


AFRICA



“We affirmed our mutual desire to further deepen our cooperation for the benefit of the United States and Kenya. The U.S. supported the efforts made by Kenya in consolidating democracy, particularly after the successful general elections of December 2002. We share the common desire to promote and entrench democracy in Africa, and the need to support Kenya as a model of democracy.”

– Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, October 7, 2003



A decade ago single-party states and military dictatorships were the norm in sub-Saharan Africa. The 2004 *Freedom in the World* report, using its stringent criteria, lists 11 African countries as free and 20 as partly free. Many more countries have made significant strides toward free and fair elections, effective governance and respect for internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Mauritania, for example, passed a law providing severe criminal sanctions for those convicted of trafficking in persons and using forced labor. Some long-term civil wars, including those in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sudan, have concluded or may be near resolution.

Nonetheless, democracy efforts and human rights in Africa face severe challenges. These result from continuing conflict in some countries and regions, weak institutions and leadership, disunity among racial, linguistic, religious and tribal groups, corruption and poor governance. Two years after deeply flawed presidential elections, the brave people of Zimbabwe continue to struggle under the heel of a despotic regime. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the end of apartheid in South Africa and the Rwandan genocide. The anniversary of both events continues to raise awareness on the need to promote and respect universal human rights.

Some African leaders recognize the challenge; one promising initiative is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). To be effective, both NEPAD and the African Union must demonstrate their credibility by holding each participating state to high standards of democracy and human rights and imposing consequences for those African nations that fail to uphold them. Sub-regional bodies like the Southern African Development Community and Economic Community of West African States also have important roles to play.

The United States is buttressing African efforts through election support and corporate responsibility programs. We have focused on efforts to resolve conflicts, defuse religious tensions and strengthen rule of law, free media and civil society. Building upon the Community of Democracies, democratic nations from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Miami in June 2003 for a "Dialogue on Democracy," to exchange experiences and develop inter- and intra-regional dialogues, institutions and strategies to strengthen the global framework of democracy. We continue to seek ways to expand capacity building and to professionalize African militaries. The African Growth and Opportunity Act encourages reform efforts. The Millennium Challenge Account, President Bush's landmark initiative to produce new accountability and results in foreign aid, also stands to benefit Africa.

ALVA WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor allocated \$400,000 from its Human Rights and Democracy Fund to support the ALVA Consortium's Women's Leadership Program in East Africa. This innovative regional project is currently under way in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda and due to its success the project is expanding to include Angola.

The project equips candidates with the skills necessary to run an effective campaign, including developing platforms, grassroots outreach, research techniques, incorporating the media into their campaigns and giving presentations. Women traditionally have been underrepresented in the political process and therefore often lack the skills needed to seek their place in a representative government. Empowering women in these countries will lead to a better informed citizenry and increased participation in political and economic decision-making. Upon completion of the program, a core group of women in each country will have the experience and skills necessary to establish sustainable leadership programs.

The project has enjoyed remarkable success in each country. For example, in Rwanda the project led to the development of the Rwanda Women's Leadership Caucus Conference (RWLC), which has been an important step in the development of representative democracy in Rwanda. Of the 20 Rwandan women taking part in the project, 15 from the initial RWLC won political office in the September-October 2003 parliamentary elections. President Paul Kagame has appointed three of the women to serve as members of the Senate, the upper body of the emerging bicameral parliamentary system.

In December 2002, just 30 days before national elections, the ALVA Consortium led a similar program in Kenya. Working closely with Egerton University in Njoro, Kenya, ALVA crafted a program to strengthen political campaign management skills among 24 Kenyan women candidates. Six of the 24 won their initial primary elections, and three went on to win in the general elections. One of the participants has since been appointed by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki to serve as the Assistant Minister of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services.

ANGOLA

Angola is a constitutional republic in transition after the end of its 27-year civil war in 2002. Consultations among the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, opposition parties and civil society on a new constitution, electoral law and a timetable for national elections were under way at the end of 2003. The Government's overall human rights record remained poor; there was continuing improvement in a few areas, but serious problems remained. The right of citizens to change their government remained restricted due to the delay in scheduling elections. Members of the security forces committed abuses, including unlawful killings and excessive use of force. Prison conditions were harsh and lengthy pretrial detentions common. The judiciary did not consistently ensure due process and poor records and procedures contributed to prolonged detentions. The Government at times restricted freedom of the press and mistreated journalists. Poor governance, including endemic corruption, continued to limit the provision of basic services to most citizens. However, the Government began infrastructure rehabilitation efforts during the year and the number of persons displaced by the conflict decreased significantly. Violence and discrimination against women were common throughout Angolan society. Children and persons with disabilities suffered as a result of poor economic conditions and limited protections against discrimination. Child labor was a problem, and there were reports of trafficking in persons.

As Angola develops its post-conflict political system, the U.S. strategy to promote democracy and human rights is focused on empowering Angolans to interact more effectively with their government and advocate on their own behalf across a wide range of issues. The Embassy's efforts include training political parties and civil society to effectively participate in elections, advancing the dissemination of independent information, improving judicial capacity and

respect for due process, and fostering Angolan civil society's lobbying and input on human and civil rights issues. The Ambassador chairs a multi-agency Democracy Committee that develops and implements democracy and human rights promotion activities in consultation with Angolan and international non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

Given the importance of free and fair elections in the development of accountability and the protection of human rights, the Embassy has allocated a significant portion of its Economic Support Funds (ESF) to support the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the International Foundation for Election Systems in creating viable political and electoral structures. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, NDI and IRI launched activities to prepare civil society organizations and political parties, respectively, for national elections and opened an electoral resource center in Luanda. NDI supported the creation of a first-ever network designed to develop and promote effective civil society involvement and participation in national elections. IRI provided organizational training to 12 of the major political parties during the year, including technical assistance for planning the Union for the Total Independence of Angola's first post-conflict congress, furthering its transition from armed movement to political party. Both NDI and IRI conducted extensive opinion polls to raise awareness of elections and highlight citizens' concerns.

The Embassy is also providing assistance to independent media outlets as an alternative to the state-controlled media. Activities include the purchase of newsprint for the independent weekly newspapers and the installation of radio transmitters to permit independent broadcaster Radio Ecclesia to expand its news coverage nationwide. In 2003, the Embassy assisted the Association of Independent Angolan Newspapers with a new printing press for equal use by the independent weekly newspapers. The Embassy also supports

Voice of America's Linha Directa service, including journalism training. With ESF and public diplomacy funds, the Embassy supported short- and long-term professional skills enhancement for local journalists through courses, seminars and exchanges. Public diplomacy efforts also engage media via the International Visitor program, U.S. speakers and information dissemination.

The Embassy has taken advantage of the opening political climate to build the capacity of Angolan NGOs and support their efforts to promote democratic change and push the Government to address human rights abuses. In 2003, the Ambassador's Democracy Small Grants program, combining ESF, Democracy and Human Rights Fund small grants and the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund, supported more than a dozen Angolan NGOs in promoting civil and human rights, including awareness of prisoner's rights, legal advocacy and the establishment of a civil rights information center. In an effort to help Angolans interact more effectively with their government, the Embassy aided local groups in holding forums, town meetings and seminars aimed at increasing citizens' participation and contributions to key Angolan revision processes such as the drafting of the new constitution which is expected to be approved in 2004. Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening partners are also including information on the electoral components of the constitution in their training programs. In addition to mobilizing an unprecedented level of Angolan civil society input in the legislation, the coalition successfully lobbied for extended public comment period and modifications to the second draft law. The Embassy also helped publish a land tenure manual in local languages to facilitate wider public discussion in rural areas.

Consistent with a larger focus on fostering the economic and social recovery of four central "Planalto" provinces that constitute Angola's agricultural breadbasket, the Embassy is working with the same target populations to strengthen their ability to effectively engage their government and

promote greater political competition, accountability and transparency. Current activities include grassroots education campaigns on issues such as land rights, access to justice and education, support for communities working in partnership with local governments on small infrastructure projects such as school rehabilitation, and media support such as the provision of supplies and equipment to 15 provincial chapters of the national journalists association to strengthen local-level journalist capacity.

The Embassy continued providing technical assistance, training and grants to specific civil society coalitions engaged in issues as wide-ranging as advocacy for children's rights to education, rights to housing for internally displaced women, and rights to confidentiality and employment for people living with HIV/AIDS. The civil society coalitions organized 218 advocacy campaigns, seminars and workshops that reached 21,929 people in FY 2003.



The coalition on rights to housing for internally displaced women was successful in pressuring the Government to approve a decree on the Resettlement and Reintegration of the Internally Displaced, providing a legal framework for government assistance to internally displaced persons, particularly important for improving the lives of families headed by women.

In the key area of access to justice, the Commerce Law Development Program's legal assistance project with the Ministry of Justice trained 12 Angolan court clerks in Sarasota, Florida and an additional 24 in Luanda on improved case tracking procedures. During the year provincial criminal courts implemented several of the new procedures that have assisted in clearing the substantial backlog of cases pending.

BURKINA FASO

The Government of Burkina Faso's human rights record remained poor, although there were some improvements in a few areas in 2003 and early 2004. Political rights, particularly the right to change government, are not fully exercised. The judiciary is subject to executive influence, and individual members of security forces continue to commit human rights abuses. To address these issues, the U.S. human rights and democracy strategy combines advocacy and program support to draw attention to international human rights norms, emphasize accountability and transparency in government, and nurture the large and active but under-financed non-governmental organization community that is engaged in the human rights/democracy arena. Several of the Embassy's regular interlocutors have emphasized that they see the American Embassy as the best and strongest advocate in the country for human rights and democracy.

Encouraged by diplomatic missions in Burkina Faso, including that of the United States, criticism and publicity campaigns by human rights

associations resulted in a sharp decline in extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects by Burkina Faso police in 2002. The treatment of detainees accused in the alleged coup plot uncovered in October 2003 is also a priority for the United States. The Ambassador has repeatedly stressed to the Government the importance of transparency and full adherence to international human rights norms in its treatment of the detainees, and the Embassy continues to press for a fair and speedy trial and presentation of evidence in 2004.

Over the past several years, through Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) and Public Diplomacy (PD) grants, the United States helped equip a number of local tribunals in the interior of the country with photocopiers and typewriters. In 2002, the United States used DHRF funds to sponsor a workshop on the living conditions in Burkina Faso prisons. Following that workshop, the Justice Minister committed himself to addressing prisoners' harsh living conditions through a number of initiatives. The United States continues to follow up on this issue with local human rights organizations including by visiting local prisons. A Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 DHRF program supported innovative training in Ouagadougou and Koudougou schools on children's rights that is now being considered by the Ministry of Education as a model for other school districts.

As part of the International Visitor program, in 2003 and 2004, the United States sent a number of professionals in the areas of democracy, good governance, conflict resolution, AIDS and civic education and journalism to the United States.

Human rights and democracy building remain strategic goals in U.S. policy toward Burkina Faso. The United States continues to encourage the Government to improve its human rights record and accelerate democratic reforms, particularly with regard to coming elections. DHRF money also supports activities that promote human rights and democratic development. In addition to sponsoring these events with program

funding, the Ambassador and other embassy staff have worked to promote women's rights, children's rights and the rights of people infected with HIV/AIDS.

U.S.-funded programs focusing on training journalists in investigative and political reporting, bringing together political parties for consideration of necessary electoral reforms, and personal advocacy from the Ambassador to encourage opposition parties to participate fully in the political reform process, paid off during the 2002 legislative elections. Both international and national observers stated that the elections were free and fair, with no serious fraud or harassment reported. In addition, all opposition parties participated and quadrupled their representation, taking 49 percent of the seats. For the first time since multiparty politics were restored in 1992, Burkina Faso has a genuinely pluralist legislature.

The country is now gearing up for 2005 elections to elect the president and also local commune representatives (a newly created office under Burkina Faso's decentralization plan). Political jockeying for these elections has already begun at the national level. A Human Rights and Democracy Fund grant supported the production of a play on the rights and obligations of citizens in a democracy, in particular during elections; the play will be performed in rural areas in different local languages.

PD grants have been used to sponsor programs on the rights of persons with disabilities, produce radio programs on human rights, democracy and the electoral process, support local associations that promote human rights, development of the judicial system and the rights of women, and sponsor awards for journalists who have published articles involving investigative journalism.

Furthering the U.S. policy of promoting religious freedom, the Embassy has sponsored a number of workshops and discussions exploring different religions and the importance of tolerance. The United States also sent three participants on an

International Visitor program about Islam in a democracy, and participants reported that the visit positively influenced their attitudes. The Embassy's Public Affairs Section also regularly meets with Burkina Faso's Muslim community for discussions and exchanges.

The United States sent both military and civilian attendees to programs sponsored by the African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), permitting them to gain insight into the workings of the military in a democratic society.

Using U.S. Labor Department funds, the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor and the Burkina anti-trafficking in children project funded a workshop on draft anti-child trafficking legislation in late 2002. The National Assembly passed the law in May 2003 and is now working on educating the public about its provisions. Two new grants from the Office to Monitor and Combat the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) are also funding an information booklet on the new law as well as a locally produced documentary on the dangers of child trafficking. FY 2003 TIP and INL funding was used for a highly successful training program on trafficking for local police in all 13 regions of Burkina Faso. In 2003, the U.S. Labor Department's International Child Labor Program funded a \$3 million project to combat child trafficking through education, to be implemented by Save the Children-Canada. Through DHRF funding, the Embassy has also sponsored programs on female genital mutilation, forced marriage, women's and children's rights, the rights of persons with HIV/AIDS and the problem of social exclusion.

BURUNDI

The Government of Burundi, led by President Domitien Ndayizeye, continues to implement the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of August 2000, as well as accords signed with rebel

groups. The Arusha Agreement calls for a return to elected government, protection of minority rights, respect for individual rights, reform of the army and an accounting for the crimes of the past. The Arusha Agreement specifies that by the end of the post-transitional period on October 31, 2004, communal and National Assembly elections are to be held and the National Assembly is to choose the first president of the post-transitional period. Under a protocol on power sharing signed by the Government and the largest rebel group, the CNDD-FDD, a new cabinet was inaugurated on November 23, 2003. An integrated army General Staff was established on January 6, 2004. One rebel group – the PALIPEHUTU-FNL – continues armed opposition to the Government. The United States has called upon the PALIPEHUTU-FNL to renounce violence and to join the peace process.

Burundi's last democratically elected president was assassinated by army elements in 1993, an event that triggered mass violence, displacement of civilians and a decade-long crisis. Since 1993, the United States has advocated the return to democracy and constitutional rule while providing \$250 million in humanitarian assistance to Burundi.

The Transitional Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit numerous serious human rights abuses. Security forces continued to commit numerous arbitrary and unlawful killings. There were credible reports of disappearances, and the security forces continued to torture, beat, rape and otherwise abuse persons. Despite some improvements, prison conditions remained very poor in general and sometimes life threatening. Impunity and the continuing lack of accountability for those who committed past abuses remained serious problems. Arbitrary arrest and detention and lengthy pretrial detention were problems, and there were reports of incommunicado detention. The court system did not ensure due process or provide citizens with fair trials. The Transitional Government controlled the media and restricted

freedoms of speech, the press, assembly, association and movement. Violence and discrimination against women continued. Commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of child soldiers were problems. Discrimination against persons with disabilities, indigenous Twa populations and state discrimination against Hutus remained serious problems. Societal discrimination between the Hutus and Tutsis continued. Incidents of ethnically motivated property destruction and killing occurred throughout the country. Child labor and trafficking in persons was a problem. Rebels also continued to commit numerous serious human rights abuses against civilians, including killings, kidnappings, rapes, theft, extortion, the forcible recruitment and employment of children as child soldiers, and forced labor.

The U.S. human rights and democracy goals in Burundi include helping the people build a just and lasting peace based on democratic principles, protecting human rights and relieving human suffering. To protect individual rights during the ongoing conflict, the Embassy has regularly raised specific cases and broader patterns of abuses with leaders of both the Government and rebel groups. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor E. Michael Southwick visited Bujumbura in August to highlight human rights and democracy concerns. During the Secretary of State's September 30 meeting with President Ndayizeye, the Secretary again encouraged the Government to respect basic rights. This private diplomacy proceeded in tandem with public statements issued by the Embassy and State Department. In 2003, President Ndayizeye met with U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations John D. Negroponte during the UN General Assembly.

U.S. programs in Fiscal Year 2003 to promote the defense of individual rights include assistance to League Iteka, a Burundian human rights organization, which maintains a country-wide network of human rights monitors and observers,

and reports on overall conditions as well as violations. A \$300,000 grant to the International Human Rights Law Group is aimed at building the reporting capacity of local human rights organizations.

In addition, the United States provided a \$2,450,000 grant to Search for Common Ground and the International Human Rights Law Group to fund democracy and human rights projects and civil society organizations. To strengthen civil society and support women's rights, Search for Common Ground funds the Women's Peace Center. This group consists of women's associations that build capacity and promote messages concerning women's rights and peace.

Search for Common Ground also has an agreement with the Implementation Monitoring Committee, the UN-chaired body charged with supervising the implementation of the Arusha Agreement, to organize discussions with the population aimed at building support for the Agreement.

With a \$300,000 grant, the International Human Rights Law Group lobbies parliamentarians to support legislation that gives the force of law to provisions of the Arusha Agreement. Examples include a bill establishing a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a post-transition constitution.

The United States also finances projects that advance the interests of women, children and the Twa minority group while promoting democratic values, good governance, human rights, conflict resolution, acceptable prison conditions, peace and reconciliation.

CAMEROON

Cameroon is a republic dominated by a strong presidency. Despite the country's multiparty system of government, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has remained in power since the early years of independence.

Citizens' ability to change their government remained limited. The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary was subject to significant executive influence and suffered from corruption and inefficiency. The Government continued to impose limits on freedoms of speech and the press. Cameroon's human rights record remained poor. Although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces continued to commit numerous abuses, such as unlawful killings and torture, and to use arbitrary arrest and detention. Violence and discrimination against women remained serious problems. Societal discrimination based on religion and against ethnic minorities continued. Child labor and trafficking in persons also remained problems in 2003.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Cameroon is to improve the democratic and human rights environment throughout the country by promoting elections that meet international standards, decentralization, independent and professional media, strong civil society and religious tolerance, as well as combating child labor. The United States has also been involved in a number of high profile public outreach efforts to help develop a free press and advance democratic reform. Over the course of 2003 and early 2004, the United States has actively engaged officials from all levels of the Cameroonian Government, local and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), members of civil society and the media to strengthen Cameroon's democratic institutions and improve respect for human rights. With presidential elections scheduled for October 2004, the United States' primary focus is on developing a more free, fair and transparent electoral process and preparing the media to effectively cover the elections.

