TM	P	p
Costa Rica	DEM	RDP	RDP	Kyrgyz Republic	DEM	TOT	E
Cote D'Ivoire	AR	C	C	Laos	TOT	C	C
Croatia	DEM	TOT	E	Latvia	DEM	TOT	E
Cuba	TOT	RDP	P	Lebanon	AR	RDP	E
Cyprus (G)	DEM	C	P	Lesotho	RDP	C	C
Czech Republic	DEM	TOT	E	Liberia	DEM	RDP	RDP
Denmark	DEM	DEM	CM	Libya	AR	P	E
Djibouti	DEM	C	C	Liechtenstein	DEM	RDP	CM
Dominica	DEM	C	C	Lithuania	DEM	TOT	E
Dominican Republic	DEM	RDP	RDP	Luxembourg	DEM	CM	CM
East Timor	P	C	C	Macedonia	DEM	TOT	E
				Madagascar	DEM	C	C

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COUNTRY	2000	1950	1900	COUNTRY	2000	1950	1900
Malawi	DEM	C	C	Slovenia	DEM	TOT	E
Malaysia	RDP	C	C	Solomon Islands	DEM	P	P
Maldives	AR	p	p	Somalia	AR	C/P	C
Mali	DEM	C	C	South Africa	DEM	RDP	RDP
Malta	DEM	C	C	Spain	DEM	AR	CM
Marshall Islands	DEM	p	C	Sri Lanka	DEM	RDP	C
Mauritania	AR	C	C	Sudan	AR	P	C
Mauritius	DEM	C	C	Suriname	DEM	C	C
Mexico	RDP	RDP	RDP	Swaziland	TM	C	C
Micronesia	DEM	P	C	Sweden	DEM	DEM	CM
Moldova	DEM	TOT	TM	Switzerland	DEM	RDP	RDP
Monaco	DEM	CM	CM	Syria	AR	RDP	E
Mongolia	DEM	TOT	E	Taiwan	DEM	RDP	E
Morocco	TM	P	TM	Tajikistan	RDP	TOT	E
Mozambique	DEM	C	C	Tanzania	RDP	P	C
Namibia	DEM	P	C	Thailand	DEM	CM	AM
Nauru	DEM	P	C	Togo	DEM	P	C
Nepal	DEM	AM	TM	Tonga	RDP	P	P
Netherlands	DEM	DEM	CM	Trinidad and Tobago	DEM	C	C
New Zealand	DEM	DEM	C	Tunisia	AR	P	P
Nicaragua	DEM	AR	RDP	Turkey	DEM	DEM	AM
Niger	DEM	C	C	Turkmenistan	AR	TOT	E
Nigeria	DEM	C	C	Tuvalu	DEM	C	P
Norway	DEM	DEM	CM	Uganda	AR	P	P
Oman	TM	TM	TM	Ukraine	DEM	TOT	E
Pakistan	AR	RDP	C	United Arab Emirates	TM	P	P
Palau	DEM	P	C	United Kingdom	DEM	DEM	CM
Panama	DEM	AR	RDP	United States			
Papua New Guinea	DEM	P	C	of America	DEM	DEM	RDP
Paraguay	DEM	AR	RDP	Uruguay	DEM	DEM	RDP
Peru	AR	AR	RDP	Uzbekistan	AR	TOT	E
Philippines	DEM	RDP	P	Vanuatu	DEM	P	P
Poland	DEM	TOT	E	Venezuela	DEM	AR	RDP
Portugal	DEM	AR	CM	Vietnam	TOT	C	C
Qatar	TM	P	P	Yemen	RDP	TM	TM
Romania	DEM	TOT	TM	Yugoslavia	AR	TOT	CM
Russia	DEM	TOT	AM	Zambia	AR	C	C
Rwanda	AR	P	C	Zimbabwe	RDP	C	C
Saint Kitts							
and Nevis	DEM	C	C				
Saint Lucia	DEM	C	C				
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	DEM	C	C				
Samoa	DEM	P	TM				
San Marino	DEM	DEM	RDP				
Sao Tome and Principe	DEM	C	C				
Saudi Arabia	TM	AM	E				
Senegal	RDP	C	C				
Seychelles	DEM	C	C				
Sierra Leone	DEM	C	C				
Singapore	AR	C	C				
Slovakia	DEM	TOT	E				

