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RUSSIA

Politically, economically, and socially, Russia continues to be a state in transition. While constitutional structures are well-defined and democratic in conception, democratization continues to be slow. The 1993 Constitution establishes a tripartite government with checks and balances. The executive branch consists of an elected president and a government headed by a prime minister. There is a bicameral legislature (Federal Assembly), consisting of the State Duma and the Federation Council, and a judicial branch. Both the President and the legislature were selected in competitive elections judged to be largely free and fair, with a broad range of political parties and movements contesting offices. The judiciary, still the weakest of the three branches, showed signs of limited independence.

President Boris Yeltsin and Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov signed a peace agreement on May 12 in which both sides agreed to settle their dispute by peaceful means. In an earlier agreement, the two sides agreed to resolve Chechnya's political status prior to 2001, but fundamental differences remain on that question with Chechnya asserting that it has earned the right to full independence and Russia insisting that Chechnya will remain a part of the Federation.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Procuracy, and the Federal Tax Police are responsible for law enforcement at all levels of government throughout the Russian Federation. The MVD oversees most of the prison system, though most functions have been ordered transferred to the Ministry of Justice. The FSB has broad law enforcement functions, including fighting crime and corruption, in addition to its core responsibilities of security, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. The FSB operates with only limited oversight by the Procuracy and the courts. The military's primary mission is national defense, but it is occasionally employed for riot-control missions. Many members of the security forces, particularly within the internal affairs apparatus, continued to commit human rights abuses.

The economy stabilized during 1997, although estimated real gross national product remained almost 28 percent below 1992 levels. Inflation has dropped from 198 percent in 1995 to 11 percent in 1997. The per capita income was \$152 per month. The ruble exchange rate stabilized and net outflow of capital ceased in 1997. Production increased slightly, but the level of capital investment remained low. The trade balance remains positive. Around 900,000 small businesses are registered. Crime and corruption significantly retard economic growth. According to official estimates, the informal and shadow economy accounts for 26 percent of gross domestic product. Unemployment reached a high of 9.6 percent in April. Moreover, an estimated 6.4 million people, of a work force of 72 million were considered underemployed. Wage and pension arrears continued to be a problem, with accumulated wage arrears reaching \$9.5 billion by October. Wages and incomes showed a slight real increase by midyear. Approximately 21 percent of the population had incomes below the poverty level, up from 19 percent in 1996.

The arrears in payment of public-sector wages and transfer payments were a symptom of a fiscal crisis that has plagued the Government for the past several years. Fulfilling a pledge to the public, the Yeltsin administration paid off all of its arrears as of December 31. The Government has been unable to formulate and implement an effective tax policy, resulting in widespread nonpayment and evasion of taxes. Federal tax revenues totaled approximately 9 percent of GDP. The consequent strain on the state budget has caused prolonged delays in payment of public servants and forced the Government to defer needed reforms and investments in areas regarded as low priorities by top officials. Delays in expanding and modernizing the prison system, introducing jury trials to more regions, training the judiciary and investing in the infrastructure of the court system and ensuring military reform contributed to human rights violations.

The Government's human rights record was uneven in 1997. There were credible reports that law enforcement and correctional officials tortured and severely beat detainees and inmates. Prison conditions worsened and are extremely harsh. According to human rights groups, between 10,000 and 20,000 detainees and prison inmates may die in penitentiary facilities annually, some from beatings, but most as a result of overcrowding, inferior sanitary conditions, disease, and lack of medical care. The Government has made little progress in combating abuses committed by soldiers, including "dedovshchina" (violent hazing of new recruits). Military justice systems consistent with democratic practices remain largely underdeveloped. There were credible reports of deaths or suicides as a result of abuse, with sharply divergent statistics offered by the Ministry of Defense and human rights groups. Arbitrary arrest and detention remained problems. Police and other security forces in various parts of Russia continued their practice of targeting citizens from the Caucasus and darker-skinned persons in general for arbitrary searches and detention on the pretext of fighting crime and enforcing residential registration requirements. However, in a positive development, the President overturned two prior decrees (one presidential, the other from the mayor of Moscow) permitting officials to detain certain individuals for up to 30 days without access to a lawyer and in some cases to expel them from Moscow. Lengthy pretrial detention remained a serious problem. The Government made little progress in the implementation of constitutional provisions for due process, fair and timely trial, and humane punishment. In addition, the judiciary was often subject to manipulation by political authorities and was plagued by large case backlogs and trial delays. Authorities infringed on citizens' privacy rights.

The case of Aleksandr Nikitin, a retired naval captain who had been researching the environmental dangers of nuclear waste from the Northern Fleet, continued to be fraught with serious violations of due process, suggesting that the FSB's case against him was politically motivated.

Institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs remain largely unreformed and have not yet adopted practices consistent with law enforcement in a democratic society. While the President and the Government have supported human rights and democratic practice in their statements and policy initiatives, they have not institutionalized the rule of law required to protect them. While most abuses occur at lower levels and not by central direction, Government officials do not investigate the majority of cases of abuse and do not dismiss or discipline the perpetrators.

In the face of a variety of obstacles, the media continued to represent a wide range of opinion. The major print media organizations functioned relatively unhindered by governmental pressure at the national level, although respect for freedom of the press varies in the regions. The principal obstacle to independent journalism was the concentration of ownership of news media by major banks and businesses, which sought to ensure that reporting was in line with their interests. Such pressure caused journalists to practice self-censorship. The practice of accepting money for printing articles remains widespread. Foreign and Russian journalists were frequent victims of kidnappings for ransom by criminals in Chechnya and throughout the north Caucasus.

In October the Government enacted a restrictive and potentially discriminatory law on religion which raised questions about Russia's commitment to international agreements honoring freedom of religion. The implications of the law, which will not be fully implemented until the end of 1999, remain unclear though it contains provisions that could result in significant restrictions on the activities of minority religious communi-

ties, including foreign missionaries. By year's end, there had been numerous instances of harassment of religious groups by local authorities, citing the new law. In addition, 22 regional governments have passed laws and decrees since 1994 restricting the activities of minority religious groups, some of which have been subjected to harassment as a result. The constitutionality of the new national law has not been formally challenged, nor has the Federal Government challenged the constitutionality of the local laws.

Despite constitutional protections for citizens' freedom of movement, regional governments (especially the city of Moscow) have imposed restrictions on movement through residence registration mechanisms. These restrictions, though successfully challenged in court, remain largely in force and are tolerated by the Federal Government. The presence of these restrictions demonstrated the continued obstacles to the enforcement of judicial rulings.

Although the Duma passed a law providing for a human rights ombudsman, it failed to select a candidate within the period allowed under the law. The post remained vacant at year's end. The Human Rights Commission examined human rights issues such as prison conditions, war crimes in Chechnya, and a draft law on religion. Similarly, the human rights chamber of the President's Political Consultative Council held a number of sessions and offered opinions on human rights issues. Governmental human rights commissions have been formed in 66 regions.

With few exceptions, human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) documented and reported on human rights violations without governmental interference or sanctions. However, some local officials harassed human rights monitors and in some cases arrested them. The Prosecutor General's response to these incidents was criticized. Some groups in Moscow have demonstrated their expertise on particular issues and regularly participate in Duma legislative working groups, as well as in the human rights chamber of the President's Political Consultative Council.

Violence against women and abuse of children remain problems, as do discrimination against women and religious and ethnic minorities.

In the breakaway Republic of Chechnya, kidnappings orchestrated by uncontrolled armed formations and bandits, some of which may have links to the former insurgent forces, have become frequent. The usual motivation for kidnappings is ransom, but some cases have political overtones. Both journalists and humanitarian assistance workers have been targets. Despite the strong opposition of federal authorities, Chechen authorities used Shari'a courts in some cases and carried out death sentences without respect for due process. The Shari'a law is still not codified.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a.

Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

There were no confirmed political killings by agents of the Government. However, an undetermined number, up to several thousand, detainees and prison inmates died after beatings by security officials or due to harsh conditions in detention (see Section 1.c.). A number of government officials, Duma aides, and other public figures were murdered, although fewer than in recent years. Few of these crimes appear to be politically motivated; the majority were linked to private financial or commercial dealings. Internal Affairs Minister General Anatoliy Kulikov acknowledged that police solved only about 10 percent of the approximately 600 contract murders in 1996.

Mikhail Manevich, deputy mayor and chairman of the City Property Committee for St. Petersburg, was killed on August 18 while on his way to work. Media reports suggested that Manevich was killed by individu-

als whose financial interests may have been threatened by his conduct of privatization in the city. A joint FSB-MVD investigation, ordered by the President, is underway. FSB officers claim to have interviewed over 1,000 witnesses and collected over 40 expert opinions and were working with their law enforcement and special services colleagues in the region. However, there were no reports of progress in the case at year's end.

Vladimir Frantskevich, Mikhail Shilov, Vyacheslav Usov, Gennadiy Dzen, and Stanislav Amirov, at least nominally aides to Duma deputies in Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russian (LDPR), were murdered in 1997. The victims had prior criminal records or links with criminal activity and were victims of contract-style killings. No link between the crimes and the LDPR was established.

Procurator General Yuriy Skuratov reported that investigations continued in the unsolved murders of orthodox priest Aleksandr Men (1990), journalists Dmitriy Kholodov (1994), and Vladimir Listyev (1995).