In anticipation of the October 2004 presidential elections, the Ambassador and other embassy personnel have met repeatedly with high-level Cameroonian officials, including President Biya, to encourage concrete action in reaching the

Cameroonian government's stated objective of holding a free and fair election. The Embassy formed a donors' working group to coordinate policy messages and assistance expenditures in support of that goal. The Ambassador attended an international meeting on Cameroon's elections and successfully lobbied reluctant donors for additional funding for electoral reform. On the legislative side, the United States worked with members of the Government and the National Assembly to strengthen the National Elections Observatory (NEO). Legislation passed by the National Assembly in 2003 makes the NEO a semi-permanent body by extending members' terms to three years and explicitly includes NGOs and opposition parties in the member selection process.

In order to promote democracy and decentralization, the United States has worked to develop the capacity of local government leaders by organizing a seminar for 25 mayors and other elected officials on public involvement in democracy. Additionally, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the Embassy held several interactive dialogues on democracy and human rights with Washington and other African posts through the State Department's broadcasting network for Africa (AFNET).

The United States has been active in developing an independent and professional media in Cameroon. The PAS held numerous training workshops for journalists, including five "Corner Stones" workshops to instruct more than 150 local journalists on how to effectively cover electoral politics. The PAS also organized two workshops on investigative journalism attended by more than 130 journalists. These workshops were widely covered by the local media, increasing their impact. The United States also sponsored a speaking tour by Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, Regional Director for Africa at the National Democratic Institute, who spoke on "Community Involvement in the Electoral Process" and the "Role of the Media in Elections."

Despite the 2000 law authorizing the creation of private radio and television stations, the Government continued to fail to respond to requests for broadcast licenses, and radio and television stations were forced to operate illegally. In December 2003, the PAS Officer met with the Cameroonian Minister of Communications Jacques Fame Ndongo to discuss the problem and underscore the importance of developing a free press in Cameroon.

To complement the programs with local government leaders and the press, the United States organized two workshops to train leaders in civil society on political organizing and the local registration process for NGOs. The United States also awarded two grants using Economic Support Funds totaling \$250,000 to local NGOs for elections-related projects: \$180,000 to the Cameroon League for Human Rights to distribute nationwide an elections guide in seven local languages, provide training in approximately 250 villages on elections procedures, civic responsibility and the application of electoral law, and hold a seminar to train print and radio journalists on coverage of elections; and \$70,000 to the Youths International Movement for Africa to distribute a series of educational posters in French, English and seven local languages related to election themes, encouraging people to vote and explaining voter's rights. The group plans to hold meetings in five provinces of Cameroon to train local authorities, opinion leaders and youth groups to participate in the election education campaign.

The Democracy and Human Rights Fund awarded \$50,000 to three organizations working to sensitize Cameroonians on good governance, human rights and the importance of being politically active. The United States also sponsored 17 government and civil society leaders to travel to America through the International Visitor program.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

In order to increase respect for human rights, the United States worked closely with the military and police to curb abuses by law enforcement. In compliance with the Leahy Amendment, the Defense Attaché's Office worked to foster more professional security forces by sending members of the Cameroon Government for training in Civil Military Relations, Military Peacekeeping Operations and Maritime Law Enforcement. The United States spent \$176,485 on training for Cameroonian military and law enforcement through the Expanded International Military Education and Training program.

The Embassy worked to advance women's rights and the rights of disabled persons throughout the year. The PAS organized a seminar on "Women's Social and Political Integration" and an AFNET program on "Women in Development" involving approximately 200 women leaders. Through the Special Self Help Grant program, local communities built a number of maternal health centers and also received materials for a school for the blind.

In the area of religious freedom and tolerance, the PAS organized a panel discussion on "Islam and Religious Tolerance," excerpts of which were aired during two editions of the weekly television program "Understanding Islam." The Ambassador also reached out to the Muslim community of Cameroon by hosting an Iftaar dinner during the holy month of Ramadan. In addition, approximately 500 copies of the International Information Programs pamphlet "Muslim Life in America" were distributed to Muslim leaders throughout the country.

Funding continued to flow from U.S. Labor Department for the multi-year International Labor Organization (ILO) program to eliminate the worst forms of child labor from the cocoa sector of commercial agriculture. In an effort to combat trafficking of women and children, the United States gave the ILO in Cameroon two \$150,000 grants to develop new trafficking legislation and train local law enforcement and the judiciary on implementation of the new legislation.

The human rights record of the Central African Republic (CAR) remains poor. On March 15, 2003, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Francois Bozize declared himself President, suspended the Constitution, and dissolved the National Assembly. During the coup, pro-government forces and rebels engaged in widespread looting, beating and raping of civilians. Although the newly installed government has made some positive progress, security forces were responsible for extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests. Prolonged detention without trial, infringements on privacy and harsh prison conditions remain problematic. Violence and discrimination against women, female genital mutilation, child prostitution, discrimination against indigenous people (Pygmies), trafficking in persons and child labor also continue to be problems.

Operations at Embassy Bangui are currently suspended due to the unstable security situation throughout the country, and relations are conducted from Washington. In accordance with U.S. law, the Government is largely ineligible for assistance from the United States. However, U.S. efforts to encourage the Government to improve its human rights and democracy records are diverse and ongoing. The U.S. strategy for promoting human rights and democracy in the CAR supports the government's stated intention to return to democratic governance, and calls for concrete, verifiable and sustained improvement in human rights.

The United States is pursuing an ongoing dialogue with other donor countries to draw attention to the severity of the situation and to explore efforts to reduce the prevalence of human rights violations. The United States monitors closely instances of violations, and, in December 2003, actively participated in the UN Security Council's consideration of the recently released Secretary General's report on the CAR. Along with the other members of the Security Council, the United

States noted the positive efforts made toward achieving reconciliation and reconstruction, but noted with concern the continuing insecurity and human rights violations.

The United States also continues to investigate avenues for providing humanitarian aid and promoting democratic processes as permitted by U.S. law. In addition to joining the United Nation's call for an international response for the CAR, the United States is promoting freedom of the press by providing financial support to an independent radio station. This \$300,000 grant to Radio Ndeke Luka enhances local media capabilities by underwriting one full year of programming. Radio Ndeke Luka will help to ensure that human rights violations are reported in a timely and accurate manner and was instrumental in provoking an investigation by the Government into the brutal slaying of three young demonstrators.

CHAD

Chad is a centralized republic dominated by a strong presidency. President Idriss Deby has ruled since taking power in a 1990 coup. He has been re-elected twice, although both elections were marred by irregularities. The majority of power is limited to allies of the President's political and ethnic bases.

The Government of Chad's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious human rights abuses. Civilian authorities did not maintain effective control of the security forces, and there were frequent instances in which elements of the security forces acting independent of Government authority committed serious human rights abuses. There were widespread reports of extrajudicial killings, torture, beatings and rape by government security forces. According to local human rights organizations, nearly one half of all human rights abuses committed in the country



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involved arbitrary or unlawful killings by security forces; members of the security forces who committed human rights abuses were rarely punished. Security forces continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention, and prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening. The judiciary remained ineffective, under-funded, overburdened and subject to executive interference, and death sentences were carried out during the year under circumstances that raised questions concerning due process. The Government at times limited freedom of the press, assembly, religion and movement. Violence and societal discrimination against women were common. Both official and societal ethnic and regional discrimination remained widespread. There also were reports of forced labor, including forced child labor. Trafficking in persons was a problem.

The United States promotes human rights in Chad in several ways. U.S. officials routinely discussed human rights conditions at the highest levels of government and with local human rights activists. The United States has urged the Government to ensure that revenues from Chad's oil exports via the Chad-Cameroon pipeline are managed transparently and for the good of all Chadians. In 2003 and early 2004, the United States also explored work with a network of individuals from the judicial system. Additional efforts have been made in the areas of media capacity building and the training of Chadian military forces.

The United States addressed human rights abuses committed in 2003 by protesting the public executions of nine convicted murderers in November and arguing that due process had not been followed. The executions, however, proceeded as planned. The United States had a more positive response in opposing the arrest of two newspaper editors in February. The editors, who had been arrested for criticizing a relative of President Deby, were released from prison with a reduced fine following extensive international and local pressure. The United States also raised concerns

over the closing of a public radio station in October, arguing that the closure did not follow standard procedures. The station was reopened in December.

The United States actively works with members of the media to promote high standards of journalism. In September, the Embassy arranged a one-week workshop in southern Chad, led by an American journalist. The workshop focused on reporting techniques and balanced reporting, attracting more than 20 local journalists. The Embassy also sent a locally hired employee to a three-week training session in the United States to learn how to work more effectively with local media contacts. Despite reduced funding levels, the establishment of a private radio station in northern Chad is currently under way.

In an effort to address widespread problems within the justice system, the United States explored ways to promote needed improvements and participated in Chad's "States General of Justice" in June, which examined the general state of the judicial system and possible solutions. Steps were also taken to launch an informal network of judges and lawyers to both identify concerns about the system and explore ways the United States could support reform.

To further promote key human rights-related issues in Chad, the United States actively promoted the International Visitor program. Chadians participated in seminars on regional stability and conflict resolution, good governance, developing youth leadership skills, communication and technology, and the role of women in agricultural policy.

To help improve the professionalism of the Chadian military and consequently address human rights abuses, Chad participated in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. Several Chadian military officials attended training in the United States, and communications equipment and training were

provided in Chad. The United States also provided training for several dozen Chadians in de-mining techniques to address nearly one million unexploded landmines in northern Chad.

The United States made more limited efforts to promote human rights in other areas, such as encouraging respect for the rights of women (including the prevention of female genital mutilation), promoting religious freedom and strengthening workers rights, largely through smaller programs. U.S. officials also worked regularly with religious and labor leaders to obtain information on local issues.

COMOROS

The Union of Comoros is an emerging democracy that was ruled by President Azali Assoumani, who took power in a coup in April 1999, and subsequently was elected democratically in April 2002 presidential elections described by international observers as free and fair. The country consists of three islands (Grande Comore, Anjouan and Moheli) and claims a fourth (Mayotte), which is governed by France. Legislative elections, scheduled for March 2003, did not take place during the year. A December 2003 ministerial meeting resolved the few remaining issues pertaining to national reconciliation. Among the issues decided at the reconciliation talks was the date for legislative assembly elections, after which a committee will be formed to draft a new constitution. Local elections for the three islands are scheduled to take place in March 2004 with national elections scheduled for April 2004. The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. Prison conditions remained poor. The Government restricted freedom of religion, and security forces reportedly continued to threaten Christians. Societal discrimination against women and Christians continued to be serious problems. There were some instances of forced child labor.

The United States relies on a combination of vigorous diplomacy and modest financial assistance to achieve its human rights objectives in Comoros – encouraging national reconciliation and promoting human rights. Foreign Operations Appropriations Act Section 508 sanctions against Comoros, which had been in place since 1999, were lifted in December. The Embassy in Port Louis, Mauritius, mounted an aggressive campaign to send embassy personnel on a monthly basis to the country to work directly with the Government and to encourage stability and the development of a democratic framework. The Ambassador discussed professionalization of security forces and division of responsibilities between the internal and external security forces at the highest levels of the national and regional governments.

The Embassy worked in close cooperation with government representatives and neighboring embassies to increase security in the country through technical assistance in immigration techniques, customs practices and drug interdiction efforts. As a result of Section 508 sanctions being lifted, the Embassy focused on political and economic stability, counter-terrorism and education, all against a backdrop of furthering awareness of human rights and the functioning of democratic institutions.

In 2003, the Embassy administered Self Help and Democracy and Human Rights Fund projects totaling \$35,800 in the Union of Comoros. Eight projects aiding community-based education and women's empowerment were funded.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is only just beginning to emerge from a bloody, chaotic war that claimed more than three million lives. With the assistance of the international community, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue resulted in the formation of a government of national

reconciliation, but the country is far from reunited or reconciled. Rather, the echoes of the war continue to haunt the country in the form of myriad victims of widespread human rights violations. The extent of this tragedy is only now beginning to emerge. Women and children have been – and continue to be – the most frequently and horribly brutalized. Rape as a weapon of war was freely wielded in the DRC, and both women and children were victims. Both groups also were kidnapped and forced to serve as child soldiers or sex slaves. In some parts of the country all pretense of social order collapsed, and many institutions – particularly of justice – remain moribund. The transitional government is preparing the country for democratic elections in 2005, the first such elections in the DRC in more than 40 years. There is also progress, albeit halting, on the problem of child soldiers. Police remain unprofessional, corrupt, under-paid (often unpaid) and under-equipped. Magistrates and lawyers are in similar straits.

In areas under central government control, the Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements, serious problems remained. Security forces committed unlawful killings, torture, beatings, acts of rape, extortion and other abuses, largely with impunity. Prison conditions in hundreds of local detention facilities, both legal and illegal, remained harsh and life threatening; however, conditions in some of the larger, centralized prisons improved. Arbitrary arrest and prolonged pre-trial detention remained problems. Before the formation of the transition government in July 2003, the Government supplied and coordinated operations with Mai Mai, who committed numerous, serious abuses, including killings, rape, torture, the kidnapping of civilians and the recruitment of children as combatants. The Government restricted worker rights. Child labor, the use of child soldiers by the Armed Forces and child prostitution remained problems. The human rights record in areas not under central government control remained extremely poor, and rebel authorities continued to commit numerous, seri-

ous abuses, particularly in the east, including North and South Kivu and the Ituri district of Orientale Province. These abuses included deliberate large-scale killings, the burning of villages, disappearances, torture, rape, dismemberment, mutilation, looting, extortion, and robbery. Prison conditions, particularly in underground prisons, were harsh and life-threatening. Arbitrary arrest and detention continued to be problems. The judiciary continued to be controlled and manipulated by the ruling authorities and subject to corruption. Rebel groups severely restricted freedom of speech, assembly, association and movement in areas under their control, and respect for religious freedom remained poor. There were attacks against local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in rebel-held areas, and some NGO personnel and UN peacekeepers were killed.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy reinforces the importance of democracy and human rights. When President Bush and Secretary of State Powell met with President Kabila in November 2003, they emphasized U.S. support for the transitional government and the need for continued progress on political reforms, security sector reform and human rights concerns as a critical element in the transition. In December, visiting U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao met with President Kabila to underscore the need to expand efforts to end child soldiering in the Congo. The United States has repeatedly stressed to President Kabila the importance of adhering to the elections schedule and ensuring that the Congolese people are well prepared for elections. The United States served as a member of the International Committee to Assist the Transition (CIAT). The Embassy also worked closely with the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congolese Independent Elections Commission to develop the most transparent and effective system possible for conducting elections. The United States continues to work with appropriate Congolese ministries, such as Human Rights, Social Affairs and Defense, to encourage the

development of a national Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) plan. The Embassy worked with local NGOs and women's groups to begin developing a series of programs aimed at assisting women, particularly the victims of rape. Embassy staff also visited 11 provinces throughout the year and held discussions with local officials, NGOs, church organizations and members of the local media to underscore the importance of democratic elections and basic human rights. The Embassy used its relationship with government officials to encourage the transitional government to establish an inter-agency working group to discuss human rights issues.

Through its implementing partners, the U.S. Agency for International Development delivered \$1.5 million worth of programming targeting democracy-building and assistance to vulnerable groups. The United States granted \$450,000 to Global Rights to provide support for vulnerable groups, transitional justice and democratic transition. In July 2003, Global Rights helped a Kinshasa-based organization of indigenous peoples to complete an investigation of the human rights situation of the Twa (pygmies), following the atrocities committed against them. Also in July, Global Rights organized a special expanded edition of its monthly forum on transitional justice. These regular meetings provide the best opportunity for dialogue between Congolese rights groups, UN agencies and representatives of development agencies and diplomatic missions. Global Rights also underwrites the work of the Strategic Law Group, which reviewed Congo's transitional constitution to identify the key legislation required by it. In November and December of 2003, Global Rights hosted a series of consultations in Lubumbashi, Goma, Bukavu, Kisangani and Kindu to apprise civil society leaders of pending legislation, distribute copies of proposed laws and educate these groups on how they can make their voices heard in the legislative process.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) received \$1.1 million to build political parties and support the electoral process. In 2003, NDI created a resource center focused on teaching consensus building-skills and encouraging dialogue among political leaders, information sharing and improved communication between politicians and constituents. They sponsored a series of political "town hall" meetings in Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Kisangani, bringing together political leaders, civil society and interested persons. IFES managed resource centers in Lubumbashi, Kinshasa and Kikwit, offering reference materials on political education to the general public. IFES also produces "Depêches," a weekly bulletin sent to more than 85 civil society partners in the DRC's 11 provinces. Finally, IFES provides technical support to the Independent Elections Commission and formed an election law task group to produce recommendations facilitating a new election law.

To address the child soldier issue, President Kabila issued in 2003 a decree banning the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and the Congolese military is identifying and preparing to release these children on a priority basis. Militias, especially the largest group, the Mai Mai, are doing likewise. The process is haphazard, however, because the Government has not yet produced a coherent national plan for DDR. The lack of such a plan has kept international assistance to ex-combatants from flowing into the DRC. The Embassy, closely coordinating with the CIAT, World Bank and others, has urged the Government to expeditiously complete the national plan and appoint a national coordinator, to enable the DDR process to truly get under way.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Republic of Congo is ruled by a government in which most of the decision-making authority is vested directly in the executive branch. Denis Sassou-Nguesso was elected President in March 2002, and in May and June of that year legislative elections were held for the Senate and the National Assembly in all jurisdictions, except for the Pool region where most of the 1997-2002 civil war and instability occurred. Both the presidential and legislative elections were determined “not to contradict the will of the people” by independent monitors. In March 2003 the Government signed a peace accord with the rebel forces known as Ninjas of Pasteur Ntumi, and the country has been relatively stable with a fragile calm since then. Internally displaced persons are returning to the Pool region, the area used by Ntumi’s Ninjas as their base. At the end of 2003 about 2,000 displaced persons from Pool remained in Brazzaville.

