
Human Rights Summary of a Report b

Argentina

A political "opening" resulted from the Argentine dictatorship's defeat in the June 1982 Malvinas war. The subsequent economic and political crisis led the military to promise a return to civilian rule and the re-establishment of democracy. However, the repressive apparatus of the state is still intact and torture, assassinations, disappearances and arbitrary detention still continue. Despite growing national and international demand, the Argentine authorities refuse any investigation into the fate of the estimated 20,000 or more who have "disappeared". The ICCHRLA urges the Canadian government to condemn the continued violation of human rights in Argentina and to press for clarification of the status of the missing.

Bolivia

The restoration of democracy in October 1982 has not permanently improved the human rights record in Bolivia. Newly won rights are threatened by the rapid deterioration of the economy. The legacy of mismanagement and corruption of the former military governments and the "other economy" of cocaine which concentrates wealth and fuels inflation, has left Bolivia with massive foreign debts and general deprivation and disparity. Economic hardship has been further increased by the policies of austerity demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). To protect the fledgling democracy, the ICCHRLA calls for less stringent financial terms from international credit institutions and especially the IMF, as well as greater and more lenient bilateral aid from countries such as Canada.

Central America

Central America is on the verge of a regional war and the crisis is both political and economic. All the countries of the region are affected by the wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and the border areas of Nicaragua. Once accessible borders are now closed, thousands of refugees have been killed in the fighting, and both Honduras and Costa Rica have adopted hostile policies to Nicaragua to ensure support from the U.S. The economies of the countries in this region have all been weakened by the conflicts as well as by

capital flight, global recession, natural disasters and growing foreign debts. Nicaragua is the only country presently meeting payments due on its loans. The economic disparities between the countries are aggravated by the policies of the international financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) as well as the Caribbean Basin Initiative formulated by the U.S. and supported by Canada. Those countries considered "friendly" to the U.S. are provided with the greatest assistance — El Salvador being the prime beneficiary — while Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba are penalized.

Honduras

Honduras, at one time a haven for refugees, has become a base for counter-insurgency operations. It is estimated that up to 3,000 Honduran troops have crossed the border into El Salvador at critical moments and that between 1,500 and 3,000 troops are stationed along the border with Nicaragua. Increasing human rights violations in Honduras include illegal detentions, disappearances, secret cemeteries, and harassment and persecution of citizens and foreign nationals. While U.S. military aid to Honduras multiplies, the internal fiscal crisis is likely to lead to greater hardship and possible repression of the general population. The ICCHRLA recommends that Canada note the deteriorating human rights situation in Honduras, condemn the repressive practices of the state authorities, and express concern over Honduras' involvement in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua

The current unstable situation, both inside Nicaragua and on its borders, jeopardizes certain civil liberties and individual rights. However, three American human rights organizations visited Nicaragua during the past year and the government reacted positively to their suggestions. No evidence was found to confirm allegations of disappearances, torture, or executions. In the case of the forced relocation of the Miskitu and Sumu Indians, the government was not considered to have acted inhumanely, though *Americas Watch* felt that reasons of defence were insufficient for such an action. Despite cross-border raids and flood and drought, Nicaragua is the only country in the region which has improved the standard of living of the majority of its people. The ICCHRLA calls on Canada to recognize the achievements and efforts of the present Nicaraguan government and to support bilateral and multilateral development aid to Nicaragua.

El Salvador

Torture, disappearances, assassinations, massacres — primarily by official and unofficial security forces — continued to mark daily life in El Salvador during 1982. The trend is selective repression in the cities and mass repression in the countryside with over 35,000 dead over the last 3 years. The elections which took place in March 1982 did not solve any of the country's pressing problems: massive structural injustice affecting the majority of the people's social and economic rights, gross and systematic violations of human rights and a

In the face of the world-wide recession and the spread of mi rights as a high priority issue. The Inter-Church Committee o of major Christian Churches of Canada, is committed to cov seeking the help of the Canadian government in holding viol, this effect the ICCHRLA annually document the worst human ed case studies with recommendations to the Canadian dele; Aside from the case studies which are capsulized below, this peared", the 90,000 men, women and children missing in Lat, and the U.N. to adopt a legal code that would recognize enfor humanity for which no pardon can be granted."

in Latin America: by Canadian Church Group

*Authoritarianism, governments are growing less inclined to view human rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA), an organization entering this trend by "resisting human rights violations and by making dictator nations accountable for what they do to their citizens." To document human rights violations that occur in Latin America and present detail to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). * This year's report calls special attention to the plight of the "disappeared" in Latin America over the past 30 years. The ICCHRLA urges Canada to condemn the disappearance "as an international crime and a crime against*

widespread war. The ICCHRLA urges Canada to press for a political settlement of the conflict in El Salvador and to call upon all states to end intervention and the supply of arms to that country.