There were no developments in the 1996 murder of U.S. businessman Paul Tatum.

Following 2 years of investigation, the Moscow procurator's office reported that it was ready to bring charges in the February 1995 murder of LDPR Duma Deputy Sergey Skorochkin. Investigators have dismissed any political motives and are focusing on Skorochkin's business dealings. They also indicated that Skorochkin may have committed a double murder shortly before his death.

In the procurator's office charged chairman of the Afghan War Veterans Association Valeriy Radchikov, along with five others, in the November 1996 bombing in the Kotlyakovskiy cemetery which killed 14 persons and injured 50 others. Authorities believe that internal disputes over the organization's lucrative tobacco and liquor duty-free-import privileges provided the motive for the bombing.

Unknown persons in the Republic of Northern Ossetiya-Alaniya killed several ethnic Ingush refugees returning to places of former residence in the contested Prigorodnyy rayon (located between the Republic of Northern Ossetiya-Alaniya and Ingushetiya).

Ethnic unrest in the North Caucasus regions of North Ossetia and Ingushetia claimed the lives of 11 people in several incidents. The tension in the region arises from a territorial dispute which has displaced a number of ethnic Ingush.

On June 10, Mullah Khasanbek Yakhayev of the Groznyy Mosque was shot at point-blank range by an unknown man who was himself then lynched by Yakhayev's relatives. Motives are unclear, although reports from witnesses claim that the killer told Yakhayev that he would not permit him to insult Wahhabism, conservative form of Islam that has recently been in conflict with Sufism, the form of Islam that is more widely practiced in the Caucasus.

No formal charges have been filed in the investigation into the December 1996 attack on the ICRC compound in Novyy Atagi, Chechnya, during which six ICRC workers were killed and one was wounded. Minister of Internal Affairs Kulikov claims to have detained suspects outside Chechnya, but indicated that he is not participating in the main investigation inside Chechnya.

On July 30, a bomb attack in Groznyy against the headquarters of Salman Raduyev, a militant former Chechen military commander, killed three persons.

President Maskhadov of Chechnya told the press that he planned to execute publicly those guilty of kidnapping. At least four persons were executed in Chechnya during the year as a result of sentences handed down by Shari'a courts (see Section 1.e.). The Federal Government termed the executions "barbaric" and the trials illegal under Russian law.

Commander Salman Raduyev claimed responsibility for two terrorist attacks on Russian railway lines in early April, one in Armavir and another in Pyatigorsk, each of which killed two persons and resulted in more than a dozen injuries.

Unknown elements in Chechnya fired on border patrols in nearby Dagestan and killed Dagestani law enforcement personnel.

In the ongoing conflict between the republics of Ingushetiya and northern Ossetiya-Alaniya, there were reports that unknown persons fired on refugees attempting to return to their places of former residence.

For example, on July 17, unknown forces fired a rocket-propelled grenade at two buses carrying returning Ingush refugees as they passed a state automobile inspectorate checkpoint. Two persons were killed and 10 injured seriously. On July 29, a mob attacked an Ingush refugee camp near the Prigorodnyy town of Tverskoye, burning two trailers and causing one death and six injuries, according to press reports.

In February Russia approved an amnesty for Russian soldiers and Chechen rebels who committed illegal acts in connection with the war in Chechnya between December 9, 1994, and September 1, 1996. The pardon excludes crimes such as murder, rape, and hostage-taking, and orders the establishment of a commission to review appeals for amnesty. Although many Chechen rebels, including Deputy Prime Minister Shamil Basayev, are under indictment in Russia for commission of serious crimes during the war, there has been no demonstrated attempt by Russian law-enforcement organs to bring such persons to justice. In effect, this selective amnesty is being applied as a blanket amnesty. In Chechnya there also is no attempt to prosecute persons accused of serious offenses during the conflict.

The Chechen Government passed an amnesty designed to cover persons guilty of war crimes similar to felonies (that is, premeditated murder, rape, assault and robbery, terrorism and banditry, and kidnaping and hostage-taking). The goal of the amnesty was to facilitate the most rapid possible prisoner exchange. In this, it was supported by the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, among others, but was opposed by human rights groups who sought the fullest possible accountability of those who were involved in violations of humanitarian law during the armed conflict. However, disputes over the types of prisoners covered under the amnesty, particularly with regard to Chechens held in Russian detention facilities for crimes rather than acts of combat, have mitigated against effective implementation. Other reports indicate that the Russian side has returned Chechen criminals but continued to detain suspected insurgents. The Glasnost Public Fund has alleged that the authorities who physically hold those potentially eligible for the amnesty also maintain the power to decide who actually receives amnesty.

b.

Disappearance

There were no reports of government involvement in cases of politically motivated disappearances. Kidnaping is frequently committed by criminal groups in the North Caucasus, some of which may have links to elements of the former insurgent forces. The main motivation seems to be ransom, although some cases have political overtones. A number of journalists were seized and held for ransom during the year, as were several humanitarian aid workers. For example, on September 20, two Russian employees of the International Orthodox Christian Charities, Dmitriy Petrov and Dmitriy Pyankovskiy, were abducted while on a humanitarian relief mission to Chechnya.

According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), at year's end 71 hostages remained in captivity, including (15 foreigners, of whom 5 are journalists and 10 are NGO representatives). There were no reports of disappearance as a precursor to an execution or other political killing, although a number of persons remain missing at year's end.

The Chechen authorities have frequently claimed that they are actively fighting kidnapers. On July 6, Chechen Procurator General Khalash Serbiyev estimated that 32 persons were held on suspicion of kidnaping. New Chechen laws call for jail terms or public executions of kidnapers. However, there have been reports that Chechen authorities including Vice President Vakha Arsanov have been involved.

There were no further developments in the case of American relief expert Fred Cuny, who disappeared in Chechnya in April 1995 and is believed to have been killed. No trace has been found of American photo-journalist Andrew Shumack, who disappeared in July 1995 after reportedly entering Chechnya.

c.
atment or
Punishment

Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Tre-

The Constitution prohibits torture, violence, and other brutal or humiliating treatment or punishment. However, there are credible reports that law enforcement personnel use torture to coerce confessions from suspects and that the Government does not hold most of them accountable for these actions. Prisoner's rights groups have documented numerous cases in which law enforcement and correctional officials tortured and beat detainees and suspects.

In a 1997 report, Amnesty International described five methods used by law enforcement officials either to gain confessions or simply to control or abuse prisoners. The "elephant" involves placing a gas mask over the head of the victim and then restricting or cutting off the flow of oxygen. Sometimes tear gas is introduced as well to induce vomiting. The "swallow" involves binding the victim's hands behind his back above the level of his head, forcing painful arching in the back. This method is used in conjunction with the elephant or separately, with the victim suspended from the wall or ceiling so that he can be beaten. The "envelope" involves securing the victim's legs near his head. The "press-camera" is a system whereby violent prisoners are coopted by guards and used to control or punish other prisoners. The coopted prisoners are permitted to torture prisoners (sometimes to gain confessions) or deal with "difficult" prisoners. The "crucifixion of Christ" involves the victim being secured spread-eagled to either a metal cot or prison bars, to which powerful electric shocks are applied. These allegations have been corroborated by other credible sources.

In a February 1996 report, the Presidential Human Rights Commission noted that existing legal norms and administrative instructions failed to provide specific, clear regulation of the application of physical force and that this allowed "the use of impermissible physical coercion directed against prisoners virtually without restraint."

Various abuses against military servicemen, including but not limited to the practice of "dedovshchina" (the violent hazing of new military recruits, MVD, and border guards), continued unabated, and may have increased during the past year. Press reports indicate that this mistreatment often includes extortion of money or material goods in the face of the threat of increased hazing or actual beatings. Soldiers usually do not report hazing to officers due to fear of reprisals, since officers in some cases reportedly tolerate or even encourage such hazing as a means of controlling their units. There are also reports that officers use beatings to discipline soldiers whom they find to be "inattentive to their duties." In one incident, a Pacific fleet sailor died when an officer punished him by placing him in a missile tube. The case is reportedly still under investigation.

According to a June General Staff briefing, during 1996 there were 2,000 deaths of servicemen, 526 of which were suicides. For 1997 military physicians reportedly estimate the army's suicide rate at 14 per 100,000, about 200 per year. The Mothers' Rights Foundation, however, cites a figure of 5,000 noncombat deaths linked to violence per year. The Mothers' Rights Foundation and the Soldiers' Mothers' Committee believe that many of those who reportedly committed suicide were driven to do so by violent hazing or abuse.

The Ministry of Defense's main military procurator noted an increase in 1997 of the incidence of "barracks hooliganism," reporting 378 incidents. Statistics for the first 6 months of 1997 show over 3,000 crimes against servicemen, with 900 persons injured and over 160 killed. Prosecutors attributed the military ser-

vice's inability to crack down on hazing in part to the reluctance of inexperienced, low-ranking officers to report hazing incidents.