For most of 2003 and early 2004 the government’s human rights record improved but still remained poor. There were reports that security forces were responsible for extrajudicial killings, as well as summary executions, rapes, beatings, physical abuse of detainees and citizens, arbitrary arrest and detention, looting, solicitation of bribes and theft. Prison conditions were poor, and the judiciary was unable to ensure transparent and expeditious trials. Rebel militias also committed serious human rights abuses, though there were fewer reports after the signing of the March 2003 Peace Accord.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in the Republic of the Congo promotes respect for human rights. U.S. programs with the Government, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations endeavor to strengthen respect for human rights.

To promote good governance, the United States provided a grant to a local NGO to conduct seminars on anti-corruption education for regional

government officials and administrators. Through demarches, discussions with the Government and cooperation with the international community, the United States continued to stress the need for the Government to increase transparency in accounting for oil revenues and other public funds. The Government organized an Anti-Corruption Day, attended by local NGOs, Ministers and other government officials to emphasize the need for honesty in the public and private sectors. The United States supplied information to the Congolese president’s anti-corruption office on conventions and steps taken by the African Union and Global Coalition on Africa on this issue. The United States, in connection with the Corporate Council on Africa, held a two-day speaker program in April followed by a workshop in May to address the issue of best business practices, accountability and transparency as they related to the country’s eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

In order to build general awareness of human rights among the population, the United States focused its efforts on youth, women and minorities. The United States used the Democracy and Human Rights Fund for programs on the rights of key minority groups such as the Twa (Pygmies) and prevention of trafficking in children. Through the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative, the United States supported funding of a local NGO to assist with scholarships for girls and girls’ HIV/AIDS education. The success of this program resulted in an Appreciation Award of \$143,750 in special additional funding in November 2003. Other grants were awarded to educate the Twa about their rights and protecting their environment and traditional ways for future generations for anti-corruption seminars, for refugee assistance, for job training for women (particularly abused women) and orphans, for food production, sheltering and schools supplies for internally displaced persons of the Pool, and trafficking in persons projects. Grants have amounted to about \$390,000 over three years.

To promote worker rights, the United States

helped fund a two-year regional initiative by the International Labor Organization's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor with the goal of demobilizing and rehabilitating child soldiers and reintegrating them into their former communities. U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao traveled to the region in mid-December to officially launch the program.

Through dialogue and military training exchanges sponsored by the Department of Defense (DOD), the United States encouraged greater military discipline, professionalism and respect for human rights. A high commission was established in 2002 for the re-integration of former rebel militia members into society and into the military using World Bank (WB) funds. Some reintegration continued in 2003 under WB funding, and a new UN Development Program Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program is planned for 2004 with European Union funding to address the Ninja combatants from the March 2003 accords. Part of the March 2003 peace accords included a commitment from President Sassou that former Ninja militia would receive amnesty if they laid down their arms. In addition, the United States continued to support a DOD-funded English-language training program for military officers intended to facilitate other types of training.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The September 2002 coup attempt that grew into a rebellion threw Côte d'Ivoire into its worst political crisis since independence in 1960. The fighting and subsequently established cease-fire line divided the country geographically and politically. Both the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the rebel forces, which control the northern half of the country, committed serious human rights abuses. The past year witnessed fitful progress toward national reconciliation and improvement in the human rights situation. Nonetheless, the Government and rebel forces' human rights records remained poor. At the beginning of 2003, the Government and New Forces (NF) committed

serious abuses, and there were credible reports of pro-government death squad activity, extrajudicial killings and disappearances. Security forces frequently resorted to lethal force to combat widespread violent crime and sometimes beat detainees and prisoners. The Government generally failed to bring perpetrators of most abuses to justice, and members of security forces operated with relative impunity. Prison conditions improved but remained harsh and sometimes life threatening. Arbitrary arrests and detention were common; numerous persons, including opposition members, journalists and military officers, were detained for long periods without trial.

The judiciary did not ensure due process. Police harassment and abuse of non-citizen African immigrants continued. Privacy rights continued to be restricted severely. The Government restricted freedom of speech, assembly, movement and the press. Discrimination and violence against women, abuse of children and female genital mutilation remained serious problems. There were incidents of violent ethnic confrontation; societal discrimination based on religion and ethnicity remained a problem. Child labor as well as some reports of forced child labor and trafficking in children and women also persisted.

The NF's human rights record was extremely poor. The rebels in the north summarily executed persons, killed numerous civilians, arbitrarily arrested and detained persons, and conducted arbitrary ad hoc justice. The rebels severely limited freedom of movement within and from the territory they held and forcibly conscripted persons, including many child soldiers. Rebels and mercenaries committed particularly grave abuses in the western region of the country and in the north; under various rebel sub-leader warlords serious abuses were committed.

The promotion of human rights, including a well-formulated human rights strategy, is one of the highest priorities for the United States in Côte d'Ivoire. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy furthers the established national reconcil-

iation process, strengthens civil society, and reduces the sense of impunity that prevails throughout the country. The long-term objective is to help Côte d'Ivoire consolidate its democratic multi-party system in which all Ivoirians have a voice and which is characterized by good governance, respect for fundamental human rights, an independent judiciary and a strong civil society. To that end, the United States has focused on promoting implementation of the January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Accords (LMA), which largely ended the fighting and framed the key issues that need to be resolved politically if a stable, peaceful Côte d'Ivoire is to emerge from the violence.

To press for LMA implementation as the basis for reconciliation on which greater democracy can be built and human rights insured, U.S. officials have maintained an extensive dialogue with the Government and all political parties and movements. The Ambassador is a key member of the UN Monitoring Committee for LMA implementation and regularly pushes the Ivoirian President, the rebel NF and all other political parties to implement LMA as the way to reconciliation and to free and fair elections in 2005. U.S. officials frequently lobbied the Government, civil society

representatives and others on the need for enhanced protection of human rights and encouraged efforts to build democratic institutions. The United States also issued strong public statements on human rights, which received widespread local press coverage.

To help build compromise and understanding in divided and crisis-ridden Côte d'Ivoire, in July 2003 the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the Embassy organized and sponsored a five-day "Compromise and Consensus Building for Sustainable Political Stability" workshop conducted by three internationally known experts. In conjunction with the Ministry of National Reconciliation, the United States invited representatives from the political parties and the NF to the workshop to teach them conflict prevention techniques and to identify potential areas of collaboration. In the same vein, in January 2004, PAS held a conference on Martin Luther King's non-violent philosophy and its application to the Ivoirian crisis in which more than 70 religious leaders, politicians and journalists took part.

Concerning tolerance and reconciliation, in



November 2003, PAS hosted an Iftaar dinner for Ivoirian Islamic leaders. The Ambassador and other embassy officials used the occasion to discuss with the Ivoirian guests the openness of American society, its thriving Muslim community, and the cohabitation of diverse religion communities in the United States.

To add further impetus to the peace process and the protection of human rights, the U.S. has secured funding for a program to strengthen political parties and support national reconciliation through a \$400,000 grant to support the National Democratic Institute in three major activities: small scale, multi-party fora to work on accountability of elected officials and citizen rights and responsibilities, skills training in negotiating and conflict resolution to strengthen capacity and reduce polarization, and development of electronic and print civic education materials.

The United States used the International Visitor program to broaden the experience of Ivoirians who can make a difference on democracy and human rights. The United States hosted visitors to programs on “Women’s Political Empowerment,” “Transparency and Good Governance,” “Religion and the Community,” “Educating Youth for Future Leadership” and “Humanizing HIV/AIDS Education.” For the coming 2004-2005 cycle, the Embassy put forward first rate candidates for programs on “U.S. Presidential Elections – The Primaries,” “Human Rights Issues,” “Role of the Media in the United States,” “Regional Stability and Conflict Resolution,” and “U.S. Society and Political Process: A Project for Emerging Muslim Leaders.”

In 2003, the United States worked with the Ministry of Justice on defining areas of judicial reform that could be initiated with Fiscal Year 2003 Economic Support Funds. Recently, however, the European Union has come forward with about \$15 million for a thorough reform of the system. The U.S. Democracy and Human Rights

Fund (DHRF) aided the Ivoirian Bar Association to extend free legal advice to people who otherwise would have no access to legal assistance.

In February, PAS sponsored a round table discussion on the rule of law, separation of powers and the importance of having an independent judiciary. Participants in the discussion included the Minister of Internal Security, a justice from the Supreme Court, Ministry of Justice officials, law professors, law students and others.

The local news media have often worked to aggravate grievances and inflame tensions in Côte d’Ivoire, both before and after the outbreak of rebellion in September 2002. To make media reporting more impartial and balanced, the United States is using a \$436,000 Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) grant for a multi-layered media project, implemented by Internews and focused on projects to de-politicize the media, using a range of media improvement techniques: conducting management training sessions for committed media outlets; arranging an advertiser fair to assist program participants; providing a full-time print journalism trainer to assist in improving news coverage; training staff of targeted print media outlets to move reporters toward international journalism standards; mentoring and providing organizational assistance to journalists; professional watchdog organization; and organizing and conducting a town hall-style panel discussion series (the “International Standard Series”) on important topics to boost the professionalism of local journalists and increase awareness of the role of responsible journalism.

In another project to strengthen the media and use local radio to reduce tensions and conflicts, the United States invested DHRF money in a community radio civic education campaign. A well known Ivoirian non-governmental organization (NGO), the Study and Research Group on Democracy and Social and Economic Development made broadcast recordings of key laws in 10 local languages, trained community radio announcers in the fundamental laws and use

of the prepared cassettes, and distributed the cassettes to other human rights and democracy organizations, educators and activists.

During the year, the United States again emphasized human rights issues that affect women and children. The United States allocated \$22,000 in DHRF monies to a “Network of African Women Ministers” project to improve girls’ access to and retention in schools and an additional \$14,000 to sustain Family Friends, a local NGO, in its campaign against the mistreatment of women and children in a remote part of Côte d’Ivoire. PAS continued its support of the Women Leaders’ Caucus – numbering 156 ministers, parliamentarians, businesswomen, lawyers and teachers – which is working to strengthen the peace-making efforts of women’s groups, increase the number of women elected to public office, enhance women’s roles in civil society and play a role in negotiating an end to the country’s crisis.

The U.S. Agency for International Development, the International Labor Organization, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the U.S. Chocolate Manufacturers Association conducted the last major study on child labor in Côte d’Ivoire in 2001. The survey research revealed that fully 96.7 percent (604,500 of 625,100) of children employed in the cocoa sector had a kinship relation with the farmer. In 2002, the ILO launched several studies on child labor and trafficking. Early findings revealed that in addition to child labor on farms, there were children working in artisan mines, construction, market places, the trades and the urban informal sector, especially in the south of the country.

Winrock International, an Embassy-supported American NGO, sponsored a November 2003 seminar on the “Problem of Child Labor and the Alternatives in Education in Côte d’Ivoire.” At the seminar, Minister of National Education Michel Amani said, “It is parents’ poverty that prevents children from going to school. To remedy that, the United States must favor equality among all the children and make school free and

compulsory.” The “Class” project (organized by Winrock International) aims to reduce child labor throughout the world. A pilot project, which focuses on areas where children regularly work on farms rather than go to school, is being carried out in Ehououguie, near Agboville in southern Côte d’Ivoire.

DJIBOUTI

Djibouti is a republic with a strong presidency and a weak legislature. Since the end of the civil war of the mid-1990s, Djibouti has seen a general decline in human rights abuses. The country however still lacks the institutional safeguards to prevent a return to widespread systemic abuses, and the Government has not yet shown the political will to hold people in positions of power to the rule of law. The Government’s human rights record is poor, and government security forces continue to commit serious abuses with impunity. Opposition groups face harassment, and through explicit and implicit actions, the Government limits citizens’ rights to change their government. The Government restricts unions, and harasses and intimidates their leaders. Child labor is also a serious issue.

Ismael Omar Guelleh won the presidential election with 74 percent of the vote in 1999. His party, the People’s Rally for Progress (RPP), has ruled the country since independence in 1977. President Guelleh made a working visit to the White House in January 2003. The 2002 legislative elections were openly contested and the RPP party coalition won all 65 seats, mainly because of a system of “winner take all” by districts. Opposition candidates won around 37 percent of the vote and made claims of massive fraud. The Government has indicated that it will hold first-ever municipal elections in October 2004 and the next presidential election is scheduled for 2005. The judiciary is weakened by the presence of corrupt judges and is influenced by the executive. Much of the country’s wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a small elite, who also dominate politics.

The United States has entered into a close partnership with Djibouti in the Global War on Terrorism. Because Djibouti is the closest geographic point between the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, it is a natural choke point for Red Sea and Gulf of Aden naval traffic as well as an ideal port for trade between the regions. Djibouti hosts the only U.S. military base in sub-Saharan Africa.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Djibouti encourages respect for basic human rights, including labor rights, and supports democratization and legal reform. The United States has worked with the Djiboutian Government to overcome its legacy of human rights abuses. In a number of individual areas, the Embassy has coordinated with other donor nations and UN agencies to bring concerns about human rights to the attention of Djiboutian authorities. The Government has often responded positively to these moves. All training of Djiboutian military, police and other security forces by the Anti-Terrorist Activities program, the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa and other U.S. civilian and military organizations is accompanied by specific training on human rights. The Embassy advocated the removal of corrupt justices.

The Djiboutian Human Rights League received a Democracy and Human Rights Fund grant in 2003 to examine the penal code. Democratic and economic reform in Djibouti is the key to a successful long-term partnership between the United States and Djibouti. The United States will continue to ensure that support for progress is key in all public and private encounters with government officials.

Over the last several years, officials at all levels from the Embassy in Djibouti and regional labor officers from the Embassy in Addis Ababa have protested the Government's suppression of the labor movement. The Embassy publicly voiced U.S. concerns about real and potential human rights violations associated with the

Government's policy of "refoulement" or expulsion of clandestine and undocumented workers in September 2003.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema has ruled Equatorial Guinea since seizing power in a 1979 military coup d'état and continues to dominate all sectors of government. Obiang's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea remains overwhelmingly dominant as does the majority Fang ethnic group and Obiang's Mongomo sub-clan. Obiang was re-elected in a December 2002 election marred by extensive fraud and intimidation.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea's human rights record remained poor, although there were some improvements in a few areas. Citizens' ability to change their government peacefully remained restricted. Security forces committed numerous abuses, including the use of torture and excessive force. There were reports of physical abuse of prisoners and suspects, arbitrary arrest and detention, and incommunicado detention. The judicial system was not independent. The Government severely restricted freedoms of speech and of the press; however, freedom of speech continued to improve marginally during the year. There were no effective domestic human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As such, the United States is working with international NGOs in the education and health sectors to strengthen civil society.

The expansion of democracy and the promotion of human rights remain the U.S.' primary objectives in Equatorial Guinea. The United States made efforts to achieve these objectives by actively engaging with government, opposition, media and community representatives. To increase progress toward these objectives, a U.S. Embassy reopened in Malabo. In 2003 and early 2004 public diplomacy programs aided the development of Equatorial Guinea's historically weak civil society. Embassy staff encouraged U.S. companies' cooperative involvement to reinforce

the U.S. message on the importance of transparency, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

In 2003, U.S. efforts were principally focused on the re-opening of Embassy Malabo. The October re-inauguration of this small facility was a tangible symbol of the U.S. commitment to concrete democratic development in Equatorial Guinea. A single officer, who acts as Chargé d'Affaires in the Ambassador's absence, staffs the Embassy. The U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon concurrently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea. Embassy Yaounde personnel have continued to be actively engaged in all substantive and administrative areas, including the promotion of human rights.

The new embassy provides an outlet for more vigorous and continuous on-the-ground promotion of respect for human rights and democracy. The Chargé d'Affaires immediately assumed an important, publicly visible role in regularly and directly communicating U.S. concerns to local government officials. In-country representation allowed the State Department to observe and report local activities directly and accurately. Subsequently, U.S. officials were able to address issues in Equatorial Guinea in a more precise and expedient manner.

Prior to the embassy's opening, the United States leveraged the promise of a new diplomatic presence to encourage the country's leaders to make progress on human rights. As a result of this action, more than 30 prisoners were released, prison conditions improved and prison visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross were institutionalized.

Before and after the re-opening of the new embassy facility, Embassy Yaounde staff made regular visits to the island and mainland. U.S. officials also held public meetings with members of Equatorial Guinea's small opposition movement to address their concerns. The Ambassador and other officers have an ongoing dialogue with

officials on the need for the development of strong civil society institutions and respect for justice and human rights. In meetings on March 5 and 15, 2004, the Ambassador raised concerns with the President and high-level ministers over transparency, good governance and fair judicial practices and continued to condemn torture and harsh prison practices. At the Ambassador's urging, it appears that President Obiang is preparing to conduct a free and transparent trial of alleged coup plotters apprehended in March 2004. In meetings with President Obiang, the Ambassador expressed concern regarding the expulsion of non-Equatorial Guinea citizens following the recent coup attempt. Obiang appeared willing to take steps to redress the Ambassador's concerns.

The United States continued efforts to actively encourage effective and transparent management of the country's oil wealth for equitable social and economic development. High-level officials from the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs met President Obiang to discuss how Equatorial Guinea can properly channel its oil wealth toward improvements in areas such as police professionalism, health and education.

In meetings with high-level government officials, U.S. officials pressed for improved transparency in public finance and the management of the oil sector. Results have been forthcoming: Following up on high-level statements of commitment to transparency in the oil and gas sector, Equatorial Guinea signed on to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

U.S. embassy officials based in Yaounde and Malabo maintained a positive working relationship with U.S. oil companies in Equatorial Guinea and have encouraged cooperative efforts between the companies and the Government. Beyond health and environmental assistance programs, these companies act as positive role models for how transparent employers operate, with

clear hiring policies as well as good labor relations. Furthermore, the companies have reinforced U.S. messages on transparency, rule of law and human rights.

Embassy Yaounde's Public Affairs Section organized a seminar aimed at enhancing the professional skills of journalists in Equatorial Guinea, in which 25 journalists from both public and private media took part. Private press is nearly nonexistent, and *La Gaceta* (printed in Spain) has a circulation of 2,000. The embassy's Information Officer met with the Minister of Information and the Director General of the National Radio and TV in Equatorial Guinea to chart out new and better ways of collaboration. Embassy officers also publicly met with members of the Association of the Press of Equatorial Guinea (ASOPGE), an organization that acts as a press association and produces its own journals. Although it has been subjected to heavy government pressure in the past, ASOPGE representatives now report that a limited relaxation of press restrictions has allowed the press to occasionally criticize government social services.

