INTRODUCTION

The scope of today’s global human rights problems far exceeds the capacity of global institutions to address them. The problem is most acute in the global economy, where a disturbing institutional void frequently leaves human rights standards unenforced. But the problem also arises as the world struggles to stop mass atrocities, protect the victims of these crimes, rebuild their countries, and bring their persecutors to justice. In each case, a more interconnected and seemingly smaller world rightfully feels a greater responsibility to respond. Yet the capacity to meet these demands has not kept up with the challenges. A reinforced global architecture is needed.

This introduction to Human Rights Watch’s annual World Report describes this weakness in the institutional capacity to address the global human rights challenges of our time. It highlights the enforcement gap for issues of human rights in the global economy. It discusses the inadequate resources given to the United Nations to assume its assigned tasks of keeping the peace and assisting war-torn nations with national reconstruction. And it describes the recent strides taken toward a new institutional justice system for the world’s worst human rights criminals but laments the U.S. government’s persistent refusal to countenance U.S. nationals being held to the same standards as the rest of the world.

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This report—Human Rights Watch’s eleventh annual review of human rights practices around the globe—covers developments in seventy countries. It is released in advance of Human Rights Day, December 10, 2000, and describes events from November 1999 through October 2000. Most chapters examine significant human rights developments in a particular country; the response of global actors, such as the European Union, Japan, the United States, the United Nations, and various regional organizations; and the freedom of local human rights defenders. Other chapters address important thematic concerns.

Highlights of the year include, on the positive side, the popular rebellion against the Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia, the conclusion of a treaty barring the use of children as soldiers, and the U.N. Commission on Human Rights’s first formal criticism of a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council (Russia, for its abuses in Chechnya). On the negative side, the U.N. Human Rights Commission refused yet again to condemn China for its relentless suppression of political opposition, the U.S. government failed to abide by conditions included in a major military aid package to Colombia that would have required the Colombian army to sever its ties with paramilitaries, and there was a growing crisis in the world’s response to refugees and asylum-seekers and persistently inadequate protection for the internally displaced.

This report reflects extensive investigative work undertaken in 2000 by the Human Rights Watch research staff, usually in close partnership with human rights activists in the countries in question. Human Rights Watch reports, published throughout the year (see http://www.hrw.org), contain more elaborate accounts of the brief summaries collected in this volume. The chapters here also reflect the work of the Human Rights Watch advocacy staff, which monitors the policies of governments and institutions with influence to curb abusive human rights conduct.

As in past years, this report does not include a chapter on every country where Human Rights Watch works, nor does it discuss every issue of importance. The failure to include a particular country or issue often reflects no more than staffing limitations and should not be taken as commentary on the significance of the problem. There are many serious human rights violations that Human Rights Watch simply lacks the capacity to address. Other factors affecting the focus of our work in 2000 and hence the content of this volume include the severity of abuses, access to the country and the availability of information about it, the susceptibility of abusive forces to outside influence, the importance of
addressing certain thematic concerns, and the need to maintain a balance in the work of Human Rights Watch across various political divides.

The Global Economy

After street protests over the past year in Seattle, Prague, Washington, and elsewhere, proponents of the global economy seem on the defensive. Globalization—the increased international flow of trade, capital, information, and people—has delivered undeniable wealth and opportunity and created millions of jobs. But there is widespread unease at some of the associated and parallel ills. Income inequality is growing, as are the number of people in abject poverty. The much-criticized “race to the bottom” seems to stymie certain attempts at social and economic betterment. Resource extraction—the business of oil, minerals, and metals—often proceeds without regard to the rights of local residents. Governments depend on migrant workers to take on less desirable jobs but frequently deny them legal protection. Trafficking in people has flourished.

Despite these problems, the current system to regulate global commerce leaves little or no room for human rights and other social values. Relevant international human rights standards exist but are not uniformly ratified, effectively enforced, or adequately integrated into the global economy.

The debate about solving these problems has been unhelpfully polarized. Advocates of unfettered trade and capital flow tend to see commerce itself as a panacea. Pointing to the immense wealth generated by the global economy, they frequently resist any governance regime that might constrain globalization by attention to other social values. More and freer commerce, in their view, is the best route to social as well as economic betterment.

But as Human Rights Watch has repeatedly found, a world integrated on commercial lines does not necessarily lead to human rights improvements. In China, increased international trade has not lessened the government’s determination to snuff out any political opposition. In Sudan, oil revenue made possible by international investment has allowed the government in only two years nearly to double the defense budget for its highly abusive war. In Central Asia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, international investment in oil and gas exploration and production has only reaffirmed the new governments’ resolve to cling to power at all costs while their people plunge into poverty. In Sierra Leone and Angola, international trade in diamonds has fueled deadly civil wars. The number of migrant workers and trafficking victims has grown with international commerce; yet abuses against them remain largely ignored. Experience shows that global economic integration is no substitute for a firm parallel commitment to defending human rights.

Opponents of globalization highlight the fate of the millions of people who are excluded from the benefits of the global economy or are forced to accept it on unsatisfactory terms. They argue that globalization mainly benefits the wealthy and that it aids the poor too slowly or actually contributes to their plight. Some opponents would simply shut down the process of globalization, convinced that its benefits are not worth the price. They include those who have used violence against institutions they see as supporting globalization. Others focus more constructively on reshaping the global economy to better serve social values. Many reforms have been discussed but none has gained a consensus.

Some of the firmest defenders of unfettered global commerce come from the developing countries in whose name the opponents of globalization claim to speak. Both governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in these countries fear that linking trade or investment to respect for social values, however well intentioned, will end up serving protectionist interests in the industrialized world and shutting off developing countries from the benefits of global commerce. They are particularly wary of the efforts of some activists to prescribe a “living wage” on a national basis for fear of being deprived of their principal competitive
advantage—cheap labor. They also object to efforts by the global North to enforce selected social and economic values in the global South when it serves Northern interests, while neglecting more costly obligations to help achieve other important social and economic goals such as alleviating poverty or improving health care or education.

**A Human Rights Framework**

In this divisive debate, human rights offer a promising framework to address many of the problems of globalization, including the tendency of some governments and corporations to compete by profiting from repression. Some of the most alarming by-products of globalization are clear violations of rights enshrined in international treaties. By the same token, upholding these rights provides the basis for solving many of the ills associated with globalization in a way that need not shut down global trade or benefit the world’s richer countries at the expense of the poor.