Senior Ministry of Defense officials acknowledge that hazing is a problem, but insist that the deteriorating quality of incoming conscripts makes it difficult to eradicate. Official reports on the spring conscription campaign state that 6 percent of those inducted had criminal convictions and 8 percent had arrest records. Military officers and spokesmen insist that they make every effort to punish soldiers and officers who either take part in or tolerate hazing. In some units, officers reportedly have been ordered to sleep in their unit barracks until the situation improves. The Soldiers' Mothers Committee confirm the military authorities' claim that hazers are punished, although they argue that action is not taken in enough cases.

The Soldiers' Mothers Committee believes that the vast majority of hazing incidents are never reported. In incidents brought to the attention of the military or civilian authorities, the Soldiers' Mothers Committee reported that in 60% of the cases there was an official finding that abuse had taken place, and that some disciplinary action was taken as a result.

Despite the admitted seriousness of the problem, the military leadership has not made any effort to implement large-scale changes in training or education programs to combat abuse, at least in part due to lack of funding for new training materials.

At a November international conference in Moscow on human rights in the armed forces, sponsored in part by the Russian Federation Presidential Commission on Human Rights, the military services came under harsh attack for systematic and widespread human rights violations, including hazing, beatings, and torture. The report called on the President and the Duma to undertake a series of reforms, including creation of a civilian post of human rights ombudsman with the power to make unannounced inspections at military bases; creation of a military police system charged with investigating human and civil rights, among other crimes; unconditional implementation of the presidential decree for an all-volunteer force by 2000; and, in the interim, observance of the constitutional right to alternative civilian service to the draft in a nonpunitive program.

The systematic abuse of psychiatry as a form of punishment during the Soviet-era has ended. However, human rights groups charge that psychiatric hospitals continue to conceal their archives and their practices. Further, Moscow police committed some sane followers of the Orthodox Society of True Believers to a psychiatric hospital for treatment (see Section 2.c.). Moreover, authorities apparently still abuse the practice of psychiatry for other purposes. The Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia has criticized the use of psychiatry in "deprogramming" "victims" of "totalitarian sects." In such cases, authorities use pseudo-psychological and spiritual techniques to "treat" persons who had been members of new religious groups (see Section 2.c.).

Conditions for detainees and prisoners in government facilities were extremely harsh, particularly in pretrial detention facilities ("SIZO's"), where overcrowding is rampant, and the authorities frequently employ physical abuse and torture to coerce confessions. Most detainees face extremely harsh and even life-threatening conditions. Yuriy Kalinin, head of the MVD's main Directorate of Internal Affairs, stated in 1995 that "the conditions in our pretrial detention centers can be classified as torture under international standards. That is, the deprivation of sleep, air, and space." These conditions have not improved.

According to the 1995 law "On the Detention of Those Suspected or Accused of Committing Crimes," inmates must be provided with adequate space, food, and medical attention. Although most of the law's provisions were due to come into effect by the end of 1996, the authorities were not able to ensure compliance, due in part to lack of funds and the absence of a bail system.

Prisons are extremely overcrowded. The State Department of the Execution of Sentences (GUIN) figures for July 1 show 273,367 persons occupying prisons and pretrial detention facilities designed to hold 182,358, a total that is 149.9 percent of the designed capacity. The Moscow Center for Prison Reform

(MCPR) reported in that one average medium-sized SIZO (investigative isolation ward) designed for 1,500 prisoners held 2,300. These inmates have only 1.4 square feet per person. The law mandates 9 square feet of space per detainee. In another case, a SIZO in the Urals holds 8,000 persons in facilities designed for 3,500. In "Kresty," St. Petersburg's largest SIZO, 5 to 15 prisoners are held in cells that were built 100 years ago to hold 1 prisoner.

Under such conditions, prisoners sleep in shifts, and there is little, if any, room to move within the cell. In most pretrial detention centers and prisons, there is no ventilation system. Cells are stiflingly hot in summer (up to 40 degrees centigrade, according to the MCPR) and dangerously cold in winter. Reports indicate that matches can not be lit in many SIZO cells during the summer because of a lack of oxygen.

Health, nutrition, and sanitation standards in penal facilities remain low due to a lack of funding. MCPR estimated that the MVD was able to provide only 20 to 30 percent of needed supplies and medications, leaving some facilities without any medicine at all. Head lice, scabies, and various skin diseases are prevalent. The MCPR estimates that MVD penitentiary facilities were able to provide only 60 to 70 percent of the daily food rations they envisioned providing. Prisoners and detainees typically rely on families to provide them with extra food.

Detention facilities have infection rates of tuberculosis at far higher rates than the population at large. The MCPR reports that as of the summer 70,000 persons in corrective labor colonies and 10,000 in SIZO's were infected with tuberculosis. In 1996 the MCPR asserted that the rate of tuberculosis is 40 times higher in the prison system than in the general population, and that the mortality rates was 17 times higher. HIV/AIDS infection rates are also a source of concern. The MCPR reported 1,000 cases (which it believes to be a low figure) in a total prison population of about 1 million. The highest rate of infection is in Kaliningrad, where the MCPR reports between 207 and 225 cases, one-eighth of the prison population.

Statistics on the number of detainees and prisoners who were killed or died and on the number of law enforcement and prison personnel disciplined for use of excessive force are not released publicly. While reliable figures are extremely difficult to establish Russian human rights groups have in the past estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 detainees and prison inmates die each year in penitentiary facilities, some due to beatings, but most as a result of overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, or lack of medical care. The Ministry of Internal Affairs does not break down its statistics to specify how many of the 21,000 personnel dismissed were punished for abusing detainees or convicts. The new Duma Committee on Penitentiary Reform has heard 35 complaints of abuse since 1995. Its predecessor, a Duma commission, investigated 1,200 cases of abuse.

The penitentiary system is centrally administered from Moscow. The MVD, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Education all maintain penitentiary facilities. The MVD oversees about 85 percent of the prison population. According to GUIN statistics, the total prison population was 1,017,848 as of July 1. At year's end there were reportedly 275,567 detainees in centers built for a maximum of 182,358, according to Human Rights Watch.

Violence among inmates, including beatings and rape, is common, as elaborate inmate-enforced caste systems in which informers, homosexuals, rapists, rape victims, child molesters, and others are to be "untouchable" and treated very harshly, with little or no protection from the prison authorities.

There are five basic forms of detention in the MVD correctional system. Prison conditions in police station detention centers vary considerably, but are as a rule harsh. In most cases, detainees are not fed and have no bedding, sleeping place, running water, or toilet.

Suspects awaiting completion of criminal investigation, trial, sentencing, or appeal are confined in pretrial detention centers (SIZO's). GUIN has 178 SIZO's. Convicts are on occasion imprisoned in SIZO's because there is no transport to take them elsewhere. Conditions in SIZO's are extremely harsh. Cells are overcrowded and prisoners must sleep in shifts due to insufficient numbers of beds.

Correctional labor colonies (ITK's) are penal institutions, which handle the bulk of the convicts. The GUIN reported on July 1 that 723,540 persons were detained in 742 facilities. According to the MCPR, conditions in ITK's are better than those in SIZO's and prisons only to the extent that there is fresh air. In the 122 timber correctional colonies, where hardened criminals serve their time, beatings, torture, and rape by guards are common.

"Prisons" are penitentiary institutions for those who repeatedly violate the relatively lax rules in effect in ITK's. The GUIN has 13 prisons with 273,367 inmates. Conditions in many prisons are extremely harsh. Although they are not as crowded as SIZO's, guards reportedly severely discipline prisoners to break down resistance. Prisoners are sometimes humiliated, beaten, and starved.

Educational labor colonies for juveniles ("VTK's") are prisons for juveniles 14 to 20 years of age. The GUIN reported on July 1 that there were 20,941 inmates being held at 61 VTK's. Conditions in VTK's are significantly better than in ITK's, but juveniles in VTK's and juvenile SIZO cells suffer from beatings, torture, and rape. The MCPR reports that such facilities have a poor psychological atmosphere and lack educational and vocational training opportunities. Many of the juveniles are from orphanages, have no outside support, and are unaware of their rights.

In October President Yeltsin signed an edict providing for the transfer of the GUIN from the MVD to the Ministry of Justice, in accordance with a recommendation of the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe.

The MVD is resisting the transfer and had prevented it from taking place by year's end.

In January 1996, President Yeltsin approved the MVD's project to reorganize criminal procedures and the penal system in order to bring the penal system into line with international standards. The President's Commission for Prison Reform monitors prison conditions and has prepared recommendations and legislation for reform. None of these efforts have led to any demonstrable progress.

In recognition of the inhuman conditions present in detention facilities, on December 24 the Duma passed the Yeltsin administration proposal for an amnesty for prisoners held for minor crimes and for first-time offenders, specifically veterans of military service in defense of the Motherland, pregnant women or women with children, invalids, tuberculosis-infected prisoners, minors and senior citizens. The measure will potentially release 445,000 persons, including 35,000 who would be released from prisons and 60,000 whose terms of detention would be reduced. While noting that the measure will alleviate some of the problems of overcrowding, human rights NGO's argue that the plan does not fully resolve the ongoing crisis.

Moscow human rights groups make frequent visits to the prisons in the Moscow area, but they have neither the resources nor a national network to investigate conditions in all 89 regions. According to the MCPR, conditions in penal facilities vary among the regions. Some regions offer assistance in the form of food, clothing and medicine. Saratov oblast, concerned over the tuberculosis crisis in facilities located there, fully funded the tuberculosis-related medicinal needs of prisoners, according to the MCPR. Other support is offered by NGO's and religious groups.

d.

Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

Arbitrary arrest and detention remain problems. The Constitution provides that the arrest, taking into custody, and detention of persons suspected of crimes are permitted only by judicial decision. However, the Constitution's transitional provisions specify that these provisions do not take effect until a new Criminal

Procedure Code is adopted. The new code had its first reading in and was not expected to go into effect until 1998. The new Criminal Code that was passed in 1995 went into effect at the beginning of 1997. Under the new code the maximum sentence increased from 15 years to 30 years.

There are credible reports from throughout the country that police detain people without observing mandated procedures and fail to issue proper protocols of arrest or for confiscated property. Credible reports exist of physical abuse being used by officers in these arrests. Moscow city law enforcement authorities frequently detain persons unlawfully for alleged violations of registration requirements (see Section 2.d.).

In the absence of measures to implement the procedural safeguards contained in the Constitution, suspects were often subjected to uneven and arbitrary treatment by officials acting under the present Criminal Procedure Code and "temporary" presidential decrees. The code gives procurators authority to issue an order of detention without a judge's authorization and, if police believe that the suspect has committed a crime or is a danger to others, he can be detained for up to 48 hours without a warrant. The Constitution and the Criminal Procedure Code provide that detainees are entitled to have a lawyer present from the time of detention, during questioning following detention, and throughout investigation up to and including the formal filing of charges. This generally is followed in practice. The Moscow Center for the Promotion of Criminal Justice Reform reports that detainees are given the opportunity to have access to a lawyer in accordance with their rights. However, the Center notes that the high cost of legal fees and the poor quality of court-appointed public defenders for those lacking the funds to engage counsel effectively deny the majority of suspects competent legal representation. As a result, many prisoners do not exercise this right because they believe it useless.

A 1994 presidential decree on combating organized crime allowed law enforcement authorities to detain persons suspected of ties to organized crime for up to 30 days without explanation of the reasons for detention and without access to a lawyer. A July 1996 decree on combating crime in Moscow went even further, allowing officials to hold unregistered residents suspected of crimes for up to 30 days and in certain cases to expel them from Moscow. These two decrees were overturned by a June 14 presidential decree that allows detention for up to 10 days without bringing charges. The June decree instructed the Government to submit to the Duma a draft federal law on preventing vagrancy and social rehabilitation of the homeless.

The Criminal Procedure Code specifies that only 2 months should elapse between the date an investigation is initiated and the date the file is transferred to the procurator so that he can file formal charges against the suspect in court. However, investigations are seldom completed that quickly. Some suspects spend 18 months or longer in detention under harsh conditions in a SIZO while the criminal investigation is conducted. The Moscow Center for Prison Reform (MCPR) reports terms of pretrial detention extending up to 3 years, with the average ranging from 7 to 10 months. In some extreme cases, however, the MCPR reports detention periods of 5 years due to financial difficulties and poor investigative and court work. The code provides that the regional procurator may extend the period of criminal investigation to 6 months in "complex" cases. If more time is required in "exceptional" cases, the Procurator General can personally extend the period up to 18 months. Extensions of the investigation period are often issued without explanation to the detainee. Until the investigation is completed, the suspect is under the jurisdiction of the procurator's office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There is no procedure for a suspect to plead guilty during the investigative period, although if a suspect informs the investigator that he is guilty, the period of the investigation is usually shorter than if he maintains his innocence. Suspects frequently fear exercising their rights to request judicial review of their detention out of fear of angering the investigating officer.

There were also credible reports that persons have been detained far in excess of the permissible periods for administrative offenses, in some cases so that police officials could extort money from friends or relatives. The situation has improved somewhat since a Yeltsin decree issued in the summer that annulled a previous Yeltsin decree that had allowed for 30-day detentions. However, the practice of detaining individuals in excess of permissible periods is still not uncommon, and this is often done for the purpose of extorting money.

The use of bail is extremely rare, even if suspects are not flight risks or have not been charged with violent crimes. This aggravates overcrowding in pretrial detention and, due to delays in bringing cases to trial, results in many suspects remaining in pretrial detention for longer than the maximum penalty they might face if convicted.

Delays also plague the trial stage. Although the Criminal Procedure Code requires court consideration to begin no more than 14 days after the judge issues the order designating the location of the trial, congestion in the court system frequently leads to long postponements. Some suspects actually serve the length of their sentences while awaiting trial. Judges often do not dismiss cases involving improper investigations or indictments, particularly if the procurator's case has political support or the case is controversial. Instead, such cases are often returned to the procurator for additional investigation.

Some authorities have taken advantage of the system's procedural weaknesses to arrest people on false pretexts for expressing views critical of the Government. Human rights advocates in the regions have been charged with libel, contempt of court, or interference in judicial procedures in cases with distinct political overtones. Others have been charged with other offenses and held either in excess of normal periods of detention or for offenses that do not require detention at all.

The case of Aleksandr Nikitin, a retired Russian naval captain who was detained for much of 1996 continued to be characterized by serious violations of due process, suggesting that his detention was politically motivated. The FSB detained Nikitin in St. Petersburg in February 1996 on suspicion of espionage and revealing state secrets. Nikitin had been working with a Norwegian environmental foundation, Bellona, to publish information on the dangers posed by the nuclear waste generated by the northern fleet, in which Nikitin had served.

In December 1996, the federal Deputy Procurator General ordered the FSB

to release Nikitin on his own recognizance. Nikitin remains at liberty

but was restricted to the St. Petersburg city limits, although he was

permitted to visit Moscow in November

On June 17, the FSB announced its most recent charges against Nikitin, "state treason" and "revealing state secrets," crimes punishable by up to 20 years in prison. The FSB was subsequently granted several 3-month extensions to their investigation, the reasons for which are unclear. The FSB concluded its investigation in September, but the defense team protested that key documents were removed from the case file. The court upheld the challenge, and the FSB restored the file and closed its investigation in November.

The indictments reportedly cite classified decrees that have never been made available to Nikitin's defense team and were unknown to Nikitin when he was writing the Bellona report. Two of them were issued in 1993 (after Nikitin's retirement in 1992) and one was issued in 1996, after Nikitin's arrest. A third was not scheduled to take effect until January 1, 1998. The prosecution also has not made available the findings of its expert review (conducted solely by Defense Ministry officers) and has refused the defense team's right to an independent expert review of the material grounds for the indictment.

The defense team demonstrated that all the information used in Nikitin's report is freely available in open sources. It also has challenged the FSB's use of classified decrees as the basis for indictment on the grounds that the Constitution specifies that "any normative legal enactments affecting human and civil rights, freedoms, and duties cannot be applied unless they have been officially published for universal information." Finally, the defense team has cited constitutional provisions giving "each person . . . the right to a decent environment [and] reliable information about the state of the environment" as a reason that none of the information can legally be classified.

Grigoriy Pasko, an active-duty officer in the Pacific Fleet, was arrested on suspicion of treason in November. His attorney questioned the legality of the arrest and claimed that Pasko is being persecuted for his environmental activism.

Murmansk human rights activist Oleg Pazyura was arrested on May 26. The specific charges under which he would be tried were not known at year's end. It is believed that the charges have to do with libeling, insulting, and possibly threatening public officials. His defenders allege that Pazyura was taken to St. Petersburg some time toward the end of the year for court-mandated psychiatric testing, allegedly to remove him from the purview of a team from the general procurator's office, which had arrived in Murmansk from Moscow to review his case. He was returned to Murmansk in late December, after the team had returned to Moscow. Pazyura's trial was scheduled for January 19, 1998.

Vasiliy Chaykin, an activist with the Krasnodar Provincial Association for the Protection of Human Rights, was arrested on April 17 on charges of statutory rape. Chaykin denies the charges and claims that they stem from his vocal criticism of law enforcement authorities. Chaykin was denied access to a lawyer of his choice for a month after his arrest.

Larisa Kharchenko, a housing advisor to former St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak, was detained in July in connection with a corruption case involving the former Mayor. She was held incommunicado for 17 days and then charged with bribery and abuse of office. Her lawyer contended that the authorities do not have a case against her and that she was kept in jail and deprived of medical care in order to force her to testify against Sobchak. She was released in mid-December, but must stay in St. Petersburg pending further developments in her case. No trial date has been set.

The Government does not use forced exile.

e. *Denial of Fair Public Trial*

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; the development of an independent judiciary continued and there are signs of limited independence. However, the judiciary does not yet act as an effective counterweight to other branches of government. A 1996 law separated the courts from the Ministry of Justice and placed them within a separate part of the Judicial Department. In the 1998 budget, this department is funded independent of the Ministry. Judges remain subject to some influence from the executive, military, and security forces, especially in high profile or political cases. The judiciary also lacks resources and is subject to corruption.

Low salaries and scant prestige make it difficult to attract talented new judges and contribute to the vulnerability of existing judges to bribery and corruption. On July 29, President Yeltsin ordered a 65 percent pay raise (from an average salary of \$333 (rr 2 million) to \$533 (rr 3.2 million per month) in an attempt to attract new judges to fill approximately 1,500 vacancies in the judiciary.