DEM = Democracy
RDP = Restricted Democratic Practice
CM = Constitutional Monarchy
TOT = Totalitarian Regime
C= Colonial Dependency
P = Protectorate
E = Empire
TM = Traditional Monarchy
AM = Absolute Monarchy
AR = Authoritarian Regime

Tracking Sovereignty



Democracy's Share:
Democratic governments elected by universal suffrage

Tables and Ratings

Table of Independent Countries

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating	Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Afghanistan	7	7	Not Free	Dominica	1	1	Free
Albania	4	5	Partly Free	⚡Dominican Republic	2	3	Free
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	East Timor	6▲	4▲	Partly Free
Andorra	1	1	Free	⚡Ecuador	2	3	Free
⚡Angola	6	6	Not Free	Egypt	6	5▲	Not Free
Antigua and Barbuda	4	3	Partly Free	El Salvador	2	3	Free
Argentina	2▲	3	Free	Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free
Armenia	4	4	Partly Free	Eritrea	7▼	5▼	Not Free
Australia	1	1	Free	Estonia	1	2	Free
Austria	1	1	Free	Ethiopia	5▼	5▼	Partly Free
Azerbaijan	6	4	Partly Free	Fiji	2▲	3	Free
Bahamas	1	1▲	Free	Finland	1	1	Free
Bahrain	7	6	Not Free	France	1	2	Free
Bangladesh	3▼	4	Partly Free	Gabon	5	4	Partly Free
Barbados	1	1	Free	The Gambia	7	5	Not Free
⚡Belarus	6	6	Not Free	Georgia	3	4	Partly Free
Belgium	1	2	Free	Germany	1	2	Free
Belize	1	1	Free	Ghana	3	3	Partly Free
Benin	2	3▼	Free	Greece	1	3	Free
Bhutan	7	6	Not Free	Grenada	1	2	Free
⚡Bolivia	1	3	Free	Guatemala	3	4	Partly Free
⚡Bosnia-Herzegovina	5	3	Partly Free	Guinea	6	5	Not Free
Botswana	2	2	Free	⚡Guinea-Bissau	3	5	Partly Free
⚡Brazil	3	4	Partly Free	Guyana	2	2	Free
Burundi	7	5	Not Free	Haiti	5	5	Partly Free
Bulgaria	2	3	Free	Honduras	3▼	3	Free
Burkina Faso	4▲	4	Partly Free	Hungary	1	2	Free
Burma	7	7	Not Free	Iceland	1	1	Free
Burundi	6▲	6	Not Free	India	2	3	Free
Cambodia	6	6	Not Free	Indonesia	4▲	4	Partly Free
Cameroon	7	6▼	Not Free	Iran	6	6	Not Free
Canada	1	1	Free	Iraq	7	7	Not Free
Cape Verde	1	2	Free	Ireland	1	1	Free
⚡Central African Republic	3	4	Partly Free	Israel	1	2▲	Free
Chad	6	5▼	Not Free	Italy	1	2	Free
Chile	2▲	2	Free	Jamaica	2	2	Free
China (P.R.C.)	7	6	Not Free	Japan	1	2	Free
Colombia	4▼	4	Partly Free	Jordan	4	4▲	Partly Free
Comoros	6▼	4	Partly Free	Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free
Congo (Brazzaville)	6▲	5	Not Free	Kenya	6	5	Not Free
Congo (Kinshasa)	7	6	Not Free	Kiribati	1	1	Free
⚡Costa Rica	1	2	Free	Korea, North	7	7	Not Free
Côte d'Ivoire	6	5	Partly Free	Korea, South	2	2	Free
Croatia	4	4	Partly Free	Kuwait	4▲	5	Partly Free
Cuba	7	7	Not Free	Kyrgyz Republic	5	5	Partly Free
Cyprus (G)	1	1	Free	Laos	7	6	Not Free
Czech Republic	1	2	Free	Latvia	1	2	Free
Denmark	1	1	Free	Lebanon	6	5	Not Free
Djibouti	4▲	6	Partly Free	Lesotho	4	4	Partly Free
				Liberia	4	5	Partly Free