Within the workplace, for example, human rights speak directly to the problems of exclusion. Factory workers often face poor wages, abysmal working conditions, sexual abuse, no social safety net, and no legal protection. Respect for freedom of association would allow workers to join together—in trade unions should they choose—to improve wages and working conditions. The prohibition against discrimination on such grounds as gender, race, or ethnicity ensures that historically marginalized people enjoy the fruits of their labor on the same terms as others. The prohibition of forced or abusive child labor and the ban on arbitrary violence require employers to negotiate with adult free-agents.

On a societal level, respect for civil and political rights, including the right to elect one’s government, allows the disadvantaged to have a voice in the direction of their nation’s social and economic development. These rights permit citizens to press their government to take on such issues as increasing the minimum wage, protecting union activists from retaliation, enforcing prohibitions on discrimination, regulating extraction industries, or ensuring that investments are made with social values in mind. They also promote the transparency and accountability in national governments and international institutions that are prerequisites to making them responsive to popular concerns.

In addition, respect for these basic freedoms helps to encourage governments of the industrialized and developing world to take seriously their obligations to uphold economic, social, and cultural rights. It allows people to urge governments to ratify the leading treaty safeguarding these rights and to adopt reasonable plans to realize these rights progressively, including in the regulation of trade and investment. It also permits popular input into the choice among alternative routes to fulfill economic and social rights, such as the amount of investment to put into education or health care, the level of restrictions to place on industries that cause environmental damage or social disruption, or the type of social welfare programs needed to temper the shock of trade liberalization and structural adjustment policies.

This emphasis on rights may not guarantee particular wage levels, working conditions, or regulatory policies. Nor does it eliminate inequalities in bargaining power or eradicate all forms of social exclusion. But by allowing an unfettered civil society to make its views heard, a rights approach permits workers and citizens to have a say in these important matters.

A rights approach also discourages the tendency of some governments and multinational corporations to gain a competitive advantage by suppressing workers’ demands for better treatment or society’s pursuit of such goals as a clean environment. Corporations might still seek lower production costs by moving to lower-wage or less socially demanding countries. Governments might still seek a competitive advantage by restricting taxes, wages, regulations, or social benefits. But competition through repression—the most nefarious aspect of the “race to the bottom”—would be significantly constrained.

A rights approach would give developing countries a legal basis to broaden discus-
sions of trade and investment policy to include the need for reciprocal benefits and concessions from the industrialized world to facilitate the realization of economic and social rights. Such demands would have more resonance because they would be grounded in legally binding international human rights treaties rather than more malleable and selective economic theories. A rights approach would thus serve as a useful supplement to development models that are premised on market liberalization but pay insufficient attention to attendant social and economic problems.

At the same time, a rights approach should prove acceptable to proponents of "free trade." It does not seek to shut down global trade and investment, only to invoke broadly accepted rights to define the limits within which commerce should proceed. It does not raise the drawbridge against global competition, but insists that the market be grounded in respect for international human rights law.

Finally, a rights approach would help develop international solutions to problems arising from the global movement of people, such as the lack of protection for migrant workers and trafficking victims. Many industrialized countries erect barriers to legal immigration from developing countries but tacitly accept undocumented migrants, or migrants with strict legal limits on their presence, to perform undesirable work. Many developing countries also export workers, some with documentation and some without, to earn foreign exchange through remittances. Lacking legal protection, these workers have little recourse in the face of such problems as sexual abuse, dangerous working conditions, and violations of the right to organize. In addition, many governments wrongly equate the smuggling used to infiltrate undocumented migrant workers with human trafficking—transport based on deception or coercion—thereby denying trafficking victims the protection they need.

**The Need for Stronger Institutions**

The advantages of a rights approach remain theoretical without broad governmental ratification of the relevant human rights treaties and a reliable means of enforcement. Stronger institutions are needed to insist that governments and corporations respect human rights in their global dealings. The United Nations and the International Labour Organization have played an important role in establishing human rights standards, including the U.N.’s international covenants and the ILO’s core labor standards. But these institutions lack adequate enforcement powers. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the most they can do is encourage treaty ratification and condemn abusive conduct. The U.N. has been more effective because its special rapporteurs and working groups have more latitude to use public shaming to encourage compliance. The tripartite nature of the ILO—combining representatives of government, business, and labor—often leaves the organization paralyzed when it tries to uphold rights in contentious situations.

Meanwhile, the World Trade Organization, which does have enforcement powers, focuses on promoting global trade, sometimes at the expense of international human rights norms. The proposal to add a “social clause” to its mandate has been controversial in part because the WTO has no expertise, culture, or tradition of protecting rights. Moreover, many Southern governments and NGOs fear that sanctions under a social clause would be applied against only developing countries, not against comparable abuses in the industrialized world.

At a regional level, the Council of Europe has established clear rights standards in the European Convention on Human Rights, enforced by the European Court of Human Rights, and the European Social Charter. At the same time, the European Union has established an institutionalized “social dialogue” procedure among employers and unions, set forth in its Maastricht Social Protocol and Agreement, and an international court, the European Court of Justice, with a proven track record of protecting employment rights. However, the commitment to integration that made this model possible is peculiar to Eu-
rope. It is not clear whether the model can be applied elsewhere.

At a national level, labor rights have been promoted through trade conditionality, such as the linkage between respect for core labor rights and access to preferential trade benefits (Generalized System of Preferences) that exists in U.S. and E.U. legislation. But this conditionality is limited geographically and applied irregularly. It should be broadened, made justiciable, and applied more consistently.

**Voluntary Codes of Conduct**

The institutions noted above can at least call attention to governmental misbehavior, but multinational corporations have largely been left to police themselves, with occasional prodding from human rights and labor organizations. In recent years, progress has been made in increasing corporate attention to human rights, but more is needed.

Only several years ago, many corporations treated human rights as outside their legitimate concerns. They claimed their role was only to maximize profits for shareholders, that human rights concerns were best left to governments.

Today, after a series of exposés of corporate complicity in human rights abuse, the response is often quite different. Corporate leaders increasingly recognize that they must pay attention to human rights or risk consumer pressure, a tarnished corporate image, and problems with employee recruitment and morale. The 1997 Asian economic crisis provided other economic reasons to be sensitive to human rights. As a result, many corporations have adopted voluntary codes of conduct, pledging to abide by specified principles on human rights and other social concerns. These corporations include not only consumer-oriented companies in apparel, footwear, toys, and appliances but also major oil companies and other extraction industries.