The Criminal Code provides for the court to appoint a lawyer if the suspect cannot afford one. The Society for the Guardianship of Penitentiary Institutions is often called upon by judges to provide legal assistance for suspects facing charges and trial without any representation. This society operates primarily in Moscow, although it uses its connections throughout Russia to appeal to legal professionals to represent the indigent. However, in many cases the indigent receive little legal assistance, because funds are lacking to pay for trial attorneys for them and public defenders are poorly trained.

Because the right to a lawyer during pretrial questioning is often not exercised (see Section 1.d.), many defendants recant testimony given in pretrial questioning, stating that they were denied access to a lawyer or that they were coerced into giving false confessions or statements. Nevertheless, human rights monitors

have documented cases in which convictions were obtained on the basis of testimony that the defendant recanted in court, even in the absence of other proof of guilt.

In the 80 regions where adversarial jury trials have not yet been introduced, criminal procedures are heavily weighted in favor of the procurator. The judge or panel of judges conduct the trial by asking questions based on their prior review of the evidence. Reports indicate that in practice the constitutionally-mandated presumption of innocence is often disregarded. Judges are known to return poorly developed cases to the prosecution for additional investigation rather than risk confrontation with powerful prosecutors. This greatly increases the time that defendants spend in SIZO's (see Section 1.c.).

Adversarial jury trials, at the option of the accused in cases where there is a risk of a death penalty, were introduced in 1993 and 1994 in nine areas, comprising 23 percent of the population. The Department of Judicial Reform of the State Legal Administration of the President, which is charged with reintroducing jury trials, planned in early 1996 to expand jury trials to 12 new regions, but failed to do so due to lack of funds. Such an expansion would extend access to jury trials to approximately half of the population.

The Moscow Center for the Promotion of Criminal Justice Reform reports that 336 cases, involving 618 persons, were tried by jury in 1996. Of these, 80 resulted in acquittals (19.1 percent) and around one quarter were returned for further investigation. According to the Center's figures, the acquittal rate for nonjury trials is approximately 2 percent.

In April Amnesty International reported on efforts by the Government of the breakaway Republic of Chechnya to establish a new criminal code based on the Islamic Shari'a code. Although the code has not been formally enacted, elements of Shari'a law have already been cited in court decisions. Four Chechens were found guilty by Shari'a courts and executed publicly by firing squad in August and September.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

f. *Arbitrary Interference With Privacy, Family, Home, or*

Correspondence

The Constitution states that officials can enter a private residence only in cases prescribed by federal law or on the basis of a judicial decision. It permits the Government to monitor correspondence, telephone conversations, and other means of communication only with judicial permission. It prohibits the collection, storage, utilization, and dissemination of information about a person's private life without his consent. However, the implementing legislation necessary to bring these provisions into effect has not yet been passed. In 1995 legislation was passed that gave broad authority for the FSB to utilize domestic surveillance and to conduct searches of private residences, with only limited oversight by the courts and the procuracy. These measures remain in force. There were reports of electronic surveillance by government officials and others. Moscow police entered residences without warrants during checks for illegal residents of the city (see Section 2.d.).

Officers in the special services, including authorities at the highest levels of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and Federal Security Service (FSB), have been accused of using their services' power to gather "kompromat" (compromising materials) on political and public figures as political insurance and to remove rivals. Similarly, persons in these agencies, both active and retired, have been accused of working with commercial or criminal organizations for the same purpose. For example, there were reports that a criminal organization was responsible for taping or leaking a videotape showing Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev disporting himself with young women in a bathhouse.

There are credible reports that regional branches of the FSB continue to exert pressure on citizens employed by western firms and organizations, often with the goal of coercing them into becoming informants.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of the press and mass information and the "right of each person to seek, pass on, produce, and disseminate information freely by any legal method." The Government generally respects these provisions; however, the law contains provisions regarding secrecy of information that federal, regional, and local authorities have on occasion chosen to interpret broadly in order to limit access to information and to prosecute journalists and media organizations that publish critical information.

Because Russian media generally are not financially self-sufficient, they are subject to manipulation by the Government and by companies that are their majority shareholders. These financial entities manipulate the media at times to further their own political and financial goals. Journalists and editors admit that the political and business interests of major shareholders are paramount, causing journalists to practice self-censorship. Prominent Russian human rights activist Sergey Kovelov has stated that, in these circumstances, "The Russian media are free but not independent."

Despite this, the major print media organizations represent Russia's broad political spectrum and provide readers with a variety of information. Independent and semi-independent television stations continue to develop, and the number of small private radio stations, mostly in the big cities, continues to increase. Nevertheless, reports of government pressure on the media continue, particularly when coverage deals with corruption or criticism of the authorities.

Private companies began investing heavily in the media market in 1997, even though the media generally are not yet profitable. The most powerful companies, such as Lukoil, Gazprom, and a number of banks, fought for influence on the Moscow media market and began to invest in media in the provinces.

Federal, regional, and local governments continued to exert pressure on journalists by depriving them of access to information, using accreditation procedures to limit access, removing them from their jobs, and bringing libel suits against them. The Glasnost Defense Fund's (GDF) mid-year report noted that such actions against journalists increased from 126 cases in the first half of 1996 to 202 in the first half of 1997. By year's end the GDF's updated figures for 1997 included 420 cases in which the rights of journalists and press freedom were violated. Further, the GDF reported that there were 353 incidents in which journalists and media sources were accused by the authorities of abuse of their journalistic privileges (defined as "incitement to societal animosity," violations related to advertising activity, campaign activities, publication of state secrets, and libel).

Accreditation rules often violate the constitutional right of journalists to access to information. For example, at the beginning of the year, the public relations department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs revised its accreditation procedure and required journalists to submit their articles for the previous 6 months in order to be considered for accreditation. The Internal Affairs Ministry withdrew this policy only after the GDF insisted that such a requirement violated federal law.

In March the State duma withdrew accreditation from ORT (Russian public television) journalists on the grounds that their coverage of a duma debate was not objective. For 3 weeks these journalists were refused access to duma proceedings; the Supreme Court ruled the duma's action illegal.

In the provinces, the use of accreditation to limit journalists' access was even more common because every regional duma, court, or city administration devises its own accreditation procedures. In July the Bryansk duma refused to renew the accreditation of Yevgeniy Yegorov, a journalist from the local daily Dobriy Den, because he wrote an article criticizing the deputies' excessive expenditures on business trips and gifts. In May the Novosibirsk mayor denied accreditation to journalists from Komok newspaper on the grounds that

he needed "to see how they do for a month or two" and that he had a feeling that the newspaper might be "shut down."

The number of court cases against journalists increased 2.5 times over 1996. In the majority of these cases, a government body or individual official accused journalists and their newspapers of "causing damage to reputation." According to the GDF's mid-year report, libel and criminal proceedings against journalists often do not have a sound legal foundation. Nonetheless, judges rule against the media in the majority of these cases because the law is vague and judges are reluctant to challenge powerful local officials. Such rulings reinforce the tendency towards self-censorship.

Journalists publishing critical information about local governments and influential businesses, as well as investigative journalists writing about crime and other sensitive issues, were subjected to threats, beatings, and even murder. In a 1997 report on violations of the rights of journalists, the GDF found numerous instances of harassment, including financial pressure, physical assaults, and threats against journalists' families.

In a widely publicized incident, Duma member and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party Vladimir Zhirinovskiy physically attacked Moscow Television Channel (MTK) journalist Yulia Olshanskaya and a cameraman from the 2x2 television channel, Valeriy Ivanov. Zhirinovskiy attacked the journalists because they tried to film him as he attempted to cross the militia cordon at the annual May 9 World War II victory celebration. Zhirinovskiy dragged Olshanskaya to a nearby car, forced her in, and locked her inside. Then he and his bodyguards proceeded to beat up Ivanov, repeatedly slamming a car door on his head. The Committee to Protect Journalists sent a letter to President Boris Yeltsin expressing concern over the indifference of law-enforcement officers towards these attacks on journalists. Olshanskaya filed criminal charges against her attacker. Zhirinovskiy was not detained (Duma members enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution), and the case against the bodyguards is still pending.

In the regions outside the major media markets of Moscow and St.

Petersburg, the pressure against the media is even more pronounced. Local authorities and criminal groups often feel that they have absolute power in "their" regions. Many authorities continued to use their ownership of media premises, printing facilities, government subsidies, and charges of libel to pressure the media. In May two men severely beat "Komsomolskaya Pravda" correspondent Irina Chernova in the center of Volgograd. Chernova alleged that the attack was connected to one of the two investigations that she was working on at the time. One involved suspicious dealings between the local Hermes-Povolzhye Bank and a local drilling technology factory. The other involved the Volgograd Region police, against which she brought harassment charges shortly before the incident.

In February two journalists of Irkutsk's Zemlya newspaper, Robert Sheptalin and Aleksandr Shakhmatov, were arrested and imprisoned on bribery charges. Their colleagues alleged that the two men were imprisoned as a result of their unfavorable reporting on prominent city officials. They were still in prison months after their arrest, and the investigation was not proceeding.

