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2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

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The annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – the Human Rights Report – cover the status of internationally recognized human rights and worker rights. The U.S. Department of State submits reports on all countries receiving assistance and all United Nations member states to the U.S. Congress in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Trade Act of 1974.

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Country Reports

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Armenia	Denmark	Italy	Netherlands	Slovenia
Austria	Estonia	Kosovo	North Macedonia	Spain
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Bahrain	Israel (incl West Bank and Gaza)	Libya	Saudi Arabia	Yemen
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Bangladesh	Kazakhstan	Nepal	Tajikistan	
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Western Hemisphere

Antigua and Barbuda	Canada	Ecuador	Jamaica	Saint Lucia
Argentina	Chile	El Salvador	Mexico	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Bahamas, The	Colombia	Grenada	Nicaragua	Suriname
Barbados	Costa Rica	Guatemala	Panama	Trinidad and Tobago
Belize	Cuba	Guyana	Paraguay	Uruguay
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Brazil		Honduras		

Appendix A

Notes on Preparation of the Country Reports and Explanatory Materials

Acts of Congress (notably the Trade Act of 1974 and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended) mandate the annual submission of the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. The *Country Reports* cover internationally recognized human rights. These rights include prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment and prohibitions on arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and other abuses of the rights to life, liberty, and the security of person. They also include certain other rights, such as the rights to freedom of expression and religion or belief. They cover key internationally recognized worker rights, such as the right to freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively, the prohibition of forced or compulsory labor, the status of child labor practices, the minimum age for employment of children, and acceptable work conditions.

The *Country Reports* rely on information available from a wide variety of credible sources, including foreign government officials; victims of alleged human rights abuses; academic and congressional studies; and reports from media, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Particularly helpful for citation are domestic and international NGOs. The *Country Reports* cover human rights practices in foreign countries and territories worldwide. They do not describe or assess the human rights implications of actions taken by the U.S. government or its representatives.

To comply with the congressional requirement for reporting on human rights practices, the Department of State provides guidance to U.S. diplomatic missions annually by July for submission of updated reports in September and October. The Department of State updates these texts by year's end. Multiple concerned bureaus and offices in the Department of State provide contributions, and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor prepares a final draft of each country report. The U.S. Department of Labor contributes subject matter expertise to the section on worker rights.

The Department of State strives to make the *Country Reports* objective and uniform in scope. We seek a high standard of consistency in the reports, despite the multiplicity of sources and the diversity of countries covered. For purposes of focus and streamlining, the reports select illustrative examples of alleged abuses and in most instances follow up only on high-profile unresolved allegations from previous years.

In recent years, the Department of State's annual instructions on the update of the *Country Reports* largely removed the requirement that information be provided even when no abuse was alleged. This change allowed the reports to increase the focus on reported abuses.

The Department of State's annual instructions for the *Country Reports* describe how to report on abuses of internationally recognized human rights, and each government's actions regarding such abuses. The executive summary of each report is sharply focused on credible reports of significant abuses of internationally recognized human rights. These include, for example, reports of extrajudicial killing, torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and evidence of acts that may constitute genocide.

In March 2025, the report was adjusted. This year's reports were streamlined for better utility and accessibility in the field and by partners, and to be more responsive to the underlying legislative mandate and aligned to the administration's executive orders.

We minimize the amount of statistical data in the report. In the age of the internet, the underlying data are generally available.

Evaluating the credibility of reports of human rights abuses remains difficult. Most governments and opposition groups deny they commit human rights abuses and occasionally go to great lengths to conceal any wrongdoing. There may be few eyewitnesses to specific alleged abuses. Frequently, eyewitnesses are intimidated or prevented from reporting what they know. On the other hand, individuals and groups opposed to a government may have incentive to exaggerate or fabricate abuses. In similar fashion, some governments may distort or exaggerate abuses attributed to opposition groups. The Department of State seeks to

identify those groups (for example, government forces) or individuals for whom available, credible evidence indicates probable involvement in human rights abuses or other problematic conduct.