These codes have been effective in changing some corporations’ conduct, but they have shortcomings. They are typically written without consultation with the workers most affected, many of whom are not even aware of their company’s code. They are usually written in vague language which looks good in corporate brochures but avoids some of the stickier human rights issues, such as how to do business in a country that bars labor unions, restricts the rights of women, guards company facilities with abusive soldiers, or uses joint-venture revenue to fund military abuses. With notable exceptions, the codes generally give independent organizations no formal role in monitoring compliance. They commonly address only workplace issues and the conduct of subcontractors, not broader societal concerns.

And, of course, the codes are voluntary. They contain no enforcement mechanism, nothing to fill the institutional gap in rights protection. Indeed, that these codes are unenforceable is one of their principal allure is one of their principal allures for corporations and governments that lack a firm rights commitment. It is thus left to human rights groups, labor organizations, and others in civil society to expand the number of corporations adopting these codes, encourage compliance, and promote improvement. These efforts can be effective, but they are ad hoc, under-funded, and not enough.

The United Nations took a potentially useful step in July by launching a “Global Compact” of business, labor, and civil society to promote social responsibility in the global economy. Its reporting requirements, though minimal, may make member corporations more accountable for their conduct. Its breadth—engaging companies based not only in Europe and North America but also in Africa, Asia, and South America—demonstrates that the demand for corporate responsibility is not limited to companies from industrialized countries. This scope also helps to refute the argument sometimes heard from U.S. companies that they are put at a competitive disadvantage by being asked to bear the brunt of concern with corporate responsibility themselves. Still, the Global Compact is also only a voluntary endeavor. It attempts to back voluntarism with a degree of social pressure, but has shown no sign of moving toward mandatory compliance. Its failure to require
probing public reports, independent monitoring, and an enforceable legal regime has left it short of its potential.

There is no single prescription for filling this enforcement gap, whether for governments or multinational corporations. Among the ideas advanced so far have been giving the ILO real enforcement powers; linking the ILO with the WTO, so that the ILO’s more rights-oriented culture might join with the WTO’s enforcement powers; or creating an intermediate institution that might be free of both the WTO’s exclusive trade orientation and the ILO’s paralyzing tripartite system. Movement in any of these directions would be useful, but they are not the only options or necessarily the most productive. Below we outline three other possible approaches, all drawn from recent governmental or institutional practices. None of these is a panacea either. Indeed, none standing alone can address all of the problems associated with globalization. But they illustrate the kinds of steps that must be taken if rights in the global economy are to move from exhortation to enforcement.

**The OECD Anti-Corruption Model**

One approach could be modeled on the response of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to the problem of corporate bribery of government officials. Such corruption once also had a “race to the bottom” dynamic. Governments were reluctant to prohibit it for fear of putting their corporations at a competitive disadvantage. In 1997, the OECD decided that a collective approach was required. It adopted anti-corruption standards and mandated that all OECD governments—the principal industrialized governments—criminalize violations. A special OECD working group was assigned responsibility for monitoring and reporting on governmental compliance. By setting a common, enforceable standard, the OECD helped undercut fears that bribery of foreign officials was necessary for corporations to keep up with the competition.

A similar global approach could help enforce human rights in the global economy. National governments could be asked to adopt a prescribed enforcement regime to ensure that all corporations operating in or from their territory avoid complicity in serious rights violations. Such a regime would allow corporations and governments from the North and South to respect these rights in the commercial realm without fear of placing themselves at a competitive disadvantage, thus undercutting the “race to the bottom.” (The OECD in June adopted voluntary Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, but these lack the compulsory nature of its anti-corruption regime.)

**The U.S.-Jordan Trade Pact**

Another promising option can be found in the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, concluded in October. Rather than uncritically endorsing national standards or relegating labor rights to a side accord, as does the North American Free Trade Agreement, the U.S.-Jordan accord incorporates core international labor rights standards in its body and insists that domestic laws uphold them. The parties explicitly recognize that “it is inappropriate to encourage trade by relaxing domestic labor laws” and vow not to do so. The agreement establishes consultative and adjudicative processes to address violations and allows unilateral sanctions in the event of breaches. But sanctions can be applied only if a violation of the accord “severely distorts the balance of trade benefits” or “substantially undermines the fundamental objectives” of the agreement—both quite high bars. The agreement also precludes judicial remedies for breaches, leaving it exclusively to governments to challenge violations.

**International Financial Institutions**

The international financial institutions should also help integrate human rights into the global economy by promoting the creation of national institutions to enforce rights and insisting on progressive improvement in respect for rights as part of loan packages. Their frequent failure to play this role has made the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund the focus of much of the
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protest against globalization.

These protests are understandable because, until recently, these institutions pursued a conception of economic development that was largely insensitive to human rights. For years, Nobel Prize economist Amartya Sen and others have demonstrated that abuse of human rights impedes economic development—that unaccountable governments are more likely to indulge corruption or misguided economic projects and less likely to distribute the benefits of development to those most in need. Yet the World Bank and the IMF insisted that human rights were a purely “political” matter outside their economic mandates. Because of the influence of these institutions, governments and private investors often followed suit. The funds they plowed into authoritarian governments were frequently wasted or misspent, while debts piled up that now thwart successor governments’ efforts to lift their people from poverty.

Many of these problems remain today. But the World Bank in particular has begun to change this sorry legacy. Under the leadership of James Wolfensohn, the bank’s efforts to combat corruption, reduce poverty, and promote good governance and the rule of law have led it, in some countries, to show greater sensitivity to human rights. Yet much of this attention is ad hoc. Additional progress is needed to institutionalize human rights as an essential foundation of the bank’s development work if the bank is to help enforce human rights in the global economy.

The bank’s approach to Zambia, Indonesia, and other countries in Asia illustrate some of the positive steps it took in 2000 to address human rights issues:

- In advance of the World Bank-convened donors conference for Indonesia in October, Wolfensohn sent a personal letter to Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid urging action to halt the violence in West Timor. Without directly threatening to suspend funding, he warned that donors would raise this issue at the conference.
- The donors conference convened in Zambia in July was the first in Africa to be wholly transparent. All deliberations were open to independent human rights activists and other representatives of civil society, and the human rights performance of the government was freely discussed as an integral part of development plans.
- In Asia, civil society input on bank projects and at donors conferences was actively sought in Cambodia, Indonesia, East Timor, and elsewhere. However, during the bank’s consultative process in Kyrgyzstan, the government excluded NGOs seen as linked to the political opposition, suggesting the need for rules based on international human rights standards to ensure participation by all elements of civil society.