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating	Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Libya	7	7	Not Free	Seychelles	3	3	Partly Free
Liechtenstein	1	1	Free	Sierra Leone	3	5	Partly Free
Lithuania	1	2	Free	Singapore	5	5	Partly Free
Luxembourg	1	1	Free	Slovakia	1▲	2	Free
Macdonia	3	3	Partly Free	Slovenia	1	2	Free
Madagascar	2	4	Partly Free	Solomon Islands	1	2	Free
Malawi	3▼	3	Partly Free	Somalia	7	7	Not Free
Malaysia	5	5	Partly Free	South Africa	1	2	Free
Maldives	6	5	Not Free	Spain	1	2	Free
Mali	3	3	Free	Sri Lanka	3	4	Partly Free
Malta	1	1	Free	Sudan	7	7	Not Free
Marshall Islands	1	1	Free	Switane	3	3	Partly Free
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	Swaziland	6	5▼	Not Free
Mauritius	1	2	Free	Sweden	1	1	Free
Mexico	3	4	Partly Free	Switzerland	1	1	Free
Micronesia	1	2	Free	Syria	7	7	Not Free
Moldova	2	4	Partly Free	Taiwan (Rep. of China)	2	2	Free
Monaco	2	1	Free	Tajikistan	6	6	Not Free
Mongolia	2	3	Free	Tanzania	4▲	4	Partly Free
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	Thailand	2	3	Free
Mozambique	3	4	Partly Free	Togo	5▲	5	Partly Free
Namibia	2	3	Free	Tonga	5	3	Partly Free
Nauru	1	3	Free	Trinidad and Tobago	1	2	Free
Nepal	3	4	Partly Free	Tunisia	6	5	Not Free
Netherlands	1	1	Free	Turkey	4	5	Partly Free
New Zealand	1	1	Free	Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free
Nicaragua	3▼	3	Partly Free	Tuvalu	1	1	Free
Niger	5▲	5	Partly Free	Uganda	5▼	5▼	Partly Free
Nigeria	4▲	3▲	Partly Free	Ukraine	3	4	Partly Free
Norway	1	1	Free	United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free
Oman	6	6	Not Free	United Kingdom*	1	2	Free
Pakistan	7▼	5	Not Free	United States	1	1	Free
Palau	1	2	Free	Uruguay	1	2	Free
Panama	1▲	2▲	Free	Uzbekistan	7	6	Not Free
Papua New Guinea	2	3	Free	Vanuatu	1	3	Free
Paraguay	4	3	Partly Free	Venezuela	4▼	4	Partly Free
Peru	5	4	Partly Free	Vietnam	7	7	Not Free
Philippines	2	3	Free	Yemen	5	6	Not Free
Poland	1	2	Free	Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	5▲	5▲	Partly Free
Portugal	1	1	Free	Zambia	5	4	Partly Free
Qatar	6▲	6	Not Free	Zimbabwe	6▼	5	Partly Free
Romania	2	2	Free				
Russia	4	5▼	Partly Free				
Rwanda	7	6	Not Free				
St. Kitts and Nevis	1	2	Free				
St. Lucia	1	2	Free				
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2	1	Free				
Samoa	2	2▲	Free				
San Marino	1	1	Free				
Sao Tome and Principe	1	2	Free				
Saudi Arabia	7	7	Not Free				
Senegal	4	4	Partly Free				

PR and CL stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties. 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free category.