Several journalists were killed throughout the country. However, at year's end, it was not yet known whether they were killed in circumstances connected to their work. For example, on March 20, a radio correspondent of Kabardino-Balkariya radio, Vladimir Aliyev, was found with a cracked skull 60 kilometers from the region's capital, Nalchik, and died from the injury a few days later. Even though the attack was classified as a theft because his documents and money were missing, the journalist's colleagues are convinced it was murder. They claim Aliyev received numerous death threats before the attack. The local procuracy, which seems to be treating it as a routine homicide, states that the case has been closed because the alleged perpetrator has since died.

Komsomolskaya Pravda special correspondent Valeriy Krivosheyev was killed in Lipetsk on September 6. According to a report from the Committee to Protect Journalists, Krivosheyev had told colleagues the day

before that he was pursuing a story that he termed "a bombshell of national proportions." Krivosheyev had previously pursued controversial stories as an investigative journalist for the Lipetsk daily De Fakto.

The Government's information policy remained restrictive. Facts, documents, and statistical data are still frequently kept from the press. The secrecy of information, and the resistance of senior officials to its release, were typically cited as pretexts for refusing to provide information to journalists.

In response to the kidnappings of journalists in Chechnya in March, the Chechen Internal Affairs Ministry announced that all journalists wishing to visit Chechnya must register with the Ministry, travel to the Republic only by air, stay in the government compound at the airport, and hire armed government bodyguards. Russian and foreign correspondents generally refused to comply.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to assemble freely, and the Government respects this right in practice. Organizations must obtain permits in order to hold public meetings. The application process must begin between 5 and 10 days before the scheduled event. Citizens freely and actively protested government decisions and actions. Permits to demonstrate were readily granted to both opponents and supporters of the Government.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association, and the Government respects this right in practice. Public organizations must register their bylaws and the names of their leaders with the Ministry of Justice. In 1995 a registration law was passed specifying that organizations had until 1999 to reregister.

In addition to submitting their bylaws and the names of their leaders, political parties must present 5,000 signatures and pay a fee to register. The Constitution and the law on elections ban the participation in elections of organizations that profess anticonstitutional themes or activities.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this right in practice. The Constitution also provides for the equality of all religions before the law and the separation of church and state. However, in practice the Government does not always respect the provision for equality of religions. In December 1990, the Soviet Government adopted a law on religious freedom designed to put all religions on an equal basis. (After the breakup of the Soviet Union, this law became part of the Russian Federation's legal code.) The law forbade government interference in religion and established simple registration procedures for religious groups. Registration of religious groups was not required, and some evangelical and other religious groups have continued to operate while choosing not to register officially with the Government. By registering, however, groups obtained a number of advantages; for example, the ability to establish official places of worship or benefit from tax exemptions. The Government does not designate religion on passports or national identity documents.

Over the past several years the sharp increase in the activities of well-financed foreign missionaries has disturbed many sectors of society, particularly nationalists and those in the Russian Orthodox Church, some of whom advocated limiting the activities of what they termed "nontraditional" religious groups and what were sometimes termed "totalitarian sects."

In October the Government enacted a new, restrictive, and potentially discriminatory law on religion, which raised questions about the Government's commitment to international agreements honoring freedom of religion. Passage of the law prompted concern in the international community because, for the first time since

the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia had adopted legislation that could abridge fundamental human rights. This law replaced the progressive 1990 religion law that had helped facilitate a revival of religious activity.

The new law was ostensibly targeted at so-called "totalitarian sects" or dangerous religious cults. However, the intent of some of the law's sponsors appears to have been to discriminate against members of less well-established religions by making it difficult for them to manifest their beliefs through organized religious institutions.

The law is very complex, with many ambiguous and contradictory provisions. Supporters and critics of the law differ as to its potential impact; each side can cite language in the law to support its interpretation. The law's most controversial provisions center on the creation of various categories of religious communities with differing levels of legal status and privileges. The law draws distinctions between religious "groups" and "organizations" and creates two categories of organization: "regional" and "centralized." A religious group is a congregation of worshipers that does not have the status of a juridical person, meaning it cannot open a bank account, own property, issue invitations to foreign guests or publish literature, among other things. Individual members of groups will presumably retain these rights. For example, a member of a religious group could buy property for the group's use, and invite personal guests to engage in religious instruction, and import religious material. In this case, however, the group would not enjoy tax benefits and other privileges extended to religious organizations.

Groups that have been in existence for 15 years have the right to obtain the status of "local religious organizations." Similarly, congregations that existed for 15 years when the new law was enacted will also be eligible for registration as an organization. Organizations, both local and centralized, are juridical persons, enjoy tax exemptions, and are permitted to establish religious schools and to host foreign religious workers. A centralized religious organization can be founded by a confession that has three functioning "local organizations" in different regions. A centralized organization apparently has the right to establish affiliated local organizations without adhering to the 15-year rule.

Under the new law, representatives of foreign religious organizations are required to register with state authorities, and are barred from conducting liturgical and other religious activity unless they have acquired the status of a group or organization."

Critics of the law have claimed that it violates the Constitution's provision of equality before the law of all confessions. In particular, many religious groups criticized the law's requirement that religious groups be in existence for 15 years before they can qualify for "organization" status. Also, many groups feared the consequences of the law's provisions limiting the actions of foreign religious missionaries. Representatives of some religions, such as the Mormon Church and some Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian groups, have said that their activities in Russia could be halted under the law. Critics of the law have also expressed concern that local authorities could abuse the new law by interpreting and implementing it more strictly than intended by the Federal Government.

President Yeltsin and high-ranking officials have consistently stated that the law would be applied in a liberal, tolerant manner, thereby preserving religious freedom and the equality of confessions. No mainstream religion already operating in Russia, they insist, would see its activities curtailed as a result of the new law. Though formally in force at year's end, the full effects of the law were not yet apparent as implementing regulations had not been promulgated. The full effect of the law may not be clear until the end of 1999, the time before which organizations registered under the old law are required to obtain new registration. Since its adoption, in fact, no religious group has completely ceased operations in Russia as a result of the law.

However, there were numerous instances of obstruction of religious groups' activities by local authorities who cited the new law, and more significantly, two reported instances of punishment for religious belief or activity. For example, on October 2, police in Moscow detained followers of the Orthodox Society of True Believers and committed them to a psychiatric hospital for treatment (see Section 1.c.). The policemen at-

tributed their actions to the new law. In October a mayor in Yamalo-Nenetskiy autonomous okrug wrote a letter informing a local judge that the latter could no longer carry out his official duties because he was a member of a "sect" (the Pentecostal Church).

In another case, local authorities citing the new law canceled the registration of the Evangelical Lutheran mission in the town of Touim in the autonomous Republic of Khakasiya. The registration was reinstated, reportedly after intervention by the authorities in Moscow. However, in November the chief procurator of Khakasiya informed the mission of his intention to seek judicial approval of his efforts to cancel the mission's registration. Similarly, the pastor of an independent Pentecostal congregation in the town of Semnadsat, about 25 miles west of Moscow, said that local authorities had cited the new law to him when informing him in August that his group would no longer be able to rent a classroom for Sunday worship. On October 12, the head of the Moscow oblast regional administration refused to reissue an authorization to a Pentecostal group to rent a community center for religious services. Many towns in Russia have virtually no facilities available for worship services that are not government-owned.

Furthermore, since 1994, 22 out of 89 regional governments have passed restrictive laws and decrees intended to restrict the activities of religious groups. The Federal Government has not sought to challenge the constitutionality of these restrictions. Enforcement is uneven, but there are reports that some local governments prevented religious groups from using venues, such as cinemas, suitable for large gatherings. As a result, in some instances denominations that do not have their own property effectively have been denied the opportunity to practice their faith in large groups. In Kursk, for example, authorities declined to renew agreements with the Catholic community granting it access to the Church of the Assumption (a Catholic church confiscated by the Bolsheviks and converted into a House of Culture); the congregation has reportedly resorted to meeting in the street outside. Similarly, Belgorod authorities refused to register the Catholic community there on the grounds that Catholicism is a "foreign" religious organization, and refused to return the Catholic Church of Saints Peter and Paul to the Catholic community. Instead, city authorities reportedly plan to turn the building into an Orthodox museum. A Catholic priest was reportedly told that he could not conduct mass, even in a private apartment.

These and other actions in certain regions have given rise to concern, but there are positive notes as well: the governor of St. Petersburg vetoed restrictive legislation on the grounds that its principles were unconstitutional and that the strictures imposed on religious groups were not within the power of the city's government to establish. While the local legislature passed, and the governor of Sverdlovsk oblast signed, a restrictive religion law in October 1996, executive branch officials have refused to enforce the law, citing fear of lawsuits by minority faiths, vagueness in the law's provisions, and the belief by officials that some of the provisions of the law were unconstitutional. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Udmurtiya struck down a 1996 republic law restricting freedom of religion.

Despite constitutional provisions for equality of religions, in many areas of the country it appeared that the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and, in some regions, Islam, had privileged positions, particularly in the pace of return of previously nationalized religious properties and in the allocation of public funds for restoration and construction of church properties.