In fighting corruption, the World Bank has also begun to pay more attention to human rights-related concerns. It has promoted greater transparency in bank projects and encouraged civil society to scrutinize these transactions. But it could still do more to support whistle-blowers, journalists, and nongovernmental monitors who are arrested or abused for exposing corruption. It should also do more to promote the basic legal and judicial reform needed to achieve access to justice for all. This would help to root out and prosecute corrupt police and public officials—steps that would improve official accountability for all sorts of human rights abuse.

The IMF, for its part, under the new leadership of Horst Köhler, has also begun slowly to change in ways that will help integrate human rights in the global economy. It was at its most innovative in Angola, where it secured the government’s agreement to allow World Bank monitoring of oil revenues to ensure that they went toward development needs and were not mismanaged. It began negotiations for a similar audit of diamond revenues. Such transparency, coupled with stringent auditing, could become a model for extraction industries operating in countries ruled by abusive governments, such as Sudan, Turkmenistan, or Burma. Until now, the vast government revenues generated meant that these companies almost inevitably risked complicity in serious abuse by funding the
machinery of repression. This new model of transparency should become a minimum requirement for companies entering into substantial revenue-producing joint ventures with repressive governments.

Yet the international financial institutions were hardly uniform in their attention to human rights. At the height of Russia’s atrocities in Chechnya, the World Bank advanced Moscow U.S. $450 million in structural adjustment loan payments without any linkage to Russian conduct in the breakaway republic. The IMF continues to freeze new loans to Russia, but it denies Russian claims that Chechnya is the reason and insists that the only cause is the slow pace of economic reform. The World Bank gave U.S. $1.6 billion loans to China in fiscal year 2000 despite rampant corruption and restrictions on basic freedoms that made any genuine consultation with people affected by projects close to impossible. The bank vowed to expand the role of civil society in China’s development but its intervention on human rights cases was selective.

The international financial institutions’ new openness to incorporating human rights into their mandates at least sometimes has produced an ironic new problem of appearing impermissibly “political.” The problem arises not because of these institutions’ attention to human rights—a natural focus of their development work—but because of their inconsistency. A steadier commitment to human rights is needed.

A useful model might be the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Founded in 1991 to assist the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it operates under a charter that reflects recognition of the link between governance and development. The charter permits assistance only to governments that are “committed to and applying the principles of multiparty democracy, pluralism, and market economics.” In 2000, the EBRD cut off public sector lending to Turkmenistan in part because “there has been no progress towards a pluralist or democratic political system.” However, the bank’s enforcement of its charter has also been uneven. Moreover, its options should include not only suspending assistance but also aiding in the development of institutions to protect human rights.

From Voluntarism to Enforcement

There is no single way to ensure respect for human rights and other social values in the global economy. Any viable approach must move beyond simply articulating standards and hoping for good-faith compliance. The stakes are too high to rely on voluntarism alone. Enforcement is needed. The contours of an enforcement regime—its national or international focus, its institutional home—remain to be defined. But until there is a consistent commitment to enforce rather than simply pronounce international standards, the global economy is likely to fall short of its potential to serve all people rather than just the fortunate few. An urgent global dialogue is needed to fill this enforcement gap.

The United Nations

One would be hard-pressed to devise a surer recipe for failure: assign an institution responsibility for managing the world’s most intractable problems, then deprive it of funds, give it a skeletal staff, overload the organization with peripheral tasks, and insist on its using large numbers of temporary personnel frequently offered less for their skills than for geographic balance or their government’s desire to collect hard currency. Yet this is how the international community treats the United Nations. For some, this setup-for-failure is by design. For others, it reflects a lack of commitment—an eagerness to pass off problems without providing the means to address them. In Kofi Annan, the U.N. has a secretary-general of unusual vision, courage, skill, and dedication. But the world’s refusal to give him the tools necessary to the tasks at hand has created an institutional crisis. It is time to stop treating the U.N. as the dumping ground for global problems without giving it the capacity to address them.

To highlight this institutional crisis is not to disparage the many parts of the U.N. that do work. The U.N. human rights staff,
based in Geneva and led by Mary Robinson as high commissioner for human rights, has grown significantly in recent years in professionalism and impact. Despite woefully inadequate resources, it has made steady progress in overcoming the ocean that was deliberately put between it and the New York-based bodies that make the U.N.’s most important political decisions. The U.N. working groups and special rapporteurs, again established through Geneva, produce many first-rate accounts of serious human rights problems, even though the governments on the politicized U.N. Human Rights Commission routinely create new and often peripheral mandates to be carried out “within existing resources.” Officials in New York at the U.N.’s Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping also attempt to address problems of immense complexity with ridiculously small staffs.

Today, after several years of steady reform, the U.N.’s main problem is less the skill or dedication of its officials than the dire lack of capacity that the nations of the world are willing to permit it. Many of these institutional shortfalls are well described in a report on U.N. peace operations issued in August by a commission led by former Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi. It describes a world body asked to take on immense challenges with paltry resources and half-hearted political backing. Earlier U.N. reports, issued in November and December 1999 on the inexcusable failure to respond to genocide in Srebrenica and Rwanda, highlight the tragic consequences of this neglect. Rare among most governments, this candid self-scrutiny is admirable. The time has come to act on these insights. If the U.N. is to remain a viable resource for addressing the world’s most complex problems, the nations of the world must make an immediate and genuine commitment to remove the straitjacket of institutional weakness that they have imposed.

Sierra Leone

The tragedy of Sierra Leone highlights the consequences—for the U.N. and for people in need—of the international community trying to buy peace on the cheap. For years, the country was plagued by a vicious civil war in which the rebel Revolutionary United Front and its allies terrorized the population with murder, rape, and the signature atrocity of chopping off human limbs. The government clung to power with the help of a Nigerian-led West African military force known as ECOMOG. But Nigeria threatened to withdraw its troops, in part because the international community refused to help cover its expenses. Eager to diffuse public pressure to respond to the crisis, the U.S. government, backed by Britain, the U.N., the Organization of African Unity, and a group of West African states, brokered a power-sharing arrangement with the RUF in the guise of a peace accord. With its economy devastated and the international community unwilling to commit the required troops, Sierra Leone was forced to accept a peace agreement that was tantamount to political surrender.