▲ up or down indicates a general trend in freedom.

▼ up or down indicates a change in Political Rights or Civil Liberties since the last Survey.

The Freedom Rating is an overall judgment based on Survey results. See the essay on Survey methodology for more details.

* Excluding Northern Ireland.

Table of Related Territories

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating	Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Australia				Cayman Islands	1	1	Free
Christmas Island	3	2	Free	Channel Islands	2	1	Free
Cocos (Keeling) Islands*			Free	Falkland Islands*			Free
Norfolk Island*			Free	Gibraltar	1	1	Free
Chile				Isle of Man	1	1	Free
Rapanui (Easter Island)*			Free	Montserrat	1	2	Free
China				Northern Ireland	3	3	Partly Free
Hong Kong	5	3	Partly Free	Pitcairn Island*			Free
Macao	6	4	Partly Free	St. Helena and Dependencies	2	1	Free
Denmark				Turks and Caicos	1	1	Free
Faeroe Islands	1	1	Free	United States of America			
Greenland	1	1	Free	American Samoa	1	1	Free
Finland				Guam	1	1	Free
Aland Islands	1	1	Free	Northern Marianas	1	3	Free
France				Puerto Rico	1	2	Free
French Guiana	1	2	Free	U.S. Virgin Islands	1	1	Free
French Polynesia	1	2	Free				
Guadeloupe*			Free				
Martinique	1	2	Free				
Mayotte (Mahore)	1	2	Free				
New Caledonia	3	2	Free				
Reunion	2	2	Free				
St. Pierre and Miquelon	1	1	Free				
Wallis and Futuna Islands	2	2	Free				
Iraq							
Kurdistan	6	6	Not Free				
Netherlands							
Aruba	2	1	Free				
Netherlands Antilles	1	2	Free				
New Zealand							
Cook Islands	1	2	Free				
Niue*			Free				
Tokelau*			Free				
Norway							
Svalbard*			Free				
Portugal							
Azores	1	1	Free				
Madeira	1	1	Free				
Spain							
Canary Islands	1	1	Free				
Ceuta	1	2	Free				
Melilla	1	2	Free				
United Kingdom							
Anguilla	2	1	Free				
Bermuda	1	1	Free				
British Virgin Islands	1	1	Free				

* Micro-territories have populations of under 5,000. These areas are scored according to the same methodology used in the rest of the Survey, but are listed separately due to their very small populations.

Table of Disputed Territories

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Armenia/Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh	5	6	Not Free
China Tibet	7	7	Not Free
Georgia Abkhazia	6	5	Not Free
India Kashmir	6	6	Not Free
Indonesia West Papua (Irian Jaya)	6▲	5▲	Partly Free
Israel Israeli-Administered territories	6	5	Not Free
Palestinian Authority- Administered territories	5	6	Not Free
Moldova Transnistria	6	6	Not Free
Morocco Western Sahara	7	6	Not Free
Russia Chechnya	7▼	7▼	Not Free
Turkey Cyprus (T)	4	2	Partly Free
Yugoslavia Kosovo	6▲	6▲	Not Free