Many governments that profess to respect human rights may in fact secretly order or tacitly condone abuses. Consequently, the *Country Reports* look beyond statements of policy or intent to examine reports of what a government did, or did not do, to protect human rights and promote accountability, including the extent to which the government investigated, brought to trial, or punished those responsible for any abuses.

The *Country Reports* describe facts relevant to human rights concerns as reported by the sources identified above. Notwithstanding terms that may be used in them, the *Country Reports* do not state or reach legal conclusions with respect to domestic or international law.

Occasionally a report may state that a country “generally respected” the rights of individuals. The Department of State uses the phrase “generally respected” because the protection and promotion of human rights are dynamic endeavors. It cannot be stated with absolute accuracy that any government always respects these rights without qualification, even in the best of circumstances. Accordingly, reports use “generally respected” as a phrase to describe countries that attempt to fully protect and promote human rights.

Because the Secretary of State designates foreign groups or organizations as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) on the Department of State FTO list, the *Country Reports* describe as “terrorists” only those groups on the current FTO list.

The following notes on specific parts of each country report provide an overview of the key problems covered, but they are not intended to be comprehensive descriptions.

Section 1. Life

A. EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

Includes killings ordered or committed by governments without fair trial guarantees or otherwise under the lawful authority of a government, including when there is evidence of a political motivation. This subsection also includes illustrative, well-known examples of killings by police or security forces, as well as deaths that resulted from excessive use of force or other abuses of human rights, including as it relates to equal protection of law.

While the subsection generally excludes combat deaths and killings by nonstate actors, it does cover killings by such actors as opposition groups or terrorists or widespread killings by criminal groups. Killings by terrorist or other nongovernmental groups are covered following the description of government abuses.

B. COERCION IN POPULATION CONTROL

Includes coercion in family planning, particularly coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization, and laws or policies that control family size.

C. WAR CRIMES, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, AND EVIDENCE OF ACTS THAT MAY CONSTITUTE GENOCIDE, OR CONFLICT-RELATED ABUSES

Includes references to reports of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or evidence of acts of genocide. In some reports, indicates whether the U.S. government has previously determined that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and/or genocide have occurred during the reporting period.

This subsection can also apply to countries with reported armed conflicts and describes reported abuses in such situations. It includes reports of unlawful killings and abuses, including torture, of civilians by members of the armed forces or other state organs or by organized nonstate armed groups within the state engaged in the conflict.

Section 2. Liberty

A. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Evaluates whether freedom of expression, including for media members, is respected and describes any direct or indirect restrictions, including censorship and intimidation of journalists. Discusses monitoring or restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression online, including the freedom to seek, receive, or impart information, ideas, and opinions.

B. WORKER RIGHTS

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

Freedom of association includes the right of workers and employers to establish and join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization; to draw up their own constitutions and rules; to elect their representatives; to formulate their programs; to join in

confederations and affiliate with international organizations; and to be protected against dissolution or suspension by administrative authority. This includes a worker's right to join a union.

The right to organize and bargain collectively includes the right of workers to be represented in negotiating terms and conditions of employment and the prevention and settlement of disputes with employers, the right to protection against interference by the government or employers, and the right to protection against acts of antiunion discrimination. Governments should promote mechanisms for voluntary negotiations between employers and workers and their organizations. Coverage of the right to organize and bargain collectively includes a review of the extent to which collective bargaining takes place and the extent to which workers, both in law and practice, are protected against antiunion discrimination.

The subsection "Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining" also covers the right to strike. It is generally accepted for strikes to be restricted in in the public sector and in essential services, the interruption of which would endanger the life, personal safety, or health of a significant portion of the population. These restrictions, however, need to be offset by adequate safeguards for the interests of the workers concerned (for example, mechanisms for mediation and arbitration, due process, and the right to judicial review of legal actions). Reporting on restrictions on the ability of workers to strike generally include information on any procedures that may exist for safeguarding workers' interests or procedures that may limit or inhibit this right.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

The text in this section was replaced by a hyperlink to the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report)* for the many countries which are covered by the *TIP Report*. For countries not covered in the *TIP Report*, relevant information is included in this subsection.