This July 1999 accord gave the RUF and all other forces amnesty for their atrocities, awarded the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, a status equivalent to vice president, and appointed him chairman of the commission that oversees exploitation of the nation’s vast diamond fields and mineral wealth. When the amnesty was greeted by protests, the U.N. secretary-general insisted at the last minute that a provision be inserted denying international, as opposed to national, recognition of it. But the international community took no action on this disclaimer by moving to prosecute these criminals. The lesson was clear: the RUF would pay no price—indeed, would be rewarded—for its ruthlessness.

It took the RUF little time to apply this lesson. Its depredations continued unabated, and no one did anything to stop them. Then, in early May 2000, as U.N. peacekeepers drawn exclusively from developing countries replaced ECOMOG forces, the RUF killed several peacekeepers and took five hundred hostage. The badly equipped, poorly led U.N. force put up little or no resistance.

Even as the year progressed, the U.N. was left under-equipped. Elite British troops
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Flown in on an emergency basis gave the peacekeepers the added muscle they needed to push the rebels back from the capital Freetown. Gradually, the hostages were freed. But even Britain would not subject its troops to U.N. command, and no other Western government volunteered its troops to lend a hand. The absence of governments with high-tech militaries willing to put their soldiers at risk in a dangerous conflict in Africa left the U.N. force significantly handicapped as it tried to contain the ruthless rebels. A stronger mandate—to provide meaningful protection for civilians throughout Sierra Leone—remained out of the question. Other aspects of the U.N. presence, including its in-country leadership, reflected a similar lack of international commitment.

East Timor and Kosovo

The international community fared only slightly better in East Timor and Kosovo—the two other most challenging situations it handed the United Nations in 1999 and 2000. Forced in each case to assemble personnel on an ad hoc basis, with no ready reservoir of experienced professionals, the U.N. operated under severe handicap.

In September 1999, immediately following an overwhelming vote in East Timor for independence, Indonesian-backed militia left the territory a charred ruin. An Australian-led military forced initially secured the territory, but by late 1999 the new country was handed over to a U.N.-led operation. The U.N. was given painfully inadequate tools for such large tasks as addressing past abuses, preventing new ones, and building basic governmental institutions from scratch. The international civilian police were recruited at an agonizingly slow pace and showed up poorly trained for short, three-month tours of duty. Their inadequacy, combined with divisions within U.N. operations, slowed investigations into the September 1999 violence and contributed to vigilante attacks and summary justice, as Timorese despaired of the U.N. police guaranteeing law and order.

In Kosovo, the U.N. again was asked to take over a territory that was virtually bereft of governmental institutions. Reconstruction was hampered by the Yugoslav government’s history of repressing the ethnic Albanian majority, the institutional and legal void it left after its sudden withdrawal in June 1999 following the war with NATO, and the lack of clarity about the territory’s future relationship with Yugoslavia. Under the circumstances, progress was made creating a new criminal justice system and civilian police force. But the justice system, inadequately supervised, fell far short of international human rights standards and showed a disturbing pattern of bias against ethnic Serbs. The international civilian police force, under equipped and poorly trained, was sometimes unwilling to arrest former Kosovo Liberation Army members and other ethnic Albanians who were responsible for violence against ethnic Serbs and other minorities, as well as against ethnic Albanian political rivals. A lack of investigative capacity and poor cooperation by the local population were also obstacles. These shortcomings meant that NATO troops sometimes had to assume sensitive law enforcement tasks for which they were unprepared. The violence against minorities persisted, meaning that virtually no ethnic Serbs participated in the October 2000 municipal elections.

Embosages

U.N. attempts to curb conflicts through embargoes suffered from a similar lack of will and resources to ensure implementation. A U.N. panel found widespread breaches of a Security Council-imposed embargo on trade in arms or diamonds with Angola’s murderous rebel group UNITA. The report, spearheaded by Canada’s then U.N. Ambassador Robert Fowler, was remarkable for naming the companies and countries, including heads of state, involved in sanctions busting. But through October, the Security Council had taken no further action to enforce its lofty pronouncement of an embargo. No serious effort was made to sanction the embargo breakers or to monitor the flow of goods at borders and airports. An embargo on arms trading with Sierra Leone and Liberia fared no
better.

**North-South Collusion**

That the U.N. is so handicapped in its capacity to address global problems is the product of an unfortunate congruence of interests between governments of the North and South, often against the interests of their people. Many governments of the industrialized world, particularly the United States, appreciate the U.N. as a place to hand difficult problem countries but distrust the global body too much to allow it the capacity to resolve these problems. The frequent result is the deployment of personnel who are starved of the resources needed to accomplish urgent tasks. Many governments of the developing world also do not like these political deployments. Rather than stand in solidarity with the people of the South whose calls for help might be answered, these governments see a U.N. emergency capacity as a diversion of resources from the U.N. development projects they most cherish and a threat to their own political latitude.

**Solutions**

It may be difficult to muster the political will to address these problems, but it is not difficult to identify solutions. Some of the changes are doctrinal, many described in the Brahimi report. For example, the U.N. must abandon its reflexive neutrality when circumstances call for protecting civilians from slaughter. Even when the U.N. enters dangerous situations consensually, it must do so with a sufficiently robust mandate and military capacity to protect U.N. personnel and the civilians they have come to serve. The Security Council must stop treating human rights as an unwelcome irrelevancy best left in its Geneva exile. Instead, drawing on the U.N.’s significant human rights expertise, the council must begin to recognize that human rights abuses are the cause of many conflicts and that ending these abuses is a critical element of lasting peace. In particular, accountability for the most heinous human rights crimes must be seen less as an obstacle to peace than as an essential building block—a goal worth embracing for pragmatic as well as principled reasons.

Other changes are structural. It makes no sense for the U.N. to squander months at the outset of each new emergency desperately searching the world for qualified personnel and begging national governments to spare them. The U.N. needs a standby capacity—not the caricature of troops drilling on U.N. grounds in New York, but a reserve of personnel that governments would make available on short notice for emergency U.N. service. This reserve should include not only specially trained troops but also police, judicial, legal, human rights, development, and administrative personnel—and the leadership to deploy them effectively.