Table of Social and Economic Indicators

Country	Real GDP Per Capita (PPP\$)	Life Expectancy	Country	Real GDP Per Capita (PPP\$)	Life Expectancy
Afghanistan	na	46	East Timor	na	na
Albania	2,120	72	Ecuador	4,940	69
Algeria	4,460	68	Egypt	3,050	65
Andorra	na	79	El Salvador	2,880	69
Angola	1,430	47	Equatorial Guinea	1,817	48
Antigua and Barbuda	9,692	74	Eritrea	820	55
Argentina	10,300	73	Estonia	5,240	71
Armenia	2,360	73	Ethiopia	510	42
Australia	20,210	78	Fiji	3,990	63
Austria	22,070	78	Finland	20,150	77
Azerbaijan	1,550	71	France	22,030	78
Bahamas	16,705	73	Gabon	7,550	52
Bahrain	16,527	69	The Gambia	1,470	45
Bangladesh	1,050	59	Georgia	1,960	73
Barbados	12,001	75	Germany	21,260	77
Belarus	4,850	68	Ghana	1,640	59
Belgium	22,750	77	Greece	12,769	78
Belize	4,300	72	Grenada	4,864	71
Benin	1,270	53	Guatemala	4,100	65
Bhutan	1,467	66	Guinea	1,880	45
Bolivia	2,880	60	Guinea-Bissau	861	44
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,720	73	Guyana	3,210	66
Botswana	7,690	40	Haiti	1,270	54
Brazil	6,480	67	Honduras	2,220	68
Brunei	29,773	71	Hungary	7,200	71
Bulgaria	4,010	71	Iceland	22,497	79
Burkina Faso	1,010	47	India	1,670	60
Burma	1,199	61	Indonesia	3,490	63
Burundi	630	46	Iran	5,817	69
Cambodia	1,290	53	Iraq	3,197	59
Cameroon	1,890	55	Ireland	20,710	75
Canada	22,480	79	Israel	18,150	78
Cape Verde	2,990	70	Italy	20,290	78
Central African Republic	1,330	46	Jamaica	3,440	71
Chad	970	48	Japan	24,070	81
Chile	12,730	75	Jordan	3,450	68
China	3,130	71	Kazakhstan	3,560	65
Colombia	6,810	69	Kenya	1,190	49
Comoros	1,530	59	Kiribati	na	na
Congo (Brazzaville)	1,620	47	Korea, North	4,058	70
Congo (Kinshasa)	880	49	Korea, South	13,590	74
Costa Rica	6,650	77	Kuwait	25,314	72
Cote d'Ivoire	1,840	47	Kyrgyz Republic	2,250	67
Croatia	4,895	72	Laos	1,300	51
Cuba	3,100	75	Latvia	3,940	70
Cyprus (Greek)	14,201	77	Lebanon	5,940	70
Czech Republic	10,510	74	Lesotho	1,860	56
Denmark	23,690	76	Liberia	na	59
Djibouti	1,266	48	Libya	6,697	75
Dominica	4,320	78	Liechtenstein	na	72
Dominican Republic	4,820	70	Lithuania	4,220	71