ERITREA

Eritrea became independent in 1993 when citizens voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ethiopia. However, Eritrea's constitution has not been implemented and the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice is the only legal party. Unfortunately, progress toward democracy in Eritrea suffered a major setback in 2001, when the Government arrested prominent persons who voiced opposition to government policy and shut down the nascent free press. Elections, which had been scheduled for December 2001, have been postponed indefinitely. Two Foreign Service National employees of Embassy Asmara have been held incommunicado without formal charges since October 11, 2001. The Government continued to seriously restrict the religious freedom of non-sanctioned religious groups. A local journalist who submitted dispatches to the Voice of America was detained in

2003, and is still being held in a military camp. These government actions have halted or reversed progress toward realizing Eritrea's self-stated goals of establishing a multi-party democracy with a free press and a market-based economy.

The Government's human rights record remained poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention remain a problem. The Constitution has not been implemented, National Assembly elections have not been held and a multi-party system does not exist. The judiciary is subject to executive control. The independent press remains closed, effectively restricting freedom of speech and the press. Hundreds of individuals have been arrested for practicing their faith and many have been subjected to torture and isolation in an attempt to force them to recant their religious beliefs.

The United States maintains an active dialogue with the Government of the State of Eritrea on human rights and democracy. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Eritrea encourages Eritrea to return to the path of democratization, implement its constitution and allow a genuinely free press, true religious freedom, a multi-party political system and free elections.

The worrisome refusal by the Government to act on concerns that the United States and others have raised about its commitment to democratization and human rights has led to limits on some plans for broader cooperation. The United States has made clear to the Government that increased cooperation with the United States depends on its demonstrated improvement with respect to democracy and human rights.

The U.S. strategy also entails efforts to extend access to information throughout the country, through encouraging use of the Internet, the embassy's Information Resource Center ("The American Center") in Asmara, including its free Internet access, and Embassy-sponsored "American Corners" in libraries outside the country's capital as tools to promote democracy and appreciation of human rights through greater

access to information. The strategy is also designed to contribute to economic and political devolution so that citizens can exercise more control over their affairs. The United States is also working to strengthen civil society and community-based organizations.

Despite strong government resistance to what is perceived as foreign meddling, with carefully targeted efforts, the United States can point to important accomplishments to promote democracy and human rights. For example, in the absence of a free press, the Internet has become one of the few means for a small but growing number of Eritreans to have access to independent views and information. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which was instrumental in bringing the Internet to Eritrea (the last country in Africa to have it), is providing technical assistance to increase the capacity and reliability of Eritrea's telecommunications link to the rest of the world in order to expand the availability of cheap, efficient, reliable Internet access. In 2003, USAID funded consultants to develop a technical assessment of the network operations center, which is responsible for managing Eritrea's international Internet link. USAID also funded consultants to assist Eritrea's development of a strong legal and regulatory regime for telecommunications. The Public Affairs Section is also conducting Internet training classes.

In an effort to build support for democratic reform and human rights among opinion leaders, the Embassy holds regular functions for alumni of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs to facilitate interactions among these influential Eritreans, and promotes discussion of democracy and its principles through speaking engagements featuring embassy staff, the U.S. Speakers Program, the "Africa Journal," the International Visitor and Voluntary Visitor programs, and direct contacts with government officials.

The United States conducts informational outreach in order to promote U.S. policies and values, to introduce Eritreans to the U.S. experience

of democratic governance, to foster familiarity with American culture and to enhance mutual understanding between the countries. This outreach extends to libraries and educational institutions and promotes increased use of the embassy's well-equipped Information Resource Center as a source of information about U.S. policies, values and culture. In 2003, in partnership with the authorities of an important regional center with a predominantly Muslim population, the United States established the first American Corner at a local municipal library. The local Muslim community extensively patronizes this facility and its resources.

The United States supports activities that devolve political power and economic resources by providing resources and expertise to promote the development of community-based organizations (CBOs) and complementary skills and understanding for local government authorities to work effectively with CBOs. In 2003, training programs on management of CBOs were provided to more than 20 organizations including parent-teacher organizations and water associations in 23 Eritrean communities.

ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Government continues its transition from a centralized system of government to ethnic federalism. However, bureaucratic power-sharing arrangements between the national and regional governments, civil conflict, poverty and unfamiliarity with democratic concepts complicated this process. Ethiopia saw some improvements in the area of human rights, but serious problems remained. Federal and local police forces lacked proper training and continued to employ excessive force, resulting at times in some unlawful killings. The Government continued to arrest and detain some persons arbitrarily, particularly those associated with opposition groups. The judiciary remained overburdened and lacked capacity, resulting in lengthy pre-trial detentions. Societal discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS continued. Trafficking in

persons remained a serious problem, as well as societal discrimination and violence against women.

The U.S. strategy to promote human rights and democracy is building the capacity of host country government and community leaders. Workshops, seminars and other training sessions are important elements of this approach. The Ambassador engaged government officials, including Ministers, privately at times, to seek clarification on government actions that could infringe upon human rights. With respect to human rights, U.S. embassy officials consulted with host government officials, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), opposition political party members and other embassies to identify constructive means of intervention. The embassy's website posts annual human rights, trafficking in persons, child labor and related human rights reports and also highlights the Ambassador's speeches, activities and press releases which include human rights themes.

To call attention to problems of ethnic violence, the Embassy engaged the Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure that proper investigations were conducted. After a series of deadly ethnic clashes in the Fugnido refugee camp in Gambella region in 2002, the Embassy took up the matter with officials of the Ethiopian refugee agency and the UNHCR and called for a transparent investigation into the camp violence. The ensuing investigation resulted in the arrests of four regional government officials, who were charged with inciting violence, and 25 refugees and local residents. In a related incident in which 32 members of one ethnic group in Gambella were forced off a bus by police officials of another ethnic group and subsequently killed, close monitoring of the case by the Embassy helped ensure that ten regional government officials, including four police officers, were arrested in connection with the killings. The Ambassador sent a consular/security team to Gambella when ethnic violence broke out in December, and the Ambassador and embassy officials have continued to engage the Government as this latest incident continued.



The Embassy is supporting the Ethiopian Federal Police in its efforts to overhaul itself into an effective, professional force. The Embassy obtained a \$500,000 grant from the State Department's Bureau of International Law Enforcement and Narcotics to provide curriculum development training to federal police instructors and to launch a community-policing project. Officials from the U.S. Department of Justice conducted a week long survey of some of the most pressing needs of the police force. Forty instructors completed a two-week course taught by two law enforcement professionals on developing a curriculum that emphasized practical applications of police skills rather than theory. In addition, the Embassy sponsored capacity-building training for approximately 16 local law enforcement officials in the area of criminal investigation, held at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Gaborone, Botswana.

To help build the capacity of Ethiopia's judicial system, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) continued to fund a program conducted by the Federal Supreme Court. During 2003, 1,244 High Court and Supreme Court justices completed the training. More than 3,000 judges have benefited from this training since the program's inception.

The embassy's Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) provided financial support totaling \$70,000 to six organizations during Fiscal Year 2003. One beneficiary was the Ethiopian Bar Association, which used its DHRF grant to support a pro-bono legal clinic. Nearly 400 people benefited from the work of this clinic in 2003. Another DHRF beneficiary was Hope for the Horn, which focused its efforts on providing human rights education in the Somali region by translating the Universal Declaration on Human Rights into the Somali language, and holding discussion groups on how it impacts people's lives.

To build awareness of democratic concepts, the Embassy hosted four speakers to address issues of democracy and the role of universities, minori-

ty rights, conflict resolution and NGO management. An embassy-sponsored journalism instructor taught a two-day course to local journalists on professional ethics and investigative reporting. A visiting State Department official from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor spoke to a group of Addis Ababa University law students about the work of that bureau in promoting human rights worldwide. The Embassy also sent 20 Ethiopians to America on International Visitor programs that focused on such issues as the U.S. judicial system, investigative journalism and accountability in government and business. One beneficiary of the State Department's Voluntary Visitor program in 2003 was the Acting Secretary General of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, who used his visit to meet with Members of Congress and international human rights organizations. Another beneficiary of the Voluntary Visitor program was the Vice Minister of Justice, who learned more about judicial training programs and crime prevention mechanisms, as well as legal issues regarding NGOs.

To promote political freedoms, the Embassy, working with other embassies, engaged local officials and the National Election Board (NEB) about complaints from opposition political parties about harassment of their members by ruling party members. An embassy representative traveled to the Amhara and Southern regions to investigate allegations of illegal detentions, harassment and torture of opposition party supporters by local ruling party cadres. The visit resulted in the subsequent release from detention of three opposition party members, and a promise by local officials to investigate the incidents. An embassy representative also visited local district bipartisan committees established to resolve disputes between government and opposition parties. After the visit, when it became apparent that no reports about any of the incidents had been forwarded to the NEB, and no actions had been taken, the Embassy called upon the NEB to produce the reports and take appropriate action against perpetrators. A letter sent by the U.S. and other embassies to the Ethiopian Government

asking it to fulfill its human rights reporting requirements to the United Nations met with a subsequent commitment from the Government to do just that.

The Embassy supported efforts to encourage respect for the rights of women and children. The Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center used a DHRF grant to create awareness among residents of a rural community about the harmful effects of traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM). As a result of its workshops, nearly 35 couples have spoken out publicly against FGM.

U.S. Labor Department representatives met with leaders of government and private labor organizations in the country, with a view to implementing a range of programs to raise awareness and fight discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

To combat the trafficking of women and children from Ethiopia to the Middle East, the United States continued to oversee a \$383,000 State Department grant to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to educate high-school students in Addis Ababa and other localities about the dangers of trafficking in persons. IOM experienced some delays in implementing this project, due to the lack of availability of teachers to undergo project-related training.

To curb the incidence of illegal adoptions, the Ambassador and embassy officers pressed the Government to lift its suspension on licensing adoption agencies. The efforts bore fruit when the Government issued licenses to two adoption agencies, thus discouraging efforts of illegal adoption brokers.

GABON

Gabon is a republic dominated by a strong presidency. The Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) has remained in power since 1968 and has circumscribed political choice. PDG leader El Hadj Omar Bongo, President since 1967, was reelected for a seven-year term in a 1998 election marred by irregularities. In July of 2003, Parliament passed a constitutional amendment facilitating a presidency for life.

The Government of Gabon's human rights record remained poor. Although there were some improvements, serious problems remained. Security forces reportedly beat and tortured prisoners and detainees, arbitrary arrest and detention were problems, and the judiciary remained subject to government influence. Forced labor, child labor and trafficking – particularly in children – remained problems. Gabon does not yet have a law specifically outlawing trafficking in persons and this has impeded the investigation and prosecution of cases.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Gabon has made the problem of child trafficking a high priority. The Ambassador and embassy personnel have continued to approach government officials at all levels, including parliamentary leaders, to persuade them of the need for concrete measures. The United States has also maintained close contacts with activists and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community concerned with this issue. The United States funded the efforts of the NGO Anti-Slavery International to hold capacity-building seminars on child trafficking prevention in March 2003 in Gabon. A local attorney active in this area was sent to a U.S.-sponsored program on the subject. The National Assembly passed a law prohibiting the trafficking in persons in 2003. Its adoption requires approval by the Senate.

The United States worked closely with journalists to improve professionalism and promote freedom of speech. A Paris based journalist traveled to

Gabon under U.S. auspices in October 2003 and conducted several journalism seminars in both the capital, Libreville, and in the city of Port-Gentil.

In the area of women's rights, the United States made available a grant to CORFEM, the largest women's organization in Gabon to provide materials and equipment to a resource center and for the development of the organization's website.

THE GAMBIA

The human rights situation in The Gambia improved significantly in recent years and U.S. engagement on human rights impelled the more favorable environment. After President Yahya Jammeh took power in a non-violent coup in 1994, his military government restricted freedoms, committed extrajudicial killings and harassed political opponents. There were credible allegations of torture and mistreatment at that time in certain cases. Most foreign observers did not recognize the 1996 presidential elections, which failed to meet democratic standards. The situation has improved significantly, however, in recent years. In late 2001 and early 2002, The Gambia completed a full cycle of presidential, legislative and local elections, all of which were deemed by international observers to have been generally free and fair, despite some shortcomings. In March 2002, the United States determined that a democratically elected government had assumed office in The Gambia and thus lifted Foreign Operations Appropriations Act Section 508 sanctions that had been imposed as a result of the 1994 coup. Effective January 1, 2003, the United States also granted The Gambia eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act based on the criteria set forth in the law, including a commitment to democracy and human rights.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. Security forces harassed or otherwise mistreated journalists, detainees, prisoners and opposition party members. Arbitrary arrest and detention were problems; however,

unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of incommunicado detention. Prolonged pre-trial detention was a problem. Detainees were denied fair and expeditious trials by a slow, inefficient and corrupt court system that was at times subject to executive branch pressure. The Government at times infringed on citizens' privacy rights. The Government limited freedom of speech and the press by intimidation and restrictive legislation. Some journalists practiced self-censorship. Unlike in previous years, the Government did not restrict freedom of assembly in 2003 and early 2004. Violence and discrimination against women were problems. The practice of female genital mutilation remained widespread and entrenched. Child labor persisted, mainly on family farms, and there were some instances of child prostitution. There were a few reports of trafficking.

Using the successful presidential election in October 2001 as well as the legislative and local elections in 2002 as a foundation, the United States has established a frank, constructive dialogue with the Government of The Gambia on human rights and other sensitive topics. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy promotes three core values: democratic freedoms, the rule of law and human dignity. The United States emphasizes the connection between the restoration of democratic rule and respect for human rights on the one hand, with the benefits of improved relations with the United States on the other.

As a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) non-presence country, the Embassy uses all the opportunities at its disposal to promote the democratization process and respect for human rights in The Gambia. These include the public diplomacy program, various military assistance programs, Economic Support Funds (ESF), the Democracy and Human Rights Fund and the USAID regional programs for West Africa on HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution and business initiatives.

Embassy advice on accountability and transparency in government likely contributed to the anti-corruption campaign begun in late 2003. This campaign has focused on the most egregious cases of corruption inside the Government and in business circles purportedly close to the Government. It has resulted in the arrest of several allegedly corrupt officials, including some very senior officials, as well as the detention of some allegedly corrupt, prominent businessmen. Investigations continue; some formal charges have been made and one trial has already begun.

In view of the upcoming 2006 presidential election and subsequent legislative elections, the Embassy continues to make strong efforts to promote and consolidate democracy. In 2003, the Embassy supported a radio station by providing an FM-extension amplifier, which enabled the station to widen its coverage, increasing the accessibility of the civic education to previously unreachable parts of the country. The United States is helping the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to set up a website that will enable all Gambians, especially those outside the country, to participate in all national elections. Through its contacts with the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute and other democracy building organizations, the Embassy is encouraging the IEC to develop an absentee voter system, a project that is highly anticipated by the opposition.

Because the legislature remains a relatively weak branch of the Government, the United States is using a \$300,000 ESF grant to support democracy by providing the offices of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the clerk and the permanent staff with training, equipment, supplies and other improvements that will help increase the National Assembly's ability to play its full constitutional role.

U.S. engagement with the Government of The Gambia has produced significant dividends in 2003, including substantial modifications to the media commission law that removed judicial

powers from the commission to returned them to the courts, in line with the country's constitution.

Embassy officials have easy and frequent access to government officials at all levels. The United States also maintains contacts with the opposition, the media and civil society. It also coordinates with other diplomatic missions, as appropriate, when addressing specific human rights concerns.

To foster more professional security forces and reduce the tendency for human rights abuses, the United States resumed non-lethal military assistance immediately after Section 508 sanctions were lifted. Military officers are educated on their proper role in a democracy through programs such as Expanded International Military Education and Training, which highlights civil-military relations.

U.S. efforts to end discrimination against certain disadvantaged groups include funding for the National Women's Bureau and the local chapter of the Special Olympics. The National Women's Bureau project is aimed at orienting council



members on their role and responsibilities under the 1999-2009 National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women, which will enable them to participate more fully in national decision-making processes. The United States is supporting the introduction of the Special Olympics curriculum into schools at all levels as a way to encourage disabled children.

The United States has taken the lead in financially and morally supporting the newly formed Child Protective Alliance (CPA) by providing sorely needed assistance for workshops and training seminars, purchasing office furniture and equipment, as well as hiring an additional administrative office member. The CPA, a coalition of a broad cross-section of organizations, has been effective in creating awareness about sexual exploitation, one of the most serious challenges to children's health, education and general well-being.

Religious harmony is the norm in the Gambia. To bolster religious freedom, the Embassy was able to promote interfaith dialogue by sending prominent Muslim cleric Imam Baba Leigh to the United States on an International Visitor program.

GUINEA

The Republic of Guinea held presidential elections on December 21, 2003, reelecting President Lansana Conte to a third term (this one for seven years). After all major opposition parties boycotted the elections because of concerns over the transparency and fairness of the electoral process, President Conte ran virtually unopposed. A few arbitrary detentions of politicians and military personnel occurred in the period prior to elections. The Government of Guinea's human rights record remains poor, with areas of serious concern. Political rights and freedom of speech remain curtailed. Although there are no political prisoners in the country and serious violations have been few, human rights violations continue to occur. There were three unlawful killings by security forces during 2003. Civilian and military

security forces beat and otherwise abused civilians. Members of the security forces committed abuses, often with impunity. Prison conditions were inhumane and life threatening. Arbitrary arrest and prolonged pretrial detention were problems. The Government restricted freedom of speech, the press, assembly and association and infringed on freedom of movement. Violence and societal discrimination against women, prostitution of young girls, female genital mutilation, ethnic discrimination, child labor and reports of trafficking of women and children continued.

The United States has a multi-faceted human rights and democracy strategy in Guinea, including programs tailored for specific aspects of human rights and democracy. It also includes widespread communication about human rights and democracy with various levels of Guinean society such as the Government, political parties, civil society, local government and the military.