The U.N. Secretariat in New York must also be bolstered. At current staffing levels, it is designed to be solely reactive. Even when it does respond, it is grossly understaffed to manage complex emergencies. The political and peacekeeping departments do not begin to have the requisite capacity. Preventive work, for example, is impossible in an institution whose limited staff is overburdened with far less significant work. The answer requires not only a substantial increase in the staff of the political and peacekeeping departments but also a cultural change. The nations of the U.N. must accept the need to identify, name, and address problem areas before they explode. They must stop diverting the U.N. from more pressing problems with demands for unread reports delivered to forgotten committees. They must transcend the zero-sum logic that every dollar spent on political or peacekeeping affairs is a dollar less for development and recognize that ending abusive conflict is a prerequisite to development for the countries, and often the regions, involved.

The U.N. is fortunate to have a secretary-general who understands and embraces these truths. But he cannot lead alone. If the U.N. has any prospect of meeting its potential, the nations of the world must accept and support the organization’s transformation.
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International Justice

The greatest strides toward an enhanced global architecture have been taken in the area of international justice. Less than a decade ago, impunity for tyrants was the rule. The world’s most heinous human rights criminals committed atrocities knowing that they could use intimidation and violence to fend off accountability. This impunity was an affront to the victims and an encouragement of further atrocities.

Today, the world is a far smaller place for tyrants because there are fewer places to escape justice. New international tribunals are being launched. These tribunals, in turn, have catalyzed national prosecutorial efforts, demonstrating that international justice serves to reinforce rather than replace national justice. Moreover, the actions of several Southern governments have made clear that justice for the worst human rights offenders is hardly an exclusively Northern concern. The most pronounced sour note in this steady progress has been the U.S. government’s persistent opposition to having its citizens held to the same legal standards as the rest of the world.

International Tribunals

The movement to create international institutions of justice took several steps forward in 2000. Most significant was the progress toward the establishment of the International Criminal Court—the first global tribunal for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. A treaty to establish the court was adopted in Rome in July 1998. Despite the many legal complexities involved, twenty-two governments had already ratified the treaty by the end of October 2000 (of the sixty needed to launch the court) and another ninety-three governments had signed it. This broad embrace suggests that the court will be up and running soon—conceivably as early as 2002.

Because the ICC will not have retroactive jurisdiction, the world continues to rely on country-specific international tribunals for the most heinous crimes of the past and present. Political changes in Croatia and Yugoslavia show how international tribunals have changed the long-term prospects of even seemingly secure human rights offenders. The death of Franjo Tudjman in December 1999 opened the way to the election of Croatia’s new president, Stipe Mesic, who has been far more cooperative with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, handing over evidence and suspects and opening the country’s borders to investigators. The September 2000 electoral loss of Slobodan Milosevic to Yugoslavia’s new president, Vojislav Kostunica, has also opened up new possibilities for cooperation. Kostunica at first insisted that he would not surrender Milosevic to the Hague, where the tribunal has indicted him for crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo. But Kostunica’s later comments were more equivocal, suggesting that cooperation with the tribunal and even the eventual surrender of Milosevic remain possibilities. At stake is also the fate of former Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic, who has taken refuge in Serbia after his indictment by the tribunal for genocide and other crimes in Bosnia.

Meanwhile, as of late October, the U.N. Security Council was moving toward the creation of a hybrid national-international tribunal for Sierra Leone. The tribunal will effectively overturn the July 1999 amnesty and make possible the prosecution of those behind the horrendous crimes that have characterized the country’s civil war. The hybrid nature of the court will be precedent-setting—an international prosecutor and judges in a dominant role to ensure the court’s independence, but a significant role for Sierra Leonean judges and prosecutors to help them begin reconstructing their devastated legal system. However, certain issues remain to be worked out, including the power of the court to compel cooperation, the time period on which the court will focus, the court’s treatment of juvenile offenders, and the extent of witness protection.

Unfortunately, a proposed hybrid tribunal for Cambodia has fared less well. Unlike Sierra Leone, the Cambodian government has insisted that Cambodians have a dominant role. The U.N. at first resisted because
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of the Cambodian government’s long history of manipulating its legal system. But the U.N. was later forced to acquiesce when the U.S. government brokered a deal largely on Cambodian terms. Still, as of late October, the Cambodian government was dragging its feet in seeking the necessary parliamentary approval, raising doubts about the court’s prospects.

National Justice Efforts

Some have questioned whether it is appropriate for international prosecutions to replace national justice systems. But that concern reflects a misunderstanding. The purpose of creating an option of international justice is to establish a backstop for national efforts. By making clear that violence or intimidation aimed at national judges and prosecutors no longer guarantees impunity, the option of international justice bolsters national justice systems. The International Criminal Court was built explicitly on these terms, and events in 2000 showed that the emergence of international tribunals has had precisely this catalyzing effect.

Britain’s October 1998 arrest of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet would almost certainly not have taken place before the ICC treaty changed the environment for international justice. In March 2000, the British government released Pinochet on health grounds after almost seventeen months in detention. He returned to a Chile that had been transformed by his arrest. In August, in a step that would have been unthinkable before his detention in Britain, the Chilean Supreme Court stripped him of his parliamentary immunity, allowing prosecution to proceed for his role in a notorious episode of execution and “disappearance” immediately following his 1973 coup.

Similarly, after the September 1999 rampage of Indonesian-backed militia in East Timor, the U.N. launched a commission of inquiry. In January 2000, the commission recommended the establishment of an international tribunal. Kofi Annan declined to endorse this recommendation so long as the Indonesian government upheld its vow to bring the abusers to justice on its own—a step it had no previous history of taking. In August, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson reminded Jakarta that she would call for an international tribunal if it did not proceed with prosecutions. In September, the government published a list of nineteen suspects involved in the East Timor rampage, though by late October the prospect of actual prosecutions remained distant.

Interestingly, in one case a nationally based prosecutorial effort may precede action by an international tribunal, suggesting a complementary relationship. The international war crimes tribunal for Rwanda has jurisdiction not only over atrocities associated with the 1994 genocide but also over crimes committed at the time by the Rwandan Patriotic Front—the dominant force in the current Rwandan government. The RPF’s military victory in June 1994 ended the genocide, but the Tutsi-led force committed serious abuses in the process. The Rwanda tribunal has issued no indictments for the RPF’s crimes—a failure that is often attributed to its need to maintain good relations with the Rwandan government so it can retain access to the country to conduct investigations and secure witnesses for the genocide trials. In August 2000, a Belgian prosecutor began investigating a complaint of war crimes and crimes against humanity filed against the RPF by a group of Rwandans. This initiative may hasten similar action by the Rwanda tribunal.