Table of Social and Economic Indicators

Country	Real GDP Per Capita (PPP\$)	Life Expectancy	Country	Real GDP Per Capita (PPP\$)	Life Expectancy
Luxembourg	30,863	77	Slovenia	11,800	75
Macedonia	3,210	72	Solomon Islands	2,310	70
Madagascar	930	52	Somalia	na	46
Malawi	710	36	South Africa	7,380	58
Malaysia	8,140	72	Spain	15,930	78
Maldives	3,690	69	Sri Lanka	2,490	72
Mali	740	46	Sudan	1,560	51
Malta	13,180	78	Suriname	5,161	70
Marshall Islands	na	62	Swaziland	3,350	39
Mauritania	1,730	54	Sweden	19,790	79
Mauritius	9,310	70	Switzerland	25,240	79
Mexico	8,370	72	Syria	3,250	67
Micronesia	na	66	Taiwan (Rep. of China)	na	75
Moldova	1,500	67	Tajikistan	1,126	68
Monaco	na	na	Tanzania	580	47
Mongolia	1,310	63	Thailand	6,690	72
Morocco	3,310	69	Togo	1,490	49
Mozambique	740	44	Tonga	na	na
Namibia	5,010	42	Trinidad and Tobago	6,840	71
Nauru	na	na	*Tunisia	5,300	69
Nepal	1,090	57	Turkey	6,350	68
Netherlands	21,110	78	Turkmenistan	2,109	66
New Zealand	17,410	77	Tuvalu	na	na
Nicaragua	1,997	66	Uganda	1,160	42
Niger	850	41	Ukraine	2,190	68
Nigeria	920	55	United Arab Emirates	19,115	74
Norway	24,450	78	United Kingdom	20,730	77
Oman	9,960	71	United States	29,010	77
Pakistan	1,560	58	Uruguay	9,200	74
Palau	na	67	Uzbekistan	2,529	69
Panama	7,168	74	Vanuatu	3,480	65
Papua New Guinea	2,654	56	Venezuela	8,860	73
Paraguay	3,980	70	Vietnam	1,630	66
Peru	4,680	68	Yemen	810	59
Philippines	3,520	67	Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	na	72
Poland	6,520	73	Zambia	960	37
Portugal	14,270	75	Zimbabwe	2,350	40
Qatar	20,987	72			
Romania	4,310	69			
Russia	4,370	67			
Rwanda	na	43			
St. Kitts and Nevis	8,017	67			
St. Lucia	5,437	72			
St. Vincent and Grenadines	4,250	73			
Samoa	3,550	65			
San Marino	na	76			
Sao Tome and Principe	1,851	64			
Saudi Arabia	10,120	71			
Senegal	1,730	52			
Seychelles	8,171	70			
Sierra Leone	410	48			
Singapore	28,460	77			
Slovakia	7,910	73			

Combined Average Ratings: Independent Countries			
FREE			NOT FREE
1.0			5.5
Andorra	Slovakia	Central African Republic	Algeria
Australia	Slovenia	Georgia	Chad
Austria	Solomon Islands	Guatemala	Congo (Brazzaville)
Bahamas	South Africa	Mexico	Egypt
Barbados	Spain	Mozambique	Guinea
Belize	Trinidad and Tobago	Nepal	Kazakhstan
Canada	United Kingdom	Nigeria	Kenya
Cyprus(G)	Uruguay	Paraguay	Lebanon
Denmark	2.0	Sri Lanka	Maldives
Dominica	Bolivia	Ukraine	Mauritania
Finland	Botswana	4.0	Swaziland
Grenada	Chile	Armenia	Tunisia
Iceland	Greece	Burkina Faso	United Arab Emirates
Ireland	Guyana	Colombia	Yemen
Kiribati	Jamaica	Croatia	6.0
Liechtenstein	Korea, South	Guinea-Bissau	Angola
Luxembourg	Nauru	Indonesia	Belarus
Malta	Romania	Jordan	Brunei
Marshall Islands	Samoa	Lesotho	Burundi
Netherlands	Taiwan	Senegal	Cambodia
New Zealand	Vanuatu	Sierra Leone	Eritrea
Norway	2.5	Tanzania	The Gambia
Portugal	Argentina	Tonga	Iran
San Marino	Benin	Venezuela	Oman
Sweden	Bulgaria	4.5	Pakistan
Switzerland	Dominican Republic	Albania	Qatar
Tuvalu	Ecuador	Gabon	Tajikistan
United States	El Salvador	Kuwait	6.5
1.5	Fiji	Liberia	Bahrain
Belgium	India	Morocco	Bhutan
Cape Verde	Mongolia	Peru	Cameroon
Costa Rica	Namibia	Russia	China (PRC)
Czech Republic	Papua New Guinea	Turkey	Congo (Kinshasa)
Estonia	Philippines	Zambia	Laos
France	Thailand	5.0	Rwanda
Germany	3.0	Azerbaijan	Uzbekistan
Hungary	Mali	Bosnia-Herzegovina	7.0
Israel	PARTLY FREE	Comoros	Afghanistan
Italy	3.0	Cote d'Ivoire	Burma
Japan	Antigua and Barbuda	Djibouti	Cuba
Latvia	Ghana	East Timor	Equatorial Guinea
Lithuania	Honduras	Ethiopia	Iraq
Mauritius	Macedonia	Haiti	Korea, North
Micronesia	Madagascar	Kyrgyz Republic	Libya
Monaco	Malawi	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia
Palau	Moldova	Niger	Somalia
Panama	Nicaragua	Singapore	Sudan
Poland	Seychelles	Togo	Syria
St. Kitts and Nevis	Suriname	Uganda	Turkmenistan
St. Lucia	3.5	Yugoslavia	Vietnam
St. Vincent and Grenadines	Bangladesh	5.5	
Sao Tome and Principe	Brazil	Zimbabwe	