The Ambassador consistently holds up human rights and democracy as a cornerstone of U.S. policy in Guinea, emphasizing the need for progress on these issues in his speeches and meetings with interlocutors. The Ambassador also stressed the need for dialogue in resolving disputes between the Government and political parties in the period before presidential elections. These efforts continue in the wake of President Conte's reelection, as set forth in the embassy's statement commenting on the election and encouraging continued political dialogue between the Government and the opposition. The Ambassador also met with government officials to emphasize human rights in response to certain high profile detentions during the year. The United States consistently reminded government interlocutors about their obligation under multiple international treaties and agreements concerning refugees, and praised them for hosting up to 700,000 refugees over the last 14 years. In addition, the United States retains close ties and meets regularly with opposition parties, political dissidents and local and international human rights non-governmental organizations.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) democracy and governance program influences the democratic process from the bottom up through training of citizens, locally elected officials and representatives of government technical services, and top-down through the facilitation of dialogue and building capacity to respond to citizen demands at the national level. The United States supports the International Foundation for Election Systems in its effort to liberalize the media and to promote civil society through civic education. USAID funds the Cooperative League of the USA's activities that seek to increase citizen participation and promote better and more transparent governance at the local level. The United States has also funded activities of the National Democratic Institute in promoting dialogue between political parties and encouraging greater participation of women and youth in political parties. USAID assistance targets three areas: increased citizen participation in local governance, support for improved political processes and capacity-building for civil society organizations to provide civic education and advocate for citizen interests with the administration.

Almost all Public Affairs Section (PAS) programs are based on respect for the right of individuals to express their views freely, the right of the public to information (including information about government actions, policies and programs) and the right of people to choose their leaders. In addition, PAS programs encourage open discussion on all topics relating to U.S.-Guinean relations and particularly American concepts of democracy and human rights. The United States has also supported democracy and human rights by sending Guineans on International Visitor (IV) programs related to human rights and democracy. Six Guineans participated in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 or are expected to take part in FY 2004 IV programs on topics related to good governance and transparency, conflict resolution and journalism.

In 2002, the Embassy provided military training to a full battalion (approximately 800 troops) from the Guinean Armed Forces (GAF). One full week of the training was devoted to human rights, treatment of refugees and other non-combatants, and the role of a military in a democracy. The material covered was reinforced repeatedly throughout the six-month training. The Defense Attaché's Office (DAO) also provides annual



seminars to the GAF and select civilians on subjects including military law, defense resource management, human rights and civil-military relations. In 2003, for example, the DAO organized a sub-regional seminar on defense budgeting, which was attended not only by Guinean military personnel and bureaucrats involved in the budget process, but their counterparts from six neighboring nations.

The Embassy annually receives more than \$70,000 in Democracy and Human Rights Fund money, which has over the past year gone to projects promoting the rights of women, students and teachers and victims of HIV/AIDS, combating female genital mutilation, and providing training in conflict resolution and responsible media. The program also has funded projects researching the role of the press in local elections and providing Internet access to legal documents.

Funding continued to flow from U.S. Labor Department for the multi-year International Labor Organization project to eliminate the worst forms of child labor from the cocoa sector of commercial agriculture. Guinea is one of five countries participating in the regional project.

GUINEA-BISSAU

At the beginning of 2003, the last strands of Guinea-Bissau's democracy were unraveling. In November 2002, President Kumba Yala dissolved the National Assembly and declared a government by presidential decree. During the years following his 2000 election, Yala undermined the independence and legitimacy of the courts, press, political parties, civil bureaucracy and military. Yala detained opponents without charges. The judicial system was almost completely dysfunctional. On September 14, 2003, after promised legislative elections were delayed a fourth time by Yala, a bloodless military coup led by Chief of Defense Verissimo Seabra removed Yala from power. Civilians were appointed as transitional President and Prime Minister. On September 28, military, political party and civil society leaders

signed the Pact of Transition, giving the Transitional Government of Guinea-Bissau a mandate to conduct legislative elections within six months and presidential elections a year later.

U.S. strategy is one of constructive engagement. The coup triggered sanctions under Foreign Operations Appropriations Act Section 508, preventing direct government-to-government assistance until an elected government takes office in Guinea-Bissau. Considering that the transitional government could represent an improvement over the Yala regime with regard to rule of law, transparency and good favor with the international community and the Bissau-Guinean people, the Embassy used Section 508 sanctions to encourage the Government to keep its promises of timely elections and good governance. In a series of demarches – from the Embassy's political officer to the President of Guinea-Bissau, Prime Minister and other Ministers, from Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Pamela Bridgewater to the government's Special Representative, and from the Ambassador to President Rosa – the Embassy explained to the Government that the United States would continue to aid the people of Guinea-Bissau through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities with the Ambassador's Special Self Help Fund, the European Command (EUCOM) Humanitarian Assistance Program, an Economic Support Fund and Development Assistance project in cashew processing and humanitarian demining. The Embassy also recommended continued African Growth and Opportunity Act eligibility for Guinea-Bissau. These measures demonstrated a desire to work constructively with Guinea-Bissau. The Government announced March 28, 2004 legislative elections, which it promised would lead to an elected prime minister and government.

September 14 marked the occurrence of the third military coup in Guinea-Bissau's 30 years of independence from Portugal. The Embassy aims to foster a more professional military in Guinea-Bissau that can contribute to, rather than detract from, regional stability. In the summer of 2003,

EUCOM evaluated a 650-man Bissau-Guinean battalion in preparation for ECOMIL, the ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Operation (PKO) in Liberia, which later became a UN PKO. The Embassy paid careful attention to Leahy Amendment human rights vetting, and Guinea-Bissau's battalion received positive reviews from EUCOM and earned valuable professional experience.

Yala left no functioning institutions in Guinea-Bissau. To conduct free and fair elections, outside observers will be required. The Embassy requested that the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute or similar organizations assist in monitoring the March 28 legislative election.

Political parties and civil society, being too intimidated to act as a counterweight to Yala's rule, were not accustomed to the responsibilities of civic participation. A Ford Foundation grant to two Senegalese NGOs funded a conference of Bissau-Guinean civil society, political, military and government leaders during the December 19-21 period. Most participants in the conference signed a declaration outlining civil society's expectations of good governance.

Though large-scale human rights abuses did not occur in Guinea-Bissau this year, isolated incidents occurred during Yala's presidency, due to corrupt and underpaid officials, inadequate training of magistrates and attorneys, and scarce resources to support the courts. The United States seeks opportunities to build capacity in Guinea-Bissau's justice system through the Democracy and Human Rights Fund, the International Visitor program and assistance to Guinea-Bissau's only law school.

Many areas of Guinea-Bissau were not within the range of radio broadcasts. A U.S. NGO, Open Society, assisted several Bissau-Guinean radio stations with equipment and training. As a result, the number of Bissau-Guineans with access to independent radio broadcasts increased.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is still common in rural parts of Guinea-Bissau. The United States supports a local NGO that convinced 36 practitioners to abandon FGM and employ alternative rituals.

Many Bissau-Guinean boys in rural areas are sent to Koranic schools in Dakar, Senegal and elsewhere. While many of the schools provide genuine religious training, others exploit the children by using them as street beggars to earn money for the leadership. The United States assists local authorities with anti-trafficking capabilities. A U.S. anti-trafficking team provided training to Senegalese police.

KENYA

The peaceful political transition in December 2002 provided Kenyans and the international community with hope that the new government headed by Mwai Kibaki would enact meaningful reforms, tackling corruption, drafting a new constitution and re-energizing the economy. These hopes have been only partially fulfilled. The Government has passed anti-corruption legislation and removed some allegedly corrupt judges, but no senior officials have been prosecuted for corruption. The constitutional review process is mired in political in-fighting, unemployment is close to 50 percent and more than one-half of all Kenyans continue to live on less than \$1 a day. Despite some progress, Kenya's human rights record remains poor in many areas. The Government continues to restrict freedom of speech and assembly on occasion. The non-military security forces continue to inflict torture and physical violence on detainees; some police officers have recently been arrested and accused of torture. Female genital mutilation, child labor and trafficking in persons also continue to be problems.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy consisted of strengthening electoral processes, rule of law, civil society and media, combating corruption and resolving conflict. To build on the

success of the 2002 general election, the United States continued to support the electoral process in Kenya in 2003. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) obligated a total of \$850,000 for electoral support, the bulk of which went to the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). The IFES grant was used to improve the capacity of the Electoral Commission of Kenya to use information technology. The Carter Center also received \$200,000 to field a team of international observers during Kenya's election. An indicator of success in these efforts was that two 2003 by-elections were competently administered and violence-free. In addition, there were no politically motivated arrests during 2003.

Additionally, in June, Kenya actively participated in the Dialogue on Democracy hosted by Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky. In this Community of Democracies project, Kenya worked with other democratic states from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss and develop inter- and intra-regional dialogues, institutions and strategies for the purpose of strengthening the global framework of democracy.

Another component of the U.S. democracy and human rights strategy in Kenya is strengthening the rule of law. A key objective is the adoption of a new constitution (to replace the 1963 constitution) that includes a better balance of authority among the executive, legislative and judicial branches and provides for devolution of authority to sub-national units of government. President Bush raised constitutional reform with President Kibaki during the latter's October visit to the United States, and Secretary of State Powell followed up during his October visit to Kenya. On March 16, 2004, the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission adopted a new draft constitution. However, the Kibaki government walked out of the deliberations in protest over its content, portending the likelihood of a vituperative debate in parliament over the constitution's adoption.

Prior to 2003, the U.S. rule of law program in Kenya was limited to supporting civil society organizations, which has been critical to enhancing support for rule of law initiatives. In 2003, the United States continued to assist civil society organizations. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has been working for the past three years under a \$225,000 USAID grant. In 2003, ICJ utilized public perceptions of the Kenyan judiciary as a lobbying tool to advocate for the removal of corrupt judges in the country and for reform of the judicial system. The Federation of Women Lawyers received a USAID grant for \$144,000 to work toward improving the legislative and policy framework for women's rights.

In addition to support to civil society, and in light of the new government's commitment to strengthening the rule of law, the United States began providing direct financial assistance to the Government in 2003. Initial support assisted Kenya in developing its five-year strategy for improving the rule of law. USAID has also aided several grantees to develop programs of assistance for torture and trauma victims.

In 2003, the United States also provided assistance to help strengthen the Kenyan parliament, in particular parliament's committee system, its capacity for analysis, investigation and decision-making, and its links with civil society. To this end, USAID provided \$600,000 to the State University of New York. Now in its third year of implementation, the program strengthens parliamentarians' ability to effectively represent the will of the Kenyan people, participate in policy reform and serve as a check on the executive. This program was complemented by grants to civil society organizations, which provided technical assistance and research to parliamentarians. For example, the Institute of Economic Affairs received a \$100,000 grant to improve parliamentarians' ability to effectively analyze the budget. Prior to this U.S. program, the Kenyan parliament was seen as a rubber stamp. It now acts more independently and is increasingly serving as a check on the executive.

A closely related U.S. objective is helping Kenya make further progress in the fight against corruption. In 2003, the Government passed two anti-corruption bills, one that sets rules for transparency and accountability and another that requires certain public officials to declare their wealth and that of their spouses. Another bill designed to tackle corruption in procurement has been introduced. The presidency created a new office under a permanent secretary to spearhead the fight against corruption and, in May 2003, the Minister of Finance fired all procurement officers in public offices. A complementary public service integrity program was established to improve management practices in public offices and a commission of inquiry was established to investigate corruption involving export compensation scandals in the early 1990s.

U.S. strategy in support of this anti-corruption initiative focused in large part on support to civil society. A USAID grant to Transparency International's Kenya (TI/K) chapter, totaling \$494,700, was in its fourth year of implementation. Key elements of the grant include conducting research to provide benchmarks of integrity and efficiency in public organizations, increasing public awareness of corruption and serving as a secretariat for the African Parliamentarians Network against Corruption. Similarly, the Center for Governance and Development (CGD) was in the second year of a two-year \$250,000 USAID grant to address corruption and bad governance in Kenya by working with the Parliament and stakeholders to help draft legislation to further the democratic process. CGD monitored developments in various economic sectors to ensure that new legislation addressing corruption was implemented effectively. TI/K and CGD efforts were instrumental in the enactment of recent anti-corruption legislation, including the Economic Crimes and Anti-Corruption Act and the Public Officers' Ethics Act, as well as key regulatory changes that promoted transparency in the conduct of the elections.

USAID also obligated approximately \$1.5 million to support the Government directly in its anti-corruption initiative. USAID supported the newly created Office of the President's Department of Ethics and Governance by helping develop a system for recording and analyzing assets disclosure forms. The United States also supported the creation of a Public Complaints officer that would allow the private sector to report corruption-related issues and problems and that would promote transparency and accountability in the private sector. A component of the training provided by the U.S. Defense Resource Management Institute to 33 senior Kenyan military officers in 2003 stressed the importance of managing defense resources as a public trust, rather than a personal kitty. Despite these efforts, Kenyan courts have yet to convict key personalities involved in corruption and U.S. businesses remain wary about investing in the country.

The embassy's Public Affairs Section (PAS) supports press freedom and other democracy and human rights objectives with a number of its annual programs (budgeted at more than \$700,000 with additional support from Washington bureaus). In Fiscal Year 2003, for example, more than one-half of the embassy's annual allotment of 20 international exchange visitors participated in programs that fit broadly under this rubric, including two Kenya-specific small group projects. Similarly, Fulbright Fellowship grants supported three Kenyan and two American scholars doing research or pursuing degrees in peace studies, conflict resolution, women's rights or legal systems. The PAS Information Resource Center featured outreach projects on responsible media, U.S. courts, trafficking in persons and state and local government. PAS has also been urging the new Kenyan Government to create a press spokesman's office to help articulate government policy and field requests for access to government information.

Another component of U.S. strategy is to ensure that the Kenyan security forces remain apolitical and not commit human rights abuses. To this

end, the State and Defense Departments, through the International Military Education and Training program, provided training in the United States in 2003 to four Kenyan military officers; the training included observations of how the U.S. military operated apolitically in a democratic country. In addition, the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies provided training in Kenya to 40 mid-grade and senior Kenyan military officers in military law and legal systems. Also in 2003, the Embassy's Regional Security Office sponsored seven training courses for 225 Kenyan security personnel in anti-terrorism and law enforcement. All seven courses included classes in how human rights and international law pertain to arrest and detention.

Although political and ethnic violence has decreased in Kenya, inter-communal violence occasionally crosses borders with Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. To this end, the government has been helping warring factions in Sudan and Somalia resolve their differences and has been working to promote national unity within the context of non-ethnically based political diversity. Within its conflict management pro-

gram, USAID's Regional Office in Kenya supported the Addis Ababa-based Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN). CEWARN is a protocol among member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development that was signed in 2002 and made effective in 2003. USAID and CEWARN activities in Kenya have focused on building capacity among government and non-governmental organizations to address conflict in the Karamoja cluster, the cross-border area of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, and in the Somali cluster, the cross-border area of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Two of the State Department's Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) awards in 2003 were for resolution of conflict among cattle raiders in the Northern Rift Valley and among warring ethnic groups in the Tana River area of Coast Province. Three additional DHRF grants were awarded in 2003 to grassroots organizations in Kenya. These awards targeted improvements in the legal and human rights of young women slum dwellers in Nairobi, Maasai women in southern Kenya and Muslim women in Nairobi. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy,



Human Rights and Labor drew upon the Human Rights and Democracy Fund to support a women's political empowerment project which equipped women candidates in Kenya with the skills necessary to run effective political campaigns.

Another focus of U.S. attention was on labor practices. In the final year of a three-year \$200,061 grant for labor law reform funded by the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, the International Labor Organization (ILO) continued the assessment and revision of Kenya's labor law to bring it into full conformity with the principles of the ILO and the African Growth and Opportunity Act and to address issues such as child labor, discrimination and civil service reform. Sensitization of parliamentarians and other stakeholders on the need for the new law began in 2003. Another DHRF grant, awarded in late 2002 but largely implemented in 2003, was for the re-registration of the civil service union following a 20-year ban. In 2003, the union organized 15,000 of its potential 40,000 members and began to lobby for civil servant rights.

In 2003, Kenya was also in the final year of a three-year \$4,743,658 East Africa regional project with ILO's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor to identify, withdraw and rehabilitate approximately 7,500 children working under hazardous conditions on plantations and to provide families with viable alternatives to child labor. To complement this program, the World Bank with U.S. support has given Kenya a \$50 million grant to support its free primary education project, making it easier for families to choose school over work.

The Embassy designed the various components in its strategy to be complementary. Better governmental checks and balances and an improved judicial system help combat corruption and create a more attractive environment for badly needed economic investment. Conflict prevention contributes to regional stability and reduces the inci-

dence of HIV/AIDS transmission, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. Together the components of the U.S. democracy and human rights strategy in Kenya are helping the country achieve better governance and a better way of life for Kenyans.

LESOTHO

In May 2002, Lesotho held its first free and fair parliamentary elections not marred by post-election violence since the restoration of democracy in 1993. The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy won 79 of 120 seats in the new mixed member proportional representation system introduced that year. Nine opposition parties divided the remaining 41 seats. Nevertheless, the largest opposition party, the Basotho National Party (BNP), claimed that the elections were flawed and has refused to formally accept the results even while taking its 22 seats in the National Assembly. In 2003, the BNP filed a number of court cases contesting various aspects of the elections, and has refused to participate in several by-elections held to fill vacancies caused by the deaths of incumbents. The Government has generally respected the human rights of its citizens, although problems continue with the police, primarily in the use of excessive force. There were unconfirmed allegations of torture by security forces. Prison conditions were poor, and lengthy pretrial detention was a problem. The military is successfully making the transition to a more professional and apolitical institution. The judiciary is under-staffed and under-funded. Rapid expansion of the garment industry has produced labor issues, due in part to the inexperience of the labor unions. Child prostitution, fueled by the creation of orphans by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, is a small but growing problem.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Lesotho supports the consolidation of democracy, strengthens the judiciary, law enforcement, and civil society, promotes worker rights and seeks to professionalize the military. In its efforts to pro-

mote the consolidation of democracy, the United States remained heavily engaged with both the Government and the opposition over the course of 2003 and early 2004 to ensure that the BNP's complaints remained peaceful, including intervening with both the party and the police to keep a February demonstration from becoming violent. A U.S.-supported program run by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) trained party representatives in such party-building areas as fundraising, volunteer organization, public outreach, platform development and articulation, and internal party democratization. The aim was to prepare the parties both for the general elections scheduled for 2007 and new local government elections scheduled for 2004. This program exemplified donor coordination: The United States focused on party building while other donors concentrated on helping to develop the National Assembly. In another U.S.-supported program, the University of Maryland, in conjunction with the National University of Lesotho, conducted conflict management and resolution training for traditional leaders, local government officials and party leaders to help prepare the way for local government elections and to build an indigenous, non-governmental capacity for conflict resolution.