"Forced or compulsory labor" is defined as work or service exacted under the menace of penalty and for which a person has not volunteered. "Menace of penalty" can include loss of rights or privileges as well as penal sanctions.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Acceptable conditions of work refer to the establishment and maintenance of appropriate mechanisms, adapted to national conditions, that provide for minimum working standards, namely:

minimum wages that exceed the government poverty level for workers and their families;

working hours of 40 hours per week, with provisions for overtime pay, and;

minimum conditions for the protection of the safety and health of workers.

The *Country Reports* specify whether workers in the informal sector are covered by labor laws, whether these laws are enforced in the informal sector, and which areas of the economy have large informal sectors.

C. DISAPPEARANCE AND ABDUCTION

Disappearance

Covers cases in which the government may be involved in the detention, abduction, killing, or other disappearance of individuals and refuses to acknowledge the detention of those persons or to account for their whereabouts or fate. This includes cases in which the disappeared person has not been found.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

Includes reports of cases in which detainees are held arbitrarily or unlawfully, such as being subjected to prolonged detention without being charged or, if charged, without being brought promptly before a judicial authority with power to determine the lawfulness of the detention or without trial within a reasonable time.

D. VIOLATIONS IN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Provides a hyperlink to the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report*. Information on antisemitism appears in section 3.d. of the *Country Reports*.

E. TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

This section contains a hyperlink to the Department of State's most recent *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

Section 3. Security of the Person

A. TORTURE AND CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

Covers torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The subsection discusses reported occurrences without analysis of whether they fit any precise definition, and it includes reported uses of physical and other force that may fall short of torture but may

constitute cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. This subsection may include reports of mistreatment that may not constitute torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse by government agents, as well as medical abuse.

B. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Child Labor

The prohibition on the worst forms of child labor looks to ILO Convention 182, which defines anyone younger than age 18 as a child and specifies certain types of employment as “the worst forms of child labor.” These worst forms of labor include slavery, debt bondage, forced labor, forced recruitment into armed conflict, child prostitution and pornography, involvement in illicit activity such as drug production or trafficking, and work that, “by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.”

Starting in 2022, the text in this section was replaced by a hyperlink to the Department of Labor’s *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* for those countries recently covered by the Department of Labor report. For other countries, the *Country Reports* describe the issues.

Child Soldiers (if applicable)

Any reports of the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers by either government forces or by other organized nonstate armed groups are discussed in this subsection.

Child Marriage

Any reports of child, early, and forced marriage are discussed in this subsection including the legal minimum age for marriage and whether authorities effectively enforced the law.

C. PROTECTION TO REFUGEES

As defined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, refugees generally are persons outside their country of nationality or, if stateless, outside their country of former habitual residence, who are unable or unwilling to return to that country based on a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Under certain regional instruments, such as the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, the term “refugee” may also refer to persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety, or freedom have been threatened by, among other things, generalized violence or internal conflict. The Protection to Refugees

section covers abuse against refugees and asylum seekers. It also reviews the government's extension of assistance and protection to refugees, including resettlement in another country.

D. ACTS OF ANTISEMITISM AND ANTISEMITIC INCITEMENT

Covers reports of antisemitic activity and the government's response.

E. INSTANCES OF TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

Covers reports of a range of acts, including killings, kidnappings, or violence taken by states against individuals living abroad, especially political opponents, civil society activists, human rights defenders, or journalists. These acts seek to silence criticism and prevent individuals from exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This subsection includes credible information regarding a country that attempted to misuse international law enforcement tools, such as INTERPOL systems, for politically motivated reprisals against individuals living outside the country. The subsection also includes efforts by a country to exert bilateral pressure on another country aimed at having the second country take adverse action against an individual in its territory. Such action could include exerting political pressure for the return of perceived enemies located in other countries.

Appendix B

2024 Reports Errata

El Salvador Human Rights Report: In the first paragraph of section 2.c (Disappearance and Abduction), deleted name of a civil society organization.

Mexico Human Rights Report: In section 3.d. (d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement), deleted name of a civil society organization.

Peru Human Rights Report: In section 3.a (Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment), deleted name of a civil society organization.

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