Combined Average Ratings: Related Territories

<p>FREE 1.0</p> <p>Aland Islands (Finland) American Samoa (US) Azores (Portugal) Bermuda (UK) British Virgin Islands (UK) Canary Islands (Spain) Cayman Islands (UK) Faeroe Islands (Denmark) Gibraltar (UK) Greenland (Denmark) Guam (United States) Isle of Man (UK) Madeira (Portugal) St. Pierre and Miquelon (France) Turks and Caicos (UK) U.S. Virgin Islands (US)</p> <p>1.5 Anguilla (UK)</p>	<p>Aruba (Netherlands) Ceuta (Spain) Channel Islands (UK) Cook Islands (New Zealand) French Guiana (France) French Polynesia (France) Martinique (France) Mayotte [Mahore] (France) Melilla (Spain) Montserrat (UK) Netherlands Antilles (Netherlands) Puerto Rico (US) St. Helena and Dependencies (UK)</p> <p>2.0 Northern Marianas (US) Reunion (France) Wallis and Futuna Islands (France)</p>	<p><i>2JS</i> Christmas Island (Australia) New Caledonia (France)</p> <p>PARTLY FREE 3.0 Northern Ireland (UK)</p> <p>4.0 Hong Kong (China)</p> <p>5.0 Macao (China)</p> <p>NOT FREE 6.0 Kurdistan (Iraq)</p> <p>MICROTERRITORIES (ALL FREE) Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Australia) Falkland Islands (UK)</p>	<p>Guadeloupe (France) Niue (New Zealand) Norfolk Island (Australia) Pitcairn Island (UK) Rapanui [Easter Island] (Chile) Svalbard (Norway) Tokelau (New Zealand)</p> <p>Micro-territories have populations of under 5,000. These areas are scored according to the same methodology used in the rest of the Survey, but are listed separately due to their very small populations.</p>
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Combined Average Ratings: Disputed Territories

<p>PARTLY FREE 3.0</p> <p>Cyprus (Turkey)</p> <p>5.5 West Papua [Irian Jaya] (Indonesia)</p> <p>NOT FREE 5.5 Abkhazia (Georgia)</p>	<p>Israeli-Administered Territories (Israel) Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia/Azerbaijan) Palestinian Authority-Administered Territories (Israel)</p> <p>6.0 Kashmir (India) Transdniester (Moldova)</p>	<p>Kosovo (Yugoslavia)</p> <p>6.5 Western Sahara (Morocco)</p> <p>7.0 Chechnya (Russia) Tibet (China)</p>
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Electoral Democracies (120)