Property disputes are some of the most frequent complaints cited by religious groups. For the most part, synagogues, churches, and mosques have been returned to communities to be used for religious services. In certain cases churches have not yet been returned. Moreover, the Moscow Patriarchate has claimed and taken possession of properties owned by other branches of orthodoxy. On October 9, local officials filed a petition in Penza oblast court to evict the Russian Orthodox Free Church from a church building that it had been using for several years. The Moscow Patriarchate openly supported this action and the property was returned to them. Similarly, at the request of the Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Vladimir and Suzdal, the Ministry of Culture and the State Property Committee ordered the Russian Orthodox Free Church community in Vladimir oblast in mid-October to relinquish its church to the Moscow Patriarchate. In some property disputes, religious buildings have been "privatized," and local authorities often refuse to get involved

in property disputes, which they contend are between private organizations. Even where state or municipal authorities still have undisputed control of properties, a number of religious communities continue to meet significant obstacles when they request the return of religious buildings, or when they seek to acquire land and necessary building permits for new religious structures. Some Protestant faiths have suggested that the Russian Orthodox Church influences the Government regarding land allocated for churches of other sects.

Although Jews and Muslims continue to encounter prejudice and societal discrimination, they have not been inhibited by the Government in the free practice of their religion. In some areas of the country, other religions, including Buddhism, various minority Christian faiths, and Shamanism are practiced in accord with local traditions.

d. **Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation**

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to choose their place of residence freely. However, regional governments continue to restrict this right through residential registration rules that closely resemble the Soviet-era "propiska" (pass) regulations. Although the rules, which came into effect at the beginning of 1996, were touted as a notification device rather than a control system, their application has produced many of the same results as the propiska system.

Although citizens are free to travel within Russia, the Government also imposes registration requirements on domestic travel. All adults are issued internal passports, which they must carry while traveling and use to register with local authorities for visits of more than 3 days (in Moscow it is 24 hours). However, travelers not staying in hotels usually ignore this requirement.

Citizens must register to live and work in a specific area within 7 days

of moving there. Russian citizens changing residence in Russia, as well

as citizens of former Soviet republics who decide to move to Russia,

often face enormous difficulties or are simply not permitted to register

in some cities. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) and refugee rights NGO's have cited Stavropol, Krasnodar,

Moscow, and St. Petersburg as being the least open to migrants. The

cost of registration is often prohibitive, far beyond the means of most

migrants or refugees, who usually do not register. On July 2, the

Constitutional Court struck down a Moscow oblast registration law on the

grounds that the fees collected constituted a tax that is not in the

power of a regional government to levy. However, since such decisions

do not have universality of application, the ruling does not affect registration requirements in other oblasts and cities. In October 1996, the city of Moscow had set registration fees at 500 times the legal minimum wage, or about \$7,500 (40 million rubles). In April 1996, the Constitutional Court struck down a Moscow city law that gave local officials the right to collect high fees for registration, but the Court did not outlaw charging fees or specify how much could be charged legally. The mayor's office protested the decision and has not lowered the fees

While federal law provides for education for all children in the Russian federation, regional authorities frequently deny access to schools to the children of unregistered persons, asylum-seekers, and migrants because they lack residential registration. Similarly, while the Moscow procurator's office has upheld the right of migrants to receive publicly available medical care, unregistered persons, migrants, and asylum-seekers are frequently denied these services.

The government and residents of Moscow and other large cities defend registration as necessary in order to control crime, to keep crowded urban areas from attracting even more inhabitants, and to gain revenue.

The city of Moscow is frequently cited for violating the rights of nonresidents and ethnic minorities as well as the rights of those legitimately seeking asylum. The weekly *Obshchaya Gazeta* reported on May 21 that Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov, in preparation for the 850th anniversary of the city, had ordered the city's Migration Service to "cleanse" the city of all "illegal migrants." Mayor Luzhkov has been quoted in the past as calling for the expulsion of Chechens and other Caucasians from Moscow. Moscow police, particularly special-duty OMON units, conduct frequent document checks, particularly of persons who appear to be from the Caucasus or are otherwise dark-skinned. Such checks have on many occasions involved police entering residences without warrants. There are credible reports that police have fined persons without registration documents in excess of legal requirements and have not provided proper documentation of the fine.

Mayor Luzhkov signed a resolution in August 1996 ordering the deportation of all unregistered people living in Moscow back to the place where they were last registered to live. At the end of September 1996, the press reported that 4,051 unregistered people had "voluntarily" departed from Moscow and that 812 were deported under armed guard. The resolution was still in effect at year's end, and the practice, often reportedly aimed at extorting money, continued.

The Constitution provides all citizens with the right to emigrate. The Government does not impose more than nominal emigration taxes, fees, or duties. On average it takes 3 months to process a passport application, although it can take much longer if documentation is needed from elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

Some liberal principles regarding emigration procedures were formally codified in the August 1996 law Concerning Order in Exit From the Russian Federation and Entry Into the Russian Federation. This law abolished the old Soviet requirement that, in order to emigrate, citizens must receive a stamp permitting "permanent residence abroad" ("PMZH")--essentially a propiska for those living outside Russia. The law required the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through its Office of Visas and Registration (OVIR), to establish regulations for eliminating this practice within 6 months of the passage of the law. However, no regulations

have been published and the requirement remains effectively in force. OVIR offices throughout Russia continue to issue the stamp and border guards continue to refuse to allow emigrants to depart who have not received the stamp.

Another feature of the law is the codification of the legal grounds for denying foreign travel documents to citizens who had access to state secrets. Under the new law, access to such classified material can only occur with the consent of the citizen, established in the form of a written contract that states that the signatory understands that he has been given access to state secrets and that his ability to travel abroad may be restricted. However, the law envisions a maximum period of delay under normal circumstances of 5 years, and it grants the interagency Commission on Secrecy the right to add an additional 5-year term to the period of delay if the Commission finds that a person had access to particularly sensitive materials. This latter provision has raised serious concerns among human rights advocates concerned about arbitrary and excessive powers on the part of the Government to restrict foreign travel.

If a citizen had access to classified material, police and FSB clearances are necessary to receive an external passport. Persons denied travel documents on secrecy grounds can appeal the decision to an interagency commission chaired by First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. The Ivanov Commission cannot rule on whether the material should or should not be classified, but can rule on the legality of travel restrictions imposed, and on whether or not the traveler actually had access to materials requiring a travel restriction. Since it was established in 1994, the Ivanov Commission has granted travel permission to approximately 95 percent of appellants.

Other grounds for denial of the right to travel abroad are military conscription or assignment to civilian alternative service, being under investigation for or serving a sentence for a crime, evasion of a court-ordered obligation, or providing false information on a passport application. The requirement that citizens satisfy obligations to immediate relatives, such as material support for parents, have been eliminated except for court-ordered obligations, such as alimony payments.

Emigrants who have permanently resettled abroad, including in Israel, Germany, or the United States have been able to visit or repatriate without hindrance. However, emigrants who departed without first obtaining a "PMZH" stamp have been stopped at the border and prevented from departing Russia (though they may enter without difficulty), as they could present neither a nonimmigrant visa to another country nor evidence of permission to legally reside abroad.

Since 1993 Russia has been a party to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. On July 28, President Yeltsin signed the federal law, Concerning Making Changes and Additions to the Law of the Russian Federation, Concerning Refugees. This law offers substantially fewer benefits to refugees than the original 1993 law it replaces. The earlier law's fairly generous commitments of resettlement support for refugees have been cited by some observers as discouraging the Federal Migration Service (FMS), which has few resources to meet this obligation, from adjudicating the cases of asylum seekers. With the passage of the new law, the FMS is expected to expedite its procedures for adjudicating asylum claims.

The Government cooperates to a limited extent with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration. Both organizations assist the Government in developing a humane migration management system; this includes effective and fair refugee status determination procedures. The UNHCR recognizes some 30,000 asylum seekers who originate from outside the territories of the former Soviet Union.

Since 1994 the FMS gave refugee status to only 80 persons originating outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In comparison, the Government provided refugee status to 130,000 former citizens (mainly ethnic Russians) of the former Soviet Union. The Government acts more expeditiously for the latter group and applies a more lenient standard.

Despite some progress in adjudicating nonformer Soviet Union asylum claims by the regional branches of the FMS, there are still major concerns about the ability and willingness of the Moscow office to process non-CIS asylum seekers. Human rights organizations claim that this is part of intentional efforts by the authorities to rid the city of foreign asylum seekers. Local legislation in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov, and other major population centers prohibits the settlement of refugees within these cities.

A large number of workers and students from Africa and Asia, who came to work or study in accordance with treaties between their countries and the former Soviet Union, remain in Russia. The Government has not deported them but encourages their return home.

The UNHCR and Amnesty International are working with the FMS and border officials to ensure that interviews of potential refugees are conducted in a timely fashion, that the UNHCR is allowed access to potential refugees in airport transit lounges, and that deportations of potential refugees are delayed until cases are adjudicated. Despite these efforts, it appears that the Government is more concerned with creating a disincentive for future nonformer Soviet Union asylum seekers than with meeting its international obligations.