The United States also worked with the Government of Lesotho to strengthen law enforcement. Forty-nine Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) officers attended training courses at the regional International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana in 2003. Seven of those officers also attended the Senior Leadership Management Course in Roswell, New Mexico. The new Minister of Home Affairs, appointed in mid-2002, enthusiastically promotes reform of the LMPS and welcomes U.S. assistance in all areas of law enforcement, including immigration control and counter-terrorism. The United States provided a grant to UNICEF for that organization to help the LMPS establish designated child protection units within the police force to deal with domestic violence, trafficking, child prostitution and other crimes against children.

The United States continued its support for the Lesotho judiciary. A computer, Internet connection and subscription to the LEXIS/NEXIS service, provided by Embassy Maseru through the Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF), helped secure the bribery conviction of the former head of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, and were instrumental in finding a Canadian and German company guilty of paying the bribes. This remains the largest anti-corruption case ever prosecuted in Africa. The Embassy sent the Chief Judge of the Labor Court and the Registrar of the High Court to the United States on International Visitor grants to study court administration. Both returned eager to implement much-needed reforms in court management. In early 2004, the United States began an Economic Support Funds program to improve the training and support of High Court Justices and civil magistrates.

The United States actively promoted worker rights in Lesotho, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act's labor protection provisions have been an important tool in this effort. The Lesotho Government has been very willing to work with the Embassy and the International Labor Organization to ensure that the local labor code conforms to international standards, and has welcomed U.S.-sponsored training for the Ministry of Labor's inspection department. The Embassy used DHRF funds to provide training to one of the smaller unions representing security workers, a segment of the workforce often subjected to unfair working conditions. At the instigation of the Embassy, local manufacturers agreed to a union "check-off" program to allow member dues to be paid directly to the union from the employers, eliminating a major source of tension. The employers also agreed to an embassy suggestion that they craft and sign a voluntary code of conduct for dealing with employee organizations. The Embassy was unsuccessful in its attempts to dissuade a breakaway faction from splitting the largest textile workers union. After the police used excessive force to disperse march-

ing strikers, the Embassy intervened with the Minister of Home Affairs to press for a full investigation of the responsible officers.

The United States has continued to use DHRF to strengthen local human rights non-governmental organizations. The Media Institute of Lesotho received funds to promote ethical practices in the media and to strengthen human rights reporting. The Embassy and the UN Development Program jointly sponsor the annual Red Ribbon Award, to promote reporting on HIV/AIDS, especially to end discrimination against persons living with AIDS.

The United States also addressed the need to professionalize the Lesotho Defense Force (LDF), which had contributed to the political turmoil in Lesotho in the 1990s. Two LDF officers participated in the Africa Center for Strategic Studies Senior Seminar that examined issues of democratic governance and civil-military relations. Other LDF personnel participated in International Military Education and Training that covered, among other subjects, human rights and civil society.

An important indicator of the success of the efforts of all donors and the people of Lesotho in promoting democracy and human rights has been the substantial improvement in popular perceptions of Lesotho as a democratic entity. A recent survey sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development found that a large majority of Basotho believe they have greater political freedoms than before and there is little support for a return to authoritarian government.

LIBERIA

Liberia is a republic. The current National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), which is not an elected government, was agreed upon as part of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) signed in Accra, Ghana, on August 18, 2003. The CPA followed months of intense fighting between the ex-Government of Liberia (ex-

GOL), and the rebel groups Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). The deployment of international peacekeepers by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), on October 1, 2003, signaled the effective end to the war and began a new era in Liberia. Former President Charles Taylor stepped down on August 11, 2003, and his Vice President and successor stepped down on October 14, 2003. The NTGL was established that day and is headed by Chairman Gyude Bryant.

Under Taylor's government, the state security forces (military, paramilitary, militia and police) committed numerous, serious abuses, including unlawful killings, excessive use of force, torture and other abuses. Police officers continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention, and beat persons in custody. Prison conditions remained extremely harsh and life-threatening. Fair and expeditious trials were problematic due to an inefficient, understaffed and under-funded judiciary, which was dominated by the executive branch and subject to corruption. The abuse of children, particularly in the form of forced conscription as child soldiers, remained a problem. Women were raped and forcibly conscripted. Many abuses were also committed by LURD and MODEL.

Under the NTGL, although many of the former practices of the police have been curtailed, some serious abuses continued. Liberians not under the protective umbrella of ECOMIL still faced abuse by elements of LURD, MODEL and former GOL troops fighting for control of territory. There were reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions, extrajudicial killings, rapes and other abuses. UNMIL is currently training and supporting an interim police force since the Liberian National Police (LNP) force has been disarmed.

Since many of the human rights abuses occurred within the security sector and justice sector, U.S. strategy successfully focused on pressing the ex-GOL to free political prisoners, and on pressing

the ex-GOL, as well as LURD and MODEL, to end the war. The United States is addressing human rights issues by concentrating programs in areas such as political party development and the education of the public on human rights.

In July 2003, the Deputy Secretary of State met with Archbishop Michael K. Francis to discuss the peace process. The United States gave Economic Support Funds (ESF) to Radio Veritas, a Catholic Church-run independent radio station, to support its activities and also funded the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote reconciliation.

Through its Public Affairs Office (PAO), the Embassy supported a local NGO that specializes in human rights concerns. This NGO received a \$5,000 grant to work with the community through forum theater to address ways in which the community can rally against violence. The PAO also facilitated a grant of more than \$3,000 to show films and hold seminars related to democracy building. Finally, the PAO arranged a grant for \$30,000 to support a local radio station in the immediate aftermath of the June-August 2003 siege of Monrovia, to deliver messages supporting an end to the violence in Liberia and support for peacekeepers. The PAO also organized a media conference dealing with post-conflict freedom of the press and media issues, which supported the democratization process, and the PAO will pursue similar opportunities this year.

U.S. officials routinely highlighted publicly the need for improvements in human rights conditions. During the Taylor era, the Ambassador and other U.S. officials worked privately with Liberian officials, NGOs and other organizations to identify areas of concern and encourage systemic reforms. These efforts continued as part of the peace implementation process, which is less about altering current practices than starting over. At least \$10 million of \$200 million that the United States allocated for relief and reconstruction in Liberia, following the departure of Taylor

and the signing of the CPA, are designated for civil police and related judicial structures, with implementation of related programs to be coordinated with other donors.

The United States has highlighted corruption-related issues repeatedly and publicly throughout the peace implementation process, and in meetings with the NTGL and other interested parties. The Embassy has supported Treasury Department efforts, including multiple assessment teams, to get “economic boots on the ground” to work with the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank and other relevant ministries to encourage transparency and the fight against corruption.

Through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Embassy has been supporting the International Republican Institute with \$650,000 toward political party strengthening. Another \$400,000 in ESF funds is being distributed through Liberian and other local partners on human rights matters. A total of \$650,000 in ESF is being used for the development of up to 20



community radio stations featuring local programming as well as the distribution of more than 2,000 solar powered radios to community literacy groups' Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) programs. The radios will also broadcast programs in such areas as human rights and civic education or health and economic livelihood subjects. The BCC program also includes theater and other community-level activities geared toward social mobilization. A key program for social mobilization is in the implementation of REFLECT in more than 100 communities. REFLECT facilitates the organization of community groups in order to address community problems, as well as contributing toward adult literacy.

MADAGASCAR

The Government of Madagascar generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. Security forces used lethal force to disperse demonstrations. Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening. Arbitrary arrests and detentions occurred. The Government at times limited freedom of speech and assembly. Women continue to face societal discrimination.

During his May 27 meeting with Malagasy President Ravalomanana, the Secretary of State encouraged adherence to good governance and democratic reforms. For its part, the Embassy advanced key U.S. human rights goals through its participation in a monthly Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), through U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) democracy and governance activities, and with programs financed with special funds. These activities reached a broad cross-section of the population. The HRWG conducted outreach designed to improve public understanding of Madagascar's Muslim community, activities promoting disability rights and programs to facilitate outreach for government anti-corruption initiatives. The Embassy also actively lobbied the Government to resolve expeditiously the cases of political detainees. USAID Madagascar programs sup-

ported observer training for municipal elections, upgraded infrastructure for the judiciary and promoted civic education and national reconciliation after the 2002 political crisis that resulted from the disputed presidential election. The Embassy also funded grassroots human rights initiatives through the Democracy and Human Rights Fund and provided scholarships for 1,400 individuals through the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship (EDDI) program.

The Embassy continued to coordinate and chair the monthly Madagascar HRWG in 2003 and early 2004, and it remained a significant forum for official and civil society to discuss broad-ranging human rights issues. The standard format is a focused presentation on a single subject, followed by an opportunity for those present to introduce and discuss matters of current interest. The embassy's Public Affairs Section this year began to provide a booth or a table at each meeting offering additional information reflecting U.S. policy on the day's main topic(s).

U.S. support for Madagascar's November 2003 municipal elections and for Ministry of Justice infrastructure upgrades had wide impact. USAID provided funding to train and transport local election observers and to conduct voter education campaigns for the municipal elections. USAID aimed to make the justice system more accessible to the average Malagasy. Working with the Malagasy Ministry of Justice, the Antananarivo Magistrates' Association and Transparency International, USAID established an information booth at Antananarivo's main courthouse and equipped 20 courtrooms throughout Madagascar with sound systems. USAID also funded a reconciliation program known as "Fihavanana" from the Malagasy word for solidarity and community consensus. The \$210,000 program dealt with lingering effects of the 2002 political crisis and provided a nationwide civic education program with a strong human rights component.

MAURITANIA

The September 2003 HRWG session, devoted entirely to Madagascar's Muslim community, allowed the Embassy to broaden its activities relating to that group of approximately 750,000. The session was intended to stimulate thinking in the broader community about an important and often dismissed minority and to improve mutual understanding. Representatives of various elements of the Muslim community made presentations on their beliefs, the social context of Islam in Madagascar, and Islam's role in the country. This session allowed a group traditionally held at arm's length by the general population to demonstrate their good citizenship and desire to integrate into Malagasy society.

The Embassy also promoted key democratic values through Democracy and Human Rights Fund II (DHRF II) grants and the EDDI program. In 2003, DHRF II grants enabled Malagasy non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across the country to organize human rights workshops, support radio broadcasts on the themes of democracy and human rights and establish a civic education information center specifically targeting women and children. In 2003, more than 1,400 girls, a group traditionally underrepresented in formal education, received full or partial scholarships through the EDDI program. The embassy's Public Affairs Section sent several outstanding Malagasy candidates to the United States under the International Visitor program to study issues such as grassroots democracy, the U.S. judicial system and HIV/AIDS education and treatment.

Finally, the HRWG's March 2003 meeting on disability rights, a first in its eight-year history, provided insights into current NGO and government activities and offered an opportunity to highlight pioneering U.S. legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mauritania is a highly centralized Islamic Republic dominated by a strong presidency. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's human rights record remained poor in 2003. Although there were improvements in some areas, several problems remained. Democratic institutions remained rudimentary and the Government circumscribed citizens' ability to change their government. Some members of the security forces reportedly used excessive force, beat or otherwise abused detainees and used arbitrary arrest and detention and illegal searches. The Government continued to refuse to officially recognize some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations. Discrimination against women continued. Female genital mutilation remained a serious problem, despite some government efforts to halt the practice. Despite government efforts to eradicate the practice, local and international reports continued that slavery in the form of involuntary servitude persisted in some areas, and that former slaves continued to work for former masters. Child labor in the informal sector was common. The Government passed a law during the year that imposed substantial criminal penalties for trafficking in persons.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Mauritania is to promote democratization and respect for fundamental human rights, develop civil society and responsible media, promote religious freedom and tolerance and combat forced labor, child labor and trafficking in persons.

The United States throughout 2003 and early 2004 raised human rights and democracy on a high level with the Government. When the Mauritanian Foreign Minister visited the United States in 2003, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman highlighted U.S. concerns regarding democracy and human rights in Mauritania. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Lorne Craner also raised those concerns with the

Ambassador of Mauritania to the United States. In addition, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs visited Mauritania in January 2004, and raised human rights issues with Mauritanian officials, in particular trafficking in persons and how to promote democratic development.

The United States provided computer equipment to financially strapped, independent newspapers. This equipment, which will be accessible to several independent newspapers, should increase the newspapers' efficiency and save them money.

The United States sponsored a seven-person delegation from the Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) in the run-up to the November 7, 2003 Presidential elections.

Although concerns about security prevented the NDI team from observing the election first-hand, NDI representatives, assisted by the Embassy, were able to participate in a useful series of meetings with government officials and members of civil society, including pro-government and opposition human rights groups. The NDI team is drafting a report with recommendations on how to promote democratic development in Mauritania that should be ready in early 2004.

A Democracy and Human Rights Fund grant allowed the United States to work closely with the free press association to sponsor a series of seminars on the role of the press in a developing democracy, election coverage and ethics in journalism. The United States sponsored the participation of the editors of two independent Mauritanian newspapers in a June 2003 International Visitor (IV) program on "Investigative Journalism" conducted by the State Department's Education and Cultural Affairs bureau. The United States will send two more journalists on democracy-related IV programs in March and April 2004.

In January 2004 the United States sponsored a weeklong seminar on civil-military relations. Seminar moderators challenged participants,

including senior military leaders and the Secretary-General of the Defense Ministry, to understand each other's perspectives and roles in a developing democracy. The program was well received and publicized, including at least two news stories on national television and radio. The United States reviewed human rights records of members of military and security forces who participated in training conducted by U.S. civilian or military personnel. U.S. embassy personnel based in Nouakchott used the opportunity of these Leahy Amendment reviews to discuss with senior security and military officials the importance of protecting human rights in the conduct of law enforcement or military activities, and of requiring human rights training for security and military personnel.

Embassy officials and various U.S. visitors discussed religious freedom and tolerance with senior government officials and religious leaders. The United States also engaged religious leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS, developing a close working relationship that also provided opportunities to discuss and promote religious tolerance. The United States built on this close working relationship by conducting three seminars with local Imams on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Throughout the year, U.S. officials encouraged the Government to adopt and implement key international agreements on trafficking of persons. Embassy officials also emphasized the need for the Government to make statistical evidence of its anti-trafficking activities publicly available. In July 2003, Mauritania ratified and publicly promulgated a national law against trafficking in persons. This law included, for the first time, substantial criminal penalties for those found trafficking in persons.

MOZAMBIQUE

On November 19, 2003 Mozambique held its second municipal elections, which were generally free and fair and occurred without violence. FRELIMO dominated the November elections, winning 28 out of the country's 33 municipalities. Presidential elections are scheduled for 2004. The Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in several areas, serious problems remained. Police continued to commit numerous abuses, including unlawful killings, beatings in custody and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Prison conditions remained extremely harsh and life threatening. Despite efforts to clear long-standing case backlogs, prison overcrowding was widespread and lengthy pretrial detention was common. The courts were dominated by the executive branch, lacked adequate resources and were chronically understaffed and largely ineffectual. Corruption continued to be a problem in the public and private sectors. Domestic violence against women, as well as widespread discrimination against women in employment and property rights, remained significant problems. There were confirmed reports that women and children were trafficked to South Africa.



The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Mozambique strengthens key institutions, enhances civil society, addresses corruption at all levels and combats trafficking in persons. The Embassy has been actively engaged in increasing the professionalism of the police and reforming the judiciary. Embassy officials have routinely engaged religious and business leaders, domestic civil society groups and government officials on human rights concerns, including trafficking in persons, HIV/AIDS and corruption. The U.S. Labor Department is also funding a U.S.-based non-governmental organization (NGO), Project HOPE, to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in the workplace and reduce discrimination.

In 2003, President Bush met with President Chissano on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York, in Chissano's capacity both as President of Mozambique and African Union Chair. The Embassy also sent various community members and Mozambique government officials on International Visitor programs in 2003, including in the areas of democracy, civic education and HIV/AIDS awareness.

To foster a more professional police force and reduce human rights abuses among the police, the Embassy used State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) funding for an intermittent long-term International Criminal Investigative Training Program advisor to assist Mozambique's Police Sciences Academy in management and curriculum development and to coordinate specialized training courses. INL funds are also paying for improved facilities. INL funded key police officials and officials from the Attorney General's office to participate in courses at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Roswell, New Mexico, and the regional ILEA academy in Botswana. The embassy's Public Affairs Section utilized Speaker Program participants to hold a series of lectures on police ethics and human rights.

Recognizing that corruption is a principal impediment to Mozambique's economic development and democratic consolidation, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) used Development Assistance (DA) and Economic Support Funds (ESF) to improve the country's judicial system and more effectively address corruption. USAID has actively supported the Anti-Corruption Unit (UAC), including paying rental of UAC's office space and provision of equipment, computers and vehicles. INL funded three trips by U.S. Department of Justice Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) short-term advisors to assist the UAC in developing skills and tracking cases. Training was also conducted in Maputo involving experts from OPDAT, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Treasury Department. An indirect result of U.S. assistance and attention to corruption was the passage by the National Assembly of the long-awaited Anti-Corruption Law, which aims to fight corruption in government offices, hospitals, schools and the police. USAID also continued to use DA funds to raise public awareness about corruption and citizens' rights through assistance to a local NGO on a planned media campaign. This NGO is also working with the UAC to open reporting centers in all ten provincial capitals with toll-free hotlines for reporting corruption.

Especially relevant due to the 2003 municipal elections, U.S. efforts in promoting democracy continued to be quite strong. USAID has used DA and ESF funds to support both international and local NGOs. With the assistance of U.S. funding, an international organization provided observers, carried out a parallel vote tabulation in partnership with Mozambican NGOs and monitored the post-election process. The group found that Mozambique's second municipal elections were well conducted and peaceful, with no major problems likely to affect the results. The Embassy used both Democracy and Human Rights Funds (DHRF) and USAID funds to support seminars for civil society on civic education. Embassy officials actively participated with the

UN Development Program and other diplomatic missions in the coordination of international observers for the November 19 municipal elections, and embassy staff served as observers in key municipalities during the elections. The Embassy has also actively engaged officials from smaller political parties.