Southern Initiatives

Some critics of efforts to hold human rights abusers accountable for their crimes have suggested that justice is a parochial concern of Northern governments which is imposed on the people of the South. But the events of 2000 demonstrated that Southern governments are also eager to pursue the most heinous human rights criminals—that the quest for justice does not break down on hemispheric lines.

In February, in an echo of the Pinochet case, a Senegalese court, acting at the request of Chadian victims, indicted former
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Chadian dictator Hissène Habré for torture and ordered his arrest. Habré had taken refuge in Senegal following the fall of his dictatorship in 1990. In July 2000, in a blow to judicial independence, an appellate court dismissed the indictment after the new Senegalese government of President Abdoulaye Wade removed the judge investigating the case and promoted the head of the judicial chamber that issued the reversal ruling. The dismissal is on appeal to the country’s Supreme Court.

In October, an Argentine judge asked Chile to extradite Pinochet and others for the 1974 assassination of General Carlos Prats and his wife, Sofia Cuthbert. Prats, the former commander-in-chief of the Chilean armed forces, had opposed Pinochet’s 1973 coup and taken refuge in Buenos Aires with his family. The judge also sought the extradition of other Chileans in the case, including the former chief of Chile’s secret police, Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, who is in prison in Chile for having carried out a 1974 car-bombing in Washington that took the life of another coup opponent, former Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier, and his assistant, Ronni Moffitt.

Also in October, Vladimiro Montesinos, the shadowy intelligence figure behind the authoritarian government of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, unsuccessfully sought political asylum (effective amnesty) in Panama. Panama had evidently tired of being the world’s dumping ground for deposed dictators and their accomplices. Montesinos, who had been responsible for forming and supervising a death squad in the early 1990s among other abuses, beat a hasty retreat to Peru.

In August, acting upon a Spanish request, Mexico arrested Ricardo Miguel Cavallo, an accused torturer for the 1976-83 Argentine military junta. Cavallo had been living in Mexico.

These and other cases demonstrate an increasingly global effort—involving governments of the North and South—to bring abusive officials to justice. The trend is still at a rudimentary stage, but it is clearly working against the impunity that so many ruthless officials enjoyed. This smaller world may make tomorrow’s dictators think twice before embarking on the path of slaughter taken by their predecessors.

Disappointments

However, the news in 2000 was not all rosy on the justice front. The most glaring failure was the international community’s refusal to put serious pressure on Russia to bring to justice the commanders who had been responsible for massacres, torture, and indiscriminate slaughter in Chechnya. With Russia wielding a veto on the U.N. Security Council, a council-created international tribunal was not an option. The U.N. Commission on Human Rights did criticize Russia’s actions and urge prosecution—the first such resolution against a permanent member of the Security Council. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also suspended the Russian delegation’s voting rights. But there was little follow-up on these initiatives, and no insistence that Russia apply the rule of law to its troops in Chechnya as a condition of receiving the large international assistance that continued to be sent its way.

Also disappointing was the lack of international attention to justice in Central Africa—particularly Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This failure is especially unfortunate in the Congo because the government of President Laurent Kabila effectively blocked an earlier U.N. commission of inquiry established to examine atrocities committed on Congolese soil during Kabila’s rise to power in 1996-97. The war fought in Congo since 1998 has also been plagued by widespread atrocities. So far, the international community has taken no steps to end the impunity that helps drive these abuses.

Despite a clear mandate, NATO made no effort through October to arrest Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb political leader who has been indicted for genocide and other crimes in Bosnia. Throughout all or most of 2000, he was reported still to be in Bosnia and hence in territory where NATO had permission to operate.
A Selective U.S. Vision of Justice

Perhaps the greatest disappointment was the persistently selective view of international justice adopted by the U.S. government. Washington has been an active supporter of country-specific tribunals insofar as they apply to others, but it has stood in the way of efforts to establish a more universal system of justice that might apply to U.S. citizens as well.

This attitude was evident in the cries of protest heard in Washington when the prosecutor for the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal, Carla del Ponte, dared even to consider opening an investigation of NATO’s conduct during the 1999 air war with Yugoslavia. The tribunal has jurisdiction over war crimes committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, whether by residents of the territory or outside forces. The prosecutor’s scrutiny of the NATO air campaign was entirely appropriate, given that, according to a Human Rights Watch study released in February, up to a half of the roughly 500 civilian deaths during the bombing campaign were attributable to possible NATO violations of international humanitarian law. Although the prosecutor ultimately decided against launching an investigation, Washington thought it an outrage that she would even contemplate holding NATO to the same standards as other forces. Indeed, NATO failed to turn over specific information requested by investigators.

In March, the U.S. government again fell short of its international justice obligations. Tomás Ricardo Anderson Kohatsu, a one-time major in Peru’s Army Intelligence Service, was credibly accused of participating in the 1997 brutal torture of a woman who was beaten, burned, raped and electrically shocked in such a manner that she was rendered paraplegic. The U.S. State Department itself had described the case in its annual human rights reports for 1997 and 1999. Anderson Kohatsu came to Washington in March 2000 to testify on Peru’s behalf at a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, part of the Organization of American States. At the request of the U.S. Justice Department, which had been alerted to his presence, he was detained while changing planes in Houston. Anderson Kohatsu was not on Peruvian government business and was not carrying a diplomatic passport. Nonetheless, without allowing the courts to consider the matter, Acting Secretary of State Thomas Pickering ordered his release on the dubious theory that he was entitled to diplomatic immunity because he had participated in official business of the OAS. Pickering’s actions reflected an administration far more concerned with avoiding political problems with Peru than with carrying out international legal obligations to arrest and prosecute the worst human rights offenders.

Perhaps most troubling is the U.S. government’s continued refusal to accept the International Criminal Court. With the help of the United States, the court already has extensive safeguards against unjustified prosecutions. Moreover, under the court’s “principle of complementarity,” any government can spare its nationals ICC prosecution by conducting its own good-faith investigation and, if appropriate, prosecution. Yet the U.S. government is determined to shut off even the theoretical possibility that its citizens would have to appear before the court. Washington maintains this stance even though an exception to the court’s universal reach would undermine the court’s legitimacy and effectiveness.