The case of Sheremetyevo 2 airport is one example. The physical layout of the airport contains an individual from exercising his right to claim asylum. The FMS established a Point of Immigration (PIC) at Sheremetyevo 2 in 1996. PIC officials are responsible for processing requests for refugee status. The PIC office is located outside the transit zone. No PIC or UNHCR phone number is listed in the transit zone, nor is any other information provided that would assist an asylum seeker. Undocumented travelers are not allowed to leave the transit zone and are often returned to Aeroflot (the carrier on which most migrants enter the Russian Federation). Legally bound to provide food and emergency medical care for undocumented travelers, Aeroflot returns them to their point of departure as quickly as possible. Human rights organizations allege that Aeroflot deports hundreds of asylum seekers. In cases where asylum seekers from Sheremetyevo 2 have accessed the PIC, FMS officials reportedly never have granted an individual refugee status. Deportations of those waiting for a decision on their cases have been documented.

In the past, the UNHCR has had limited access to the transit areas of Moscow's airports. Access to the Sheremetyevo 2 transit lounge eased somewhat in October, but remains sporadic.

Armenians evacuated from Baku in the wake of late 1980's ethnic violence are recognized as refugees, although their credentials require annual renewal. The vast majority of those evacuated have either emigrated from Russia or found some way to live in Russia. However, a group of about 1,400-2,000 are still housed in the "temporary quarters" assigned after the evacuation, usually in Moscow hotels or workers' dormitories in the greater Moscow area. They are unable to return to Azerbaijan and are not accepted by Armenia. Since they lack residency permits for Moscow, they cannot legally apply for work and are effectively denied the ability to register their children for public schooling. They have declined offers of Russian citizenship on the grounds that they would lose even the meager benefits they presently receive (although such a step would allow them to establish legal residence, seek work, and apply for benefits such as foreign travel passports). They have also rejected offers of relocation to other regions of Russia because they allege that the alternative residences they are offered frequently are not habitable, are still occupied by others, or simply do not exist. Their situation is becoming increasingly precarious as the formerly state-owned hotels in which many reside are privatized, and the new owners exert financial and other pressure on them to depart. A number of orders have already been served in such cases. The courts are legally required to appoint a new residence, but have been uneven in meeting this requirement.

The Constitution states that the Russian Federation does not permit the extradition to other states of persons persecuted for their political beliefs or their actions (or inactions) that are not considered a crime in the Russian Federation. However, instances have occurred in the past in which opposition figures were deported to countries of the former Soviet Union to face charges that were political in nature. Under the 1993 Commonwealth of Independent States Convention on Legal Assistance in Civil, Family, and Criminal Affairs, persons with outstanding warrants can be detained for periods of up to 1 month while the Procurator General

investigates the nature of outstanding charges against the detainee. This system is informally but effectively reinforced by collegial links among senior law enforcement and security officials in the various republics of the former Soviet Union. Human rights groups allege that this network is employed to detain opposition figures from the other former Soviet republics without actual legal grounds.

On February 21, journalist Albert Musin, an ethnic Uzbek citizen of Kazakhstan, was detained by Moscow police during a documents check (the Moscow police also reported that Musin was drunk and disorderly). During processing at the police station, authorities found outstanding warrants for Musin's arrest in Uzbekistan on charges of slandering President Karimov and "illegally" gathering and disseminating information. Despite calls for his release from human rights activists, such as Human Rights Watch and the Union of Councils, Musin was held in custody until March 7, on the grounds that the police needed official confirmation from the Uzbek Government as to the nature of the charges and the continued status of the warrant. The Uzbek Government indicated that it was no longer pursuing the case and Musin was released. While technically legal under the Convention, the case raised clear concerns about Russia's willingness to forcibly return opponents of friendly regimes in the Commonwealth of Independent States to a country where they feared persecution.

In another case, a member of the opposition in Tajikistan, former Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Akmadzhon Sayidov, was extradited to Tajikistan due to outstanding criminal warrants. While the warrants were for criminal rather than political offenses, Human Rights Watch believes that Sayidov is at risk of persecution for opposition activities. The Russian Government made extradition contingent on a promise by the Tajik Government not to pursue charges of "anti-State activities" against Sayidov.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to

Change Their Government

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government, and citizens exercise this right in practice.

The Federal Assembly comprises two chambers. The lower chamber, the State Duma, consists of 450 deputies, half elected in single mandate constituencies, half by party lists. In the December 1995 parliamentary elections, 43 political blocs appeared on the ballot. The upper chamber, the Federation Council, has 178 members—the 89 chief executives of regional administrations and the 89 chairpersons of regional legislatures, all of whom are popularly elected. The Constitution provides the President and the Prime Minister with substantial powers, which they used in the absence of effective opposition from the Parliament and the courts.

A democratic election for the President of the Russian Federation took place in July 1996 for the first time in the history of Russia as an independent state. President Yeltsin was reelected in a generally free and fair election.

In 1997 gubernatorial elections were held in 13 federation regions. Some of these elections were complicated by extensive residence requirements, age requirements, or local language requirements in federal republics, which the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) has ruled to be illegal.

The (OSCE) monitored the January 27 elections in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya and found them to reflect the will of the voters. The Russian Government recognized the election of Aslan Maskhadov as Republic President.

Women are underrepresented in government and politics. In the December 1995 elections, 46 female deputies were elected to the 450-member Duma, a decrease from the 58 female deputies in the Duma elected in 1993.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and

Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Many domestic and international human rights groups operate freely. Most groups investigated and publicly commented on human rights issues, generally doing so without government interference or restrictions. However, some local officials harassed human rights monitors, going so far as to arrest them. Human Rights Watch criticized the Prosecutor General's response to these incidents. Several NGO's are headquartered in Moscow and have branches throughout the country. Some of the more prominent human rights organizations are the Moscow Center for Prison Reform, the Society for the Guardianship of Penitentiary Institutions, the Glasnost Public and Defense Funds, Memorial, the Moscow Research Center for Human Rights, the Soldiers' Mothers' Committee, the Mothers' Rights Foundation, and the Moscow Helsinki Group. Several of these groups are recognized by government and legislative officials for their expertise in certain fields, and such groups participate (with varying degrees of success) in the process of drafting legislation and decrees.

Various types of regionally based human rights groups are being established. Social-economic rights groups are the most numerous and monitor issues such as unpaid wages and benefits. There are fewer civil-political rights groups, but according to Memorial, these are growing in number. These groups include "generalist" organizations that cover the range of human rights issues and "specialist" organizations that cover only one issue. Public legal centers have been formed, due to the critical lack of legal advice that is available to the general public. These centers are usually run on a part-time basis by lawyers who, while they cannot afford to offer trial counsel or actual legal work, offer advice at no cost on legal rights and recourse under the law.

Regional groups, which generally do not benefit from any international support or attention, reported that local authorities have obstructed their work and that law enforcement officers have begun criminal investigations based on fabricated charges against certain regional human rights groups' leaders (see Section 1.d.). Criticism of the Federal Government and regional authorities is usually permitted without hindrance. The threshold appears to be criticism of a specific political leader in the region (usually the governor or a senior law enforcement official). Regional human rights advocates have been charged with such offenses as libel, contempt of court, and interference in judicial proceedings, along with other crimes, in cases with distinct political overtones (see Section 1.d.). Local human rights groups have far fewer opportunities to interact with legislators in developing legislation than their Moscow counterparts; some are excluded from the process entirely by local authorities.

The import of copies of the NGO report "Russia's Northern Fleet: Sources of Radioactive Contamination," authored in part by former Naval Captain Aleksandr Nikitin, is still blocked by the FSB. Copies of the report in English and Norwegian are available over the Internet through Russian providers, but the Russian version is blocked out. Bellona Foundation employees continue to experience difficulties when applying for visas to the Russian Federation, a situation that the Russian Government has declined to fully explain.

Nongovernmental organizations have entirely withdrawn from Chechnya since the murder of six International Committee of the Red Cross personnel in December 1996 because of the risk of kidnaping and other criminal attacks (see Section 1.b.). Chechen authorities have generally discouraged NGO's from returning to Chechnya, although the motive for such discouragement appears to be based more on security concerns than unwillingness to submit to nongovernmental human rights monitoring.

The Government's human rights institutions lack independence. The President's Human Rights Commission is composed primarily of people from the Government (unlike the 1993-1996 Commission under Sergey Kovalev which had large representation by human rights activists). Some human rights groups complained that the Commission's focus has changed from advocacy of human rights to defending the Government's policy. Commission Chair Vladimir Kartashkin indicated to the press that his role is mainly consultative and investigatory, without powers of enforcement. The Commission examined and was often critical of the Government on issues such as prison conditions, human rights violations and amnesties in Chechnya, and human rights in the military, and is involved in the planning of "Human Rights Year" for 1998.

The Constitutional law establishing the position of a human rights ombudsman was passed by the Federal Assembly on February 12. It was signed by President Yeltsin on February 26 and it entered into force on March 4. The law establishes a two-stage election process in selecting a human rights ombudsman. To be on the slate of candidates, a nominee must receive support from two-thirds of the Duma. Deputies can vote for multiple candidates. The ombudsman is then selected from the candidates by a simple majority. Despite language in the law requiring an ombudsman to be elected by the Duma within 30 days after the law's promulgation, the Duma failed to nominate any candidates in voting held on April 4. The post remained vacant at year's end.

In June 1996, President Yeltsin signed a decree entitled "On Certain

Measures of State Support for the Human Rights Movement in the Russian

Federation," which called for a high degree of coordination between

federal structures and the human rights community. Specific measures

laid out in the decree included the creation of three entities: An