The Embassy, through an inter-agency agreement with the U.S. Labor Department, is working to improve industrial relations in Mozambique. Activities have included training programs that have been furnished by the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, covering mediation techniques as well as techniques for collaborative labor relations. In September, a four-day Train-the-Trainers Course was held with several trainers and 30 student participants from unions, management and government.

Mozambique is a country of origin for trafficked women and children, and there is growing attention among government and civil society to the problem. U.S. officials are working with NGOs and government officials to develop more effective mechanisms to address trafficking and better coordinate existing efforts. This year, several DHRF grants were awarded for activities that focus specifically on trafficking and women's issues, including training seminars for police and immigration officials.

NIGER

The 2003 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Niger identified the lack of judicial independence, poor prison conditions, limited free speech, domestic violence and discrimination against women, informal child labor, child prostitution, trafficking in persons and the continued existence of unofficial slavery or servitude as continuing human rights problems. The U.S. democracy and human rights strategies and tactics address most of these issues, using a combination of Democracy and Human Rights Funds (DHRF), Economic Support Funds (ESF), U.S.

Agency for International Development (USAID) and Public Diplomacy (PD) grants, as well as support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Supporting the development of democratic systems and promoting human rights remain the primary strategic objectives of the United States in Niger. The strategies to improve democracy and human rights in Niger include: increasing the capacity of the Government of Niger, civil society and political parties to implement and monitor elections and the decentralization process; strengthening the capacity of Niger's democratic institutions to govern well and to be responsive to public needs, increasing public support for democracy; initiating studies to improve civilian and government understanding of and appreciation for human rights in the Nigerien context; supporting the development of effective human rights policies; fostering cooperation between the Government, international human rights organizations, and local human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and promoting continued good governance and transparency.

Despite the lack of a USAID mission, the Embassy manages eight U.S.-funded programs totaling approximately \$2.7 million, designed to increase public understanding of and respect for democracy and human rights. Over the past year, significant progress has been made to improve Niger's democratic environment and infrastructure, and human rights have greatly improved since democracy was re-established in 1999. However, Niger's democratic institutions remain fragile, and internal and external insecurity continue to put basic human rights at risk.

Using ESF and DHRF resources, electoral programs and the decentralization process were strengthened in Niger. Political parties were trained in election monitoring and several public outreach campaigns were implemented to improve the decentralization process. After an open debate in the national assembly and prolonged discussions in the media, a decentraliza-

tion law was drafted, distributed to the public, discussed with traditional leaders, reviewed by the constitutional court and ratified. With support from NED and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), all political parties encouraged their membership to promote women and other minority candidates in upcoming local and parliamentary elections. The United States funded rural radio programs in remote areas of the country, which increased public awareness of the political process and supported the participation of women and nomadic populations in community development initiatives.

The United States also strengthened human rights organizations in 2003 and early 2004, but the Government often was unresponsive to their views. Tamidria, ANDDH and other independent human rights organizations operate freely within the country, and their activities are given press coverage in both government and independent media. The Government and political and religious leaders strongly support persons living with HIV/AIDS and advocated a reduction in the stigma associated with the disease in the media and in the national assembly. Freedom of assembly, movement and religion are generally respected and closely monitored in Niger. Workers rights are also protected. The United States specifically supported human rights organizations in the country through DHRF capacity building grants and PD training programs. U.S. officials reinforced U.S. support to human rights and democratic systems in numerous public speeches reported in the media. Good governance and transparency were also promoted through targeted advocacy efforts and multilateral initiatives.

Niger is scheduled to hold local, parliamentary and presidential elections in 2004. Approximately \$400,000 in ESF funds are being used to assist the Government and local and international partners to implement these very important elections. The program is funding training for political party poll watchers and media campaigns to encourage the increased participation of women and ethnic minorities (nomads) in the electoral process.

Embassy contacts in the media, in the political and judicial realms, with the police, in the military and with human rights organizations were actively engaged to promote peace, democracy and respect for human rights. The capacity of local human rights organizations was strengthened through training and exchange programs funded by NED and PD, and U.S. advocacy efforts created links and communication channels between civil society and government institutions.

Using ESF resources, Africare and Helen Keller International have installed 25 solar-powered rural radio stations in three remote regions of Niger. Local communities design, plan, implement and evaluate the operation of these community radios. Developmental messages, including messages on decentralization, voter education, agriculture, environmental protection, literacy and health are broadcast locally. The radios are apolitical and are not allowed to broadcast information with political content.

Using ESF funds and in collaboration with USAID and the UN Development Program, the United States is implementing an innovative program to improve both the supply of and demand for Internet access in Niger. The private sector and local businesses have been actively involved in the implementation of this program. Women business leaders have been trained as Internet trainers, and journalists and civil society watchdog organizations have been trained in Internet use to combat corruption. The Embassy intends to encourage the development of distance learning opportunities for Niger's youth.

The Embassy, through the Defense Attaché's Office and in coordination with PD and other embassy sections, financed a civil-military seminar stressing respect for human rights and the role of the military in a civil democracy. The program was well covered by local media and included the participation of top military and political leaders.

In 2002, the United States funded six activities, including a study and workshop on religious fundamentalism in Niger, a mobile legal defense clinic to improve judicial access in rural areas, the collection and publication of international human rights treaties ratified by Niger to improve people's understanding of their internationally guaranteed human rights, training to support women's participation in upcoming local elections, civic education and decentralization training in rural areas and workshops to reduce discrimination against women. In 2003, the United States funded five DHRF activities, including a national seminar on Women, Democracy and Decentralization; local elections training for rural radio journalists, anti-corruption training for national media representatives, a national school campaign to denounce violence against women and activities to promote conflict resolution in rural communities. Fiscal Year 2004 resources will fund activities to support local and national elections.

NED funded three activities in Niger, including training for women political party members (with NDI), capacity building for local NGOs (with Africare), and support for private media (with Radio Anfani). In addition, other U.S. funded programs, including the multi-year \$24 million Title II Food for Peace Program, ESF women's micro-credit programs and the West Africa Water Initiative (a Global Development Alliance), support the development of democratic systems and the protection of human rights by focusing on community capacity building, gender training, conflict prevention and management, and civic education.

Implemented by CARE and a local NGO, the Maradi Youth Program will provide job skills training and civic education for youth in an area susceptible to civil unrest provoked by religious extremists from Northern Nigeria.

The United States used \$224,000 to launch an anti-trafficking in persons program. The program will be implemented in collaboration with

UNICEF and is designed to identify the magnitude of the trafficking problem in Niger, as well as helping the Government and local NGOs prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims of human trafficking and prosecute trafficking offenders.

NIGERIA

Nigeria held multiparty general elections in 2003, the second since the end of military rule in 1998. The elections were marred by fraud and irregularities. President Obasanjo was elected to another four-year term amidst allegations of electoral misconduct. The United States is a key partner for Nigeria's reformers, and has helped Nigeria reach a number of human rights milestones despite ongoing problems. Years of authoritarian misrule diminished or destroyed most national institutions, and corruption has rotted the civil service and most parastatals. Nigeria is beset by religious and ethnic divisions, all too often violent, and its government sometimes has been as much a part of the problems as of the solutions.

The Government's human rights record remained poor, and the Government continued to commit serious abuses. Security forces committed numerous, serious abuses including extrajudicial killings. Impunity was a problem. The judicial system often was incapable of providing criminal suspects with speedy and fair trials. Shari'a courts sentenced persons to harsh punishments including amputations and death by stoning. The Government continued placing limits on freedom of assembly and association. Some state governments placed limits on some religious rights, and some government programs discriminated between religious groups. Domestic violence and discrimination against women remained widespread. Female genital mutilation also remained widespread. Some restrictions on worker rights continued. Child abuse, child labor and child prostitution were common. Trafficking in persons for purposes of prostitution and forced labor was a problem.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy aims to assist in the consolidation of democracy and improve its effectiveness and transparency, strengthen civil society participation in governance processes, work closely with the Government and civil society to improve their ability to monitor, manage and prevent human rights abuses nationwide and communal conflict in areas of known ethnic or religious tension, and reduce and eliminate trafficking in persons.

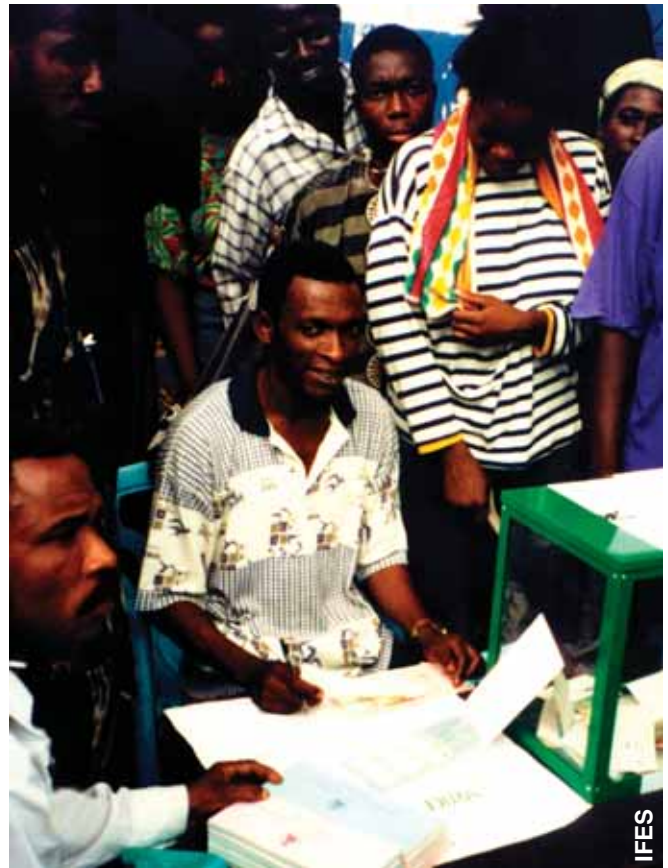
President Bush raised U.S. concerns about human rights issues and accountability with President Obasanjo during his July visit to Nigeria. Secretary Powell and Assistant Secretary Walter Kansteiner added personal demarches this year to a continuing U.S. campaign of pressing the Government to advance democracy and human rights.

The United States worked with civil society, political parties and the media in an effort to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. The United States itself played an active observer role at the political party conventions, at all levels of the elections in multiple states and at tribunals looking into allegations of election fraud. The United States provided training to civil society, and the Ambassador and key members of his staff gave speeches in numerous fora to encourage it to play more effective roles in policy advocacy and government oversight. The United States worked with political parties to widen the participation of the general public, particularly women, in the political process. The United States also assisted government and local officials, traditional and religious and social leaders to understand the issues underlying violent conflicts in their areas, and to formulate strategies to resolve the conflicts.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) committed \$3 million to improving governance in 2003. This funding was used in part to strengthen the Independent National Electoral Commission and political parties, and train polling agents and election monitors. A

National Information Center was established for civil society to transmit “real time” data from nearly 12,000 domestic monitors. USAID also funded Islamic women’s groups to serve as election monitors for the first time, with more than 1,800 monitors. Aid to State Assemblies trained staff in technical and procedural matters; 56 new pieces of legislation were passed nationwide for legislative management, implementing constitutional requirements and improving core development issues such as infrastructure, social services, conflict mitigation and security. USAID-trained legislative associates (interns) were embedded in State Assemblies, and the National Assembly assumed management of its U.S.-funded computer resources center. The embassy’s Public Affairs Section made two Funds for Civic Education program grants for public education in democratization and civil rights.

The United States expanded its efforts to make rule of law more effective, working with Nigerian courts to improve case management and judicial ethics, and building the investigative capacity and independence of Nigerian government agencies charged with investigating corruption and monitoring procurement. USAID committed \$1.25 million in judicial strengthening activities to improve management and dissemination of court information, codify judicial ethics and expand public access to justice through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Nigeria’s second multi-purpose ADR Center in Abuja will offer civil mediation and arbitration services. The Embassy helped Chief Judges in pilot state jurisdictions create new bar/bench management committees that helped produce timely and accurate judicial reports, shorten the time between litigation, settlement and final disposition, and reduce the number of appeals based upon recording inaccuracies. Judges from three pilot jurisdictions unanimously ratified a “Code of Conduct for its Court Employees,” requiring employees to be accountable for resources, protect confidential information, avoid the appearance of impropriety, refrain from using their position for personal



enrichment and uphold high standards of behavior.

The United States funded several Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) projects to encourage respect for the rights of women. In the North, the Embassy worked with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to create radio programs promoting the empowerment and education of Muslim women. The United States also sponsored a televised docudrama aired nationwide to educate viewers about the problem of domestic violence, and continued working with a domestic NGO to educate policymakers in three states on introducing legislation for the eradication of female genital mutilation. The Public Affairs Section’s International Visitor program, with input from several different sections of the Embassy, sent representatives from Nigeria’s civil society, government and media to a wide range of U.S. programs, notably conflict resolution, NGO management, empowerment of women, trafficking issues and Islam in America.

The United States worked extensively on the problem of inter-religious violence and religious freedom, meeting with national and local political and religious leaders on multiple occasions to gain a better understanding of the problems and to advocate resolution. U.S. officers gave speeches across the country calling for reconciliation, and traveled extensively to work with state officials and Muslim and Christian leaders on promoting peace and ending discrimination. USAID committed \$1.044 million to support a range of conflict management and peace-building activities, including sponsoring a Christian pastor and Islamic imam from Kaduna at a peace-building course at the School of International Training in Vermont in 2003. The two leaders then trained members of the Kaduna Peace Committee, and USAID paid for radio and television programs where the pastor and imam could discuss conflict issues in Kaduna and Kano. In 2004 the pastor and imam received the prestigious Common Ground Award from the well known NGO Search for Common Ground, in recognition of the success of their peacemaking efforts.

The United States has worked to help Nigeria improve the professionalism of its military, the military's respect for human rights and all Nigerians' appreciation and support for civilian rule. Congress has restricted military aid to Nigeria in response to the massacre of approximately 200 civilians in Benue State in 2001 by the Nigerian army. The United States sponsored a Defense Institute of International Legal Studies seminar for Nigerian military and civilian leaders with a focus on human rights, international law, rules of engagement and civilian control of the military. The United States continued to sponsor a high-level program at the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to teach proper civil-military relations and assist in the reorganization of the MOD.

During the election year, the United States was a staunch advocate of democratic processes and reforms inside and outside the Nigerian Government. The United States reported on numerous human rights abuses committed by

security forces and helped human rights organizations and the media more effectively play their roles in democracy. The United States continued its train-the-trainers program on police reform with three 4-week programs to improve the professionalism, responsibility and performance of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Human rights, including such topics as excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings, were a major focus. The United States also managed a six-month program for 500 new NPF recruits, which included training on human rights and law enforcement, community policing and the proper use of force.

Elsewhere in Nigeria, USAID engaged unemployed and out-of-school Muslim and Christian youth in basketball tournaments to create competition without violence, a program that gained national attention. Concerns about the implementation of new laws based on Shari'a in several Nigerian states led USAID partners to establish the Shari'a Stakeholders Consultative Group. The Group served as both a rule of law advocate and information source in the landmark Amina Lawal adultery/capital punishment case. The United States has funded various programs to help bring peace to the oil-rich Niger delta, where inter-communal violence has killed dozens and displaced thousands of Nigerians.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provided financial backing for the International Labor Organization's International Program to Eliminate Child Labor (ILO/IPEC), specifically to build the capacity of government institutions and NGOs to deal with the problem. Funding continued to flow from DOL for the \$5 million multi-year ILO/IPEC project to eliminate the worst forms of child labor from the cocoa sector of commercial agriculture. Nigeria is one of five countries participating in the regional project. USAID committed Development Assistance to anti-trafficking programs. U.S. officials traveled to Nigeria in 2003 to help raise public awareness and meet with government officials, law enforcement and NGOs. The embassy's Public Affairs Section published magazine articles on trafficking in women and

children, and held a televised discussion forum on Trafficking in Persons with officials of the Human Rights Commission, the Police Service Commission, human rights advocacy groups, the Federation of International Women Lawyers, national legislators and journalists.

Nigeria continued to receive DOL funding for a program transitioning veterans into civilian occupations. DOL continued funding under its HIV/AIDS Workplace Education project.

The United States has taken a very active role in helping Nigeria combat trafficking in persons, including a \$2.3 million commitment from the State Department. The U.S. Department of Justice provided another \$350,000 from its International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program and Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training program to train prosecutors, law enforcement and judicial officials – training which also forwards U.S. rule of law and anti-corruption interests. An additional \$500,000 from Economic Support Funds supported two rehabilitation shelters for victims of trafficking.

RWANDA

April 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the 1994 genocide that claimed the lives of at least 800,000 victims. In 2003 and early 2004, Rwanda's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses. Local Defense Forces committed unlawful killings, human rights groups reported politically motivated disappearances and security forces continued to subject opposition figures to arbitrary arrest and detention. Elections were marred by a lack of transparency and intimidation of the major opposition party. The judiciary failed to ensure due process: A Foreign Service National who was arrested in April 2002 remained in detention without trial. The Government restricted freedom of speech and the press, beat journalists and harassed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in civic education. These abuses over-

shadowed the adoption of a new constitution and the first-ever multi-party elections to elect a president and a bicameral legislature, important initial steps in building a viable democracy in Rwanda.

To address these problems, the U.S. human rights and democracy strategy seeks to increase the capacity of Rwandan civil society and political parties through decentralization of local government. It also aims at strengthening respect for human rights among Rwandan officials and opinion leaders as well as encouraging the development and professionalization of the country's media.

Strengthening human rights and democracy involves U.S. officials in Washington and the entire Embassy, from the Ambassador to first-tour officers, and reflects a collaborative effort among the State Department's reporting officers, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Defense Attaché's Office, the Public Diplomacy Section and the Diplomatic Security Service. To implement its strategy, the Embassy utilizes a range of diplomatic tools, including monitoring and reporting of human rights abuses, providing technical assistance and training to promote government accountability and respect for human rights and enhancing capacity-building to strengthen Rwandan institutions, NGOs and civil society.

In September and October, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, respectively, discussed the Rwandan elections with Foreign Minister Murigande. When the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs met with the Foreign Minister in February, they also discussed democracy and human rights issues.