Because the U.S. government has no intention of ratifying the court’s treaty anytime soon, it has focused on the supposed outrage that the court would have jurisdiction over the citizens of a state that has not ratified the treaty. But it is common practice for a government to prosecute a foreign national for crimes committed on its territory without first seeking permission of the foreigner’s government. The jurisdiction of the ICC amounts to no more than a delegation of this widely accepted power for the most serious human rights crimes. Indeed, Washington itself routinely exercises far more expansive jurisdiction in unilaterally pursuing alleged terrorists or drug traffickers even when their crimes were not committed on U.S. soil.
Still, the U.S. government has advanced one scheme after another to shield U.S. citizens from the court’s reach. The latest idea, floated in October, would exempt the citizens of any government that has not ratified the court, so long as the government could show that it “acts responsibly” and is “generally” willing to prosecute its own serious human rights offenders. But these requirements are not in the ICC treaty. Adding them would fundamentally revise the treaty and upend a whole series of carefully crafted compromises made in Rome to secure the court’s broad support. Moreover, the principle of complementarity as framed in the treaty permits a government to avoid ICC prosecution of a citizen only by pursuing the specific suspect in question. Washington wants to weaken this rule by requiring only a “general” willingness to prosecute criminals of this nature—something a country could presumably establish once and for all and thereafter preclude the risk of ICC prosecution for any of its citizens. That is hardly a goal worth endorsing.

The best antidote to this U.S. exceptionalism is for the many governments supporting the court to reject all such schemes out of hand and proceed as rapidly as possible toward the sixty ratifications of the treaty needed to establish the court. The sooner the court is up and running, the sooner Washington will recognize the futility of its quest to carve out an exemption for its citizens. Ultimately, Washington will realize that its best defense against unfair (as opposed to legitimate) prosecutions of Americans is to help create a culture within the ICC that is deeply respectful of individual rights and the rule of law. The U.S. contribution to that culture will be far more effective if the United States joins the court—or at least becomes a friendly supporter of it—than if it persists in attacking the court from the outside.

**Conclusion**

An increasingly interconnected world is generating human rights problems of a global dimension. From regulating the global economy to rebuilding war-torn societies to bringing the most heinous criminals to justice, global solutions are needed to these global problems. A nation would never willingly address its most complex national problems with handicapped national institutions. So the world needs to enhance its institutional capacity on a global level to address the most serious human rights problems that transcend national borders. Some progress is being made in each of these areas, but far more needs to be done. The challenge today is to build a global institutional capacity commensurate with the complexity and importance of these global problems.

Over fifty years ago, as World War II ended and a new era began, the international community created a new set of institutions to address the challenges of the future. What emerged were such landmark organizations as the United Nations and the Bretton-Woods institutions. Similar vision is needed today. To manage the global economy, stronger institutions are needed to ensure respect for human rights. To assist war-torn nations, the United Nations must be bolstered substantially. To build an international system of justice, the International Criminal Court must be launched and supported. These are major steps requiring foresight and commitment. Complacency can no longer be tolerated. It is time to act.
The international community took important actions in 2000 aimed at protecting those who are risking their lives to fight for human rights. During its annual session, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights voted to establish the post of a special representative of the secretary-general on the situation of human rights defenders. After a worldwide search, in August, the secretary-general appointed Hina Jilani, a Pakistani human rights lawyer (and a human rights monitor honored by Human Rights Watch in 1991 at our annual monitors’ celebration) for the post. The special representative will be able to press for the implementation of the 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and intervene in cases of threats to and harassment of human rights defenders worldwide.

Five humanitarian workers were murdered in 2000 while aiding refugees. In West Timor, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) staff Samson Areghaegn, Carlos Caceres, and Pero Simun were killed on September 6. In Guinea, UNHCR head of office Mensah Kpognon was killed on September 17. In Burundi, Brother Antoine Bargiggia of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was killed on October 3. Their tragic deaths prompted a global protest and highlighted the dangers for humanitarian workers world wide. The murders also posed a serious threat to the protection of refugees as UNHCR responded by withdrawing all staff from West Timor and the border areas of Guinea, leaving refugees there almost completely unprotected. The Jesuit Refugee Service continued to serve refugees in Burundi.

Indonesia experienced the loss of human rights defenders Sukardi and Jafar Siddiq Hamzah in the year 2000. Sukardi, a volunteer for the local environmental and human rights group based in Aceh, the Bamboo Thicket Institute (Yayasan Rumpun Bambu Indonesia), “disappeared” on January 31. Sukardi’s body was found naked and bullet-riddled on February 1. Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, the founder and director of the New York-based rights group, the International Forum for Aceh, vanished on August 5, while on a visit to Medan, Indonesia. Jafar, one of Aceh’s most accomplished human rights advocates, was found dead with his body showing signs of torture in an unmarked grave on September 3.

Some fifty miles outside Nairobi, Fr. John Kaiser, a well-known human rights activist in Kenya, was murdered during the night of August 24, 2000. Father Kaiser, a Catholic parish priest in the Rift Valley area and a U.S. citizen, worked in Kenya for thirty-six years and was an outspoken human rights activist. In 1999, the Law Society of Kenya had honored Father Kaiser with its annual human rights award.

In Colombia, four human rights defenders were killed and three “disappeared” in the year 2000. On July 11, Elizabeth Cañas, a member of the Association of Family Members of the Detained and Disappeared (Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos-Colombia ASFADDDES), was shot and killed in Barrancabermeja. Angel Quintero and Claudia Patricia Monsalve, also ASFADDDES members, were “disappeared” in Medellín, Antioquia, on October 6. Indigenous activist Jairo Bedoya Hoyos, a member of the Antioquia Indigenous Organization (Organización Indígena de Antioquia, OIA) who worked on human rights issues, was “disappeared” on March 2. Demetrio Playonero, a displaced person and human rights leader was murdered apparently by paramilitaries on March 3. In May, Jesús Ramiro Zapata, the only remaining member of the Segovia Human Rights Committee, was killed near Segovia. Government prosecutor Margarita María Pulgarin Trujillo, part of a team investigating cases linking paramilitaries to the army and regional drug traffickers, was murdered in Medellín on April 3.

In Haiti, Jean Dominique, the director of Radio Haiti-Inter and one of Haiti’s most prominent radio journalists, was shot to death the morning of April 3. Forced into exile in 1980 for his opposition to the Jean-Claude Duvalier regime, Dominique was a strong proponent of the free press and Haiti’s struggle for democracy.