Guatemala

Guatemala continues, with El Salvador, to be one of the worst violators of human rights in Latin America. Since the March 1982 coup by General Rios Montt, large-scale massacres of the peasant, mostly indigenous population have continued as part of a systematic government policy. Medical, academic and church personnel, politicians, trade unionists and journalists also continue to risk and suffer harassment, threats, abduction, torture and death by assassination. In a country where the budget priorities are geared to the military (one estimate, 82%) evidence shows malnutrition, illiteracy, high infant mortality rates, and poverty to be widespread. The ICCHRLA recommends that the Canadian government condemn the massive pattern of human rights violations in Guatemala, particularly the "genocide" of the indigenous, rural population.

Chile

Since the military took power in 1973, the international community has annually debated the human rights situation in Chile. The ICCHRLA finds that civil and political rights, and social and economic rights, have still not improved and in some instances have deteriorated. Weakened by global recession and by the failure of its domestic, "open market" policies, the

Chilean economy is in a severe slump which has led to a loss of government support even in traditional, right-wing sectors. However, the military dictatorship remains entrenched and repression is its chief response to declining support and growing protest. As in past years, the Special Rapporteur of the UNCHR reported that Chilean authorities refused to cooperate in his examination of violations of human rights in Chile. In the perpetual "state of emergency" in Chile, arrest without warrant, illegal entry, kidnappings, banishments, secret detentions and the consistent use of torture are all "institutionalized" practices of the state. The ICCHRLA urges Canada to express its concern over the state of human rights in Chile and to call on General Pinochet to clarify the situation of the "disappeared".

Haiti

The past year has brought new proof of the instability of the "Baby Doc" Duvalier regime and its inability to reform itself. The dismissal of reform politicians, the continued practice of arrest and disappearances, and a developmental policy which is detrimental to the needs of the people provide evidence that the Haitian government's promises of change are a deliberate pretence to gain aid and improve world opinion. The ICCHRLA recommends that Canada not support the proposed construction of the Verettes-Lachapelle dams which would displace thousands of peasants and reduce food-producing land; and that Canadian policy on aid to Haiti, if not suspended, be conditional upon respect for human rights in that country.

Uruguay

Since 1972, Uruguay has been ruled by autocratic, military-controlled regimes which have repressed all fundamental human rights. Documented evidence shows serious abuse of political prisoners, especially at the notorious Liberated (men's) and Punta de Rieles (women's) prisons, as well as suppression of labour unions, censorship of the media, and abductions and disappearances. SERPAJ/Uruguay (Service for Peace and Justice), the first human rights organization in Uruguay since 1973, is already subject to harassment and arrest. The ICCHRLA urges Canada to condemn the mistreatment of political prisoners in Uruguay and to press the UNCHR for a special study of the human rights situation in that country.

Guyana

The Guyanese economy is on the verge of bankruptcy with severely reduced productivity levels, large-scale layoffs in the public sector, and widespread malnutrition caused by restrictions on food imports. The Guyana Human Rights Association and other observers place the principal responsibility for this situation not on the world recession, but on the policies of the Forbes Burnham regime. While the primacy of the party is the highest priority of the government, economic, political and social rights are eroded. Elections are fraudulent, numerous instances of uninvestigated violent deaths have occurred, media is restricted, and human rights personnel are harassed. The ICCHRLA recommends that Canada condemn political repression and economic deprivation in Guyana and calls particular attention to the plight of the opposition newspapers and freedom of expression in that country.

Copies of the Submission which the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America presented to the Canadian Ambassador to the 39th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights are available from the ICCHRLA office for \$6.50 (including postage and handling). ICCHRLA, 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M9. Telephone (416) 921-4152.

* Among the countries that the ICCHRLA does not document in the 1982 report are Cuba, Grenada and Paraguay.