Albania	El Salvador
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-legislative democracy
Andorra	Estonia
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Argentina	Fiji
Federal presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy and traditional chiefs
Armenia	Finland
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Australia	France
Federal parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Austria	Georgia
Federal parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Bahamas	Germany
Parliamentary democracy	Federal parliamentary democracy
Bangladesh	Ghana
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Barbados	Greece
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Belgium	Grenada
Federal parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Belize	Guatemala
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-legislative democracy
Benin	Guinea-Bissau
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy (military-influenced) (transitional)
Bolivia	Guyana
Presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Botswana	HaW
Parliamentary democracy and traditional chiefs	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Brazil	Honduras
Federal presidential-legislative democracy	Presidential-legislative democracy
Bulgaria	Hungary
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Canada	Iceland
Federal parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Cape Verde	India
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy (insurgencies)
Central African Republic	Indonesia
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy (military-influenced)
Chile	Ireland
Presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Colombia	Israel
Presidential-legislative democracy (insurgencies)	Parliamentary democracy
Costa Rica	Italy
Presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Croatia	Jamaica
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Cyprus	Japan
Presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Czech Republic	Kiribati
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Denmark	Korea, South
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Djibouti	Kyrgyz Republic
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Dominica	Latvia
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Dominican Republic	Liberia
Presidential-legislative democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Ecuador	
Presidential-legislative democracy	

Liechtenstein	Romania
Principality and parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Lithuania	Russia
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Luxembourg	St. Kitts and Nevis
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Macedonia	St Lucia
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Madagascar	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Malawi	Samoa
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy and traditional chiefs
Mal	San Marino
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Malta	Sao Tome and Principe
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Marshall Islands	Seychelles
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-legislative democracy
Mauritius	Sierra Leone
Parliamentary democracy	Presidential-legislative democracy
Micronesia	(rebel insurgencies)
Federal parliamentary democracy	Slovakia
Moldova	Parliamentary democracy
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Slovenia
Monaco	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Principality and legislative democracy	Solomon Islands
Mongolia	Parliamentary democracy
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	South Africa
Mozambique	Presidential-legislative democracy
Presidential-legislative democracy	Spain
Namibia	Parliamentary democracy
Presidential-legislative democracy	Sri Lanka
Nauru	Presidential-parliamentary democracy (insurgency)
Parliamentary democracy	Suriname
Nepal	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Parliamentary democracy (insurgency)	Sweden
Netherlands	Parliamentary democracy
Parliamentary democracy	Switzerland
New Zealand	Federal parliamentary democracy
Parliamentary democracy	Taiwan
Nicaragua	Presidential-legislative democracy
Presidential-legislative democracy	Thailand
Niger	Parliamentary democracy
Presidential-parliamentary democracy (transitional)	Trinidad and Tobago
Nigeria	Parliamentary democracy
Presidential-parliamentary democracy (transitional)	Turkey
Norway	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Parliamentary democracy	(military-influenced) (insurgency)
Palau	Tuvalu
Presidential-legislative democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Panama	Ukraine
Presidential-legislative democracy	Presidential-parliamentary democracy
Papua New Guinea	United Kingdom
Parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Paraguay	United States of America
Presidential-legislative democracy	Federal presidential-legislative democracy
Philippines	Uruguay
Presidential-legislative democracy (insurgencies)	Presidential-legislative democracy
Poland	Vanuatu
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Parliamentary democracy
Portugal	Venezuela
Presidential-parliamentary democracy	Presidential-authoritarian democracy

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 Inter-American Press Association
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 Open Society Institute
 Operation Lifeline Sudan
 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Organization of American States	Uganda Journalists' Safety Committee
Panamanian Committee for Human Rights	Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research
Peoples Forum for Human Rights, Bhutan	UNICEF
Permanent Commission on Human Rights [Nicaragua]	Union of Councils for Soviet Jews
Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights [Columbia]	U.S. Committee for Refugees
Physicians for Human Rights	Venezuelan Human Rights Education Action Program
Reporters Sans Frontieres	Vicaria de la Solidaridad [Chile]
Runejel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities [Guatemala]	Vietnam Committee on Human Rights
Stratfor	Voice of Bahrain
Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries (SIGMA)	Washington Office on Africa
Tarsadalmi Kutato Intezet - TARKI [Social Research Institute, Hungary]	Washington Office on Latin America
Tibet Information Network	West Africa Journalists Association
Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy	Women Acting Together for Change [Nepal]
Tutela Legal (El Salvador)	Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
	World Algerian Action Coalition
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