To strengthen democracy and rule of law, the Embassy sponsored legal experts, including a professor of constitutional law and several federal judges, to work with the Transitional National Assembly and Rwanda's Judicial Reform

Commission on drafting the new constitution and outlining judicial reforms, respectively. USAID funded an American legislative advisor who helped both the Transitional National Assembly and its successor develop rules of procedure, draft legislation and provide budget training to parliamentarians; support for this project in Fiscal Year 2003 totaled nearly \$700,000.

To promote civil and political rights, the Ambassador and other U.S. officials met with members of Rwanda's Human Rights Commission, National Electoral Commission, Constitutional Commission and National Unity and Reconciliation Commission to highlight concerns about the Government of Rwanda's law against "divisionism." Under the law, the Government recommended that the primary opposition party be banned. It detained political opponents. Members of the opposition, including a prominent parliamentarian disappeared. To foster freedom of the media, the Embassy sponsored two weeklong workshops on media issues in 2003. One workshop featured presentations to Rwandan media professionals from veteran journalists from the United States and South Africa.

During the 2003 constitutional referendum and national elections, the Embassy fielded teams of electoral observers throughout the country, to gather first-hand information on the conduct of the voting and ballot counts. The Ambassador also chaired an interagency elections task force comprised of State, USAID and Defense Attaché's Office officials, who reviewed weekly election developments and U.S. electoral support activities.

USAID grants helped international NGOs strengthen democracy in Rwanda. USAID provided \$500,000 in grants to the U.S.-based International Foundation for Election Systems and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), to field international observers for the presidential and legislative elections and conduct election assessments that were provided to Rwanda's National Electoral Commission. President Paul

Kagame, of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front, was elected to a seven-year term, officially receiving 95 per cent of the vote and defeating two independent rivals. Observers questioned, however, whether elections were free and fair, and documented harassment of opposition figures. NDI organized a post-election roundtable of political parties that promoted dialogue among Rwandan political figures and helped build cooperation.

USAID also provided \$570,000 to the Academy for Educational Development (AED), aimed at capacity-building for electoral officials. The AED grant funded the installation of desktop computers and software in the electoral commission's 12 provincial offices to manage a database of nearly four million voters, and will provide election officials with preprinted voter registration cards for future elections. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor used its Human Rights and Democracy Fund to support a women's political empowerment project which equipped women candidates in Rwanda with the skills necessary to run effective political campaigns. As a result, women comprise 49 percent of Rwanda's newly elected parliament, one of the world's highest rates of representation by women.

A USAID grant to CARE International helped civil society organizations develop a civic education manual in 2003, with related posters, pamphlets and field guides on Rwandan citizens' rights and responsibilities.

USAID provided \$250,000 in grants to Internews to produce three films on election processes, to be shown in local communities throughout the country. Government officials ultimately prohibited the showing of two films completed prior to the elections, but did allow one film to be shown to Rwanda's new parliament, as part of its legislative training.

To strengthen Rwanda's legal institutions while promoting justice and reconciliation, the Embassy

helped Rwanda's Ministry of Justice establish a state-of-the-art computer network and database, which links the Ministry and Attorney General with provincial prosecutors and courts nationwide and allows them to track court proceedings. USAID also provided nearly \$800,000 in vehicles, computers, equipment, office furniture and supplies to the Rwandan court offices administering "Gacaca," the grassroots, village-level proceedings for approximately 80,000 Rwandans still in pre-trial detention for crimes related to the genocide. The Embassy's Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) supported a \$15,000 grant to the Episcopal Church Diocese at Gahini, which works with recently released prisoners and others to promote reconciliation and strengthen "Gacaca" genocide trials.

To strengthen local government, the Embassy funded programs to promote fiscal decentralization. With U.S. assistance, district-level accountants received training in financing community development projects.

To encourage respect for the rights of women and children, the Embassy's DHRF provided a grant to FACT-Rwanda, an NGO providing training to

secondary school students on addressing sexual and gender-based violence. The Embassy also awarded a DHRF grant to Club Isangano, a youth group that uses traditional song and dance to promote reconciliation throughout Rwanda. U.S. support for the Genocide Survivors' Scholarship Fund, through a \$2 million grant, allowed nearly 7,000 Rwandan children (two-thirds of whom are girls) to attend secondary school in the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years.

The 2003 release of a report funded the previous year by a DHRF grant provided new information on the situation of street children in Rwanda.

In 2003, the Defense Attaché Office worked with UNICEF and the Rwandan Defense Forces to provide training on children's rights to Rwandan military officers. Such training aims at sensitization and recognizes the growing number of rebel child soldiers that are being demobilized from eastern Congo and reintegrated into Rwanda. In early 2004, the Government of Rwanda formally established a separate facility for the demobilization of child soldiers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Following the Rwandan military's formal withdrawal from the DRC in October 2002, there were no reports that



the Rwandan military committed human rights abuses in the DRC. The United States also supported refugees in Rwanda, by funding the American Refugee Committee's work in two refugee camps for approximately 60,000 Congolese refugees. In September 2003, the Defense Attaché Office organized a weeklong workshop aimed at teaching Rwandan military officers how to work more effectively with the media. The Defense Attaché Office also organized a seminar on "Developing a Professional Military." The seminar, which was taught by the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, explored such important topics as the military's role in a democracy.

The Embassy utilizes the State Department's International Visitor (IV) program to promote respect for human rights and democratic values. By sponsoring their travel to the United States, the Embassy has helped prospective Rwandan leaders from government, academia, the NGO community and the media participate in IV programs on such topics as grassroots democracy, transparency and good governance, the U.S. judicial system, the role of the media, women's leadership and conflict resolution.

Among the states in the Great Lakes region of central Africa, Rwanda is unique among its neighbors, for it is the only one not actively fighting an insurgency or civil war within its borders. All around Rwanda, conflict threatens economic and social progress. The U.S. human rights strategy in Rwanda recognizes that despite the lack of a military conflict within its borders, the people of Rwanda continue to wage an important battle – a battle for democracy, human dignity and political freedom.

SIERRA LEONE

The terrible catalog of egregious human rights abuses committed in Sierra Leone over the last several years was nearly all a result of the country's 11-year civil war. Following the conclusion of the war in January 2002, human rights abuses

have fallen dramatically. The Government generally respected the rights of its citizens; however, there were serious problems in several areas. In 2003, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) allegedly committed serious human rights abuses, including killings, rapes and beatings, though on a far lesser scale than during and before the war. Members of the SLP continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily. There were reports of extortion by police. Prolonged detention, excessive bail and insufficient legal representation remained problems. Although conditions in some prisons improved, many detention centers were overcrowded and unsanitary. The Government at times limited freedom of speech and the press during 2003. Violence, discrimination against women and prostitution remained problems. Female genital mutilation remained widespread. Abuse of children was a problem; however, numerous children who fought as child soldiers continued to be released and participated in reintegration programs during the year. Residents of non-African descent faced institutionalized political restrictions. Forced labor continued to be a problem in rural areas. Child labor remained a problem, and there were reports of trafficking in persons.

The primary U.S. priority in Sierra Leone remains the consolidation of the peace, which was established principally due to massive intervention by the international community. Preventing a relapse into civil conflict and promoting the current improved human rights climate is the aim of all U.S. efforts in Sierra Leone. Achievement of this objective requires the promotion of stable, democratic governance, transparency and broader participation of Sierra Leone's people.

The United States participates in the UK-led effort to remake the RSLAF and SLP into effective forces responsive to civilian authority. Three American military personnel embedded in the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) and U.S.-funded helicopter sup-

port contributed substantially to IMATT's capabilities. Exceptionally poor civil-military relations have been a chronic impediment to democratic governance in Sierra Leonean society. The Defense Attaché Office organized several conferences to promote improved civil-military relations. In 2003, two SLP officers graduated from the FBI training academy at Quantico, opportunities made possible by the Regional Security Officer.

Past human rights abuses were directly related to the state of extreme insecurity in the country. Consequently, much of the effort to address human rights abuses are directed at strengthening the ability of the Sierra Leone Government to provide for the security of its citizens. Several incidents of human rights abuses in 2003 were attributed to belligerents in the conflict in neighboring Liberia. Both sides in that conflict sent armed foraging parties into Sierra Leone to loot border communities and force Sierra Leone citizens to serve against their will as porters and possibly in other capacities. The U.S. provision of helicopter services to the RSLAF and the SLP, paid for by peacekeeping funds, has assisted in strengthening border security.

Through the provision of \$20 million over three years in Economic Support Funds (ESF), the United States is the largest financial contributor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Special Court has a mandate from the UN Security Council to put on trial those with the greatest responsibility for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in Sierra Leone since 1996. The United States also gives the Special Court strong political backing in the UN Security Council and on the UN management committee. The Ambassador and members of his country team are in regular contact with senior Special Court officials to determine how the United States can most effectively support the Court. Successful implementation of the Special Court's mandate will send a strong message throughout the African



continent that the culture of impunity is fast ending.

The United States provided a \$800,000 Human Rights and Democracy Fund grant to the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative to document war crimes, building upon work previously undertaken in the Balkans.

Approximately \$700,000 in ESF monies was contributed to Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) through the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Embassy has closely followed the work of the TRC and the Ambassador has weighed in with key players to assure effec-

tive management of U.S. resources in support of the TRC's mandate. The United States has conditioned an additional \$300,000 on successful completion of the TRC's work and credible progress on the establishment of a truly independent Human Rights Commission.

All elements of the Embassy make democratic practice an element of their dialogue with key contacts in civil society, including religious leaders, women, politicians in government and opposition and the media. The United States also underlines the significance of improved democratic practice to sustaining U.S. engagement in Sierra Leone. The Embassy's Public Diplomacy section became fully staffed in 2003 for the first time since 1997. The United States has focused these enhanced resources, including exchanges and visiting speakers, on issues of democratic practice with all relevant audiences. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Democracy and Human Rights Fund and other resources, the United States supports the activities of the National Democratic Institute and domestic non-governmental organizations, such as the Campaign for Good Governance, that promote human rights and democracy.

The United States funded the construction of Radio Moa, which serves Kailahun, an area in eastern Sierra Leone near the Liberian border traumatized by a decade-long rebel occupation during the war. The radio station is relevant and successful because it airs uncensored public opinion. The local community manages the station through a diverse board representing a wide range of local people and institutions. The radio station played a key role in providing accurate information after a recent disturbance involving gunfire between RSLAF soldiers that local villagers mistook for an armed incursion.

The U.S. Ambassador gave speeches in Kailahun District in 2003 and 2004 in which he drove home the importance of educating girls and making good use of donor assistance. The speeches

generated extensive media coverage and comment. The substance of these speeches was later used by the President of Sierra Leone in remarks he made promoting the advancement of women in the country, urging Sierra Leoneans to place a high value on the education of women and girls.

Serious human rights abuses such as bonded and child labor continue to be problems in Sierra Leone's extensive alluvial diamond fields. Through strong intervention from USAID, the United States is addressing these and other issues in an attempt to make diamond mining a legitimate and effectively monitored economic activity.

SOMALIA

Somalia has been without a central government since its last president, dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, fled the country in 1991. The human rights record remained poor, and serious human rights abuses continued. In May 2000, in Arta, Djibouti, delegates representing all clans and a wide spectrum of Somali society participated in a "Conference for National Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia." The Conference adopted a charter for a three-year Transitional National Government and selected a 245-member Transitional National Assembly. Administrations in the northwest (Somaliland) and northeast (Puntland) did not recognize the results of the Djibouti Conference, nor did several Mogadishu-based factional leaders. Serious inter-clan and intra-clan fighting continues in parts of the country, resulting in the killing of numerous civilians.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Somalia is to achieve national reconciliation, nurture democratic institutions and the rule of law, and mitigate conflict. Since the United States does not have diplomatic representation in Somalia, the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi is responsible for Somalia. During visits to Somalia, embassy officers encouraged participation in Somali reconciliation efforts to develop country-wide democratic institutions and also addressed human rights violations on an individual basis

when aware of them. In 2003, the Embassy used the Democracy and Human Rights Fund for four projects in southern Somalia, two involving human rights education and training and two promoting conflict resolution at the local grassroots level.

A reconciliation process was initiated by the Government of Kenya on behalf of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eldoret, Kenya, in October 2002. In 2003, the process, which has as its goal the establishment of governance in Somalia acceptable to all Somalis, was moved to the outskirts of Nairobi. The embassy's "Somalia Watcher" was an active observer at the talks until July 2003; embassy involvement was less intensive for the remainder of the year as the result of a staffing gap. In 2003, the United States provided \$250,000 in support of this reconciliation process, both for expenses related to conference administration and to support broadcasts of the conference proceedings in order to keep the Somali public informed on the debates and decisions being made at the conference.

Somaliland, the self-proclaimed republic in northwestern Somalia, held presidential elections in April 2003. Embassy Nairobi staff informally served as election observers. According to the announced results in the presidential contest, the incumbent, Dahir Riyale Kahin, won a very narrow victory; his principal challenger, Ahmad Muhammad Silanyo, announced that his party would peacefully protest the outcome. The United States maintains informal contacts with Somaliland authorities, as it does with a number of other Somali groups. However, it does not have an official relationship with Somaliland and, therefore, did not provide direct electoral assistance to the Somaliland authorities. The United States did provide financial assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for party-building, including \$200,000 from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for political party development activities through the International Republican Institute, and U.S.

officials visiting Somaliland have encouraged political leaders to develop democratic institutions.

One of USAID's strategic objectives for Somalia has been to strengthen Somali capacity for local governance and conflict mitigation. In 2003, USAID provided \$769,000 to a civil society expansion program in Somaliland and Puntland. This program is designed to provide technical support and funding to local organizations and communities that have the capacity to implement developmental services in cooperation and collaboration with local authorities.

Civil society groups are now key partners in carrying out conflict awareness and management programs. In 2003, USAID provided \$805,000 to the War-torn Societies Project (WSP). This is an innovative field-oriented research-cum-action project, which seeks to help create an environment conducive to the consolidation of peace and sustainable development. WSP supports two local participatory research organizations, one in Somaliland and one in Puntland that are designed to be successor organizations to the project.

USAID extended by six months its three-year program with the UN Development Program to support the judiciary and the rule of law. The program seeks to help re-establish functional judicial services including the rationalization and adoption of legal codes, and the re-establishment of functional judicial and court facilities, including training, capacity building and the provision of essential equipment.

SUDAN

The Government of Sudan remained under the leadership of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who took power in a military coup in 1989, and continued to operate under an extended state of emergency. The Government's human rights record remained extremely poor, and although there were improvements in some areas, numerous serious abuses continued. The Government



restricts some non-Islamic religious practices and other civil liberties. The judiciary is not independent. The press is not free. Members of the national security forces operate with impunity and the number of political detentions has risen. The peace negotiation process to end the second of two 20-year civil wars since independence in 1956 continued. The United States, with its troika partners the United Kingdom and Norway, remained actively engaged.

The Government denies that fighting in the western region of Darfur has led to human rights violations and has sought to keep this conflict separate from the ongoing peace process in the south. However, an estimated 700,000 are fleeing their homes due to insecurity. Reports indicate that Arab Muslim militias are killing, looting and raping vulnerable populations. By all accounts, the victims of these human rights violations are African Muslims. In addition, the Government of Sudan is denying humanitarian access to hundreds of thousands of civilians, creating further widespread suffering. The security forces have detained a large number of people from Darfur including human rights activists working in the region. Though most have been released, a few have been charged under the crimes against the

state law and remain in detention, and some remain in detention without charges. Due to the unrest in the area, parliament voted December 29, 2003, to extend the state of emergency law for another year.

The press still suffers from suspensions, arrests and harassing lawsuits. Members of the security forces have exercised their authority separately from the president's office, unilaterally ordering newspaper closings, and they shut down al-Jazeera's Sudan office and detained the director incommunicado for seven days without charges. These actions strain President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's credibility since he announced the Government's commitment in October 2003 to lift the prohibitions on press and the media as well as to human rights in general. The Embassy actively monitors press freedom and has delivered statements to the newspapers and the Government protesting press suspensions and detentions and meets personally with those involved.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Sudan supports conflict resolution, promotes respect for fundamental human rights and combats trafficking in persons. Embassy officers

stressed to government officials at all levels the importance of human rights benchmarks to improve bilateral relations and for the eventual loosening and lifting of economic sanctions, emphasizing press freedom, religious tolerance, promoting an open political process and freedom of speech, movement and assembly.

The Chargé d'Affaires, Deputy Chief of Mission, other embassy representatives and official Washington visitors maintained essential and continuous dialogue, not only with government officials, including regularly with the Foreign Minister, but also with various opposition politicians from Khartoum and political leaders from the West and East of Sudan, leaders from all sectors of Sudanese society, activists in the human rights arena and members of the media. Embassy officers also met regularly with religious leaders and encouraged the work of the Sudan inter-religious council. Senior Washington officials, including the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Special Administrator met with top government officials and influential players. The Embassy supported new initiatives for cultural and educational exchange programs in the areas of democracy, human rights and civil liberties, and responsible press. The Chargé d'Affaires and Washington visitors held numerous press conferences and interviews for local, regional and international media.

In Fiscal Year 2003, the United States allocated nearly \$163 million for humanitarian assistance including a USAID-supported internally displaced persons and child protection program. New initiatives linked to the peace process included expanding humanitarian assistance as a result of improved access to populations in the south. The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Affairs funded refugee protection and assistance programs for children.

The United States continued to provide funding, assistance and support to the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team (CPMT) (\$6 million in 2003), the Nuba Mountains Joint Monitoring Mission (\$7 million in 2003) and the Verification Monitoring Team (\$1.3 million in 2003 and 2004). The CPMT objectively documents military attacks against civilians occurring in warring areas and brings them to the attention of the Government, the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the international community; incidents have decreased significantly since the monitoring began in 2002. The CPMT posts its reports on the Internet (www.cpmtsudan.org) and provides them to local media for publication. The 12-nation Nuba Mountains Joint Military Commission continued to monitor government and SPLM adherence to a cease-fire in the Nuba Mountains.

The Government does not consider trafficking in persons to be a major problem; the Government does acknowledge that abductions have occurred in large numbers. To facilitate reintegration and family reunification of abductees, the Government recently began to provide funding to the governmental organization Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWC) for that purpose. In line with the recommendations of U.S. Special Envoy Senator Danforth's International Eminent Person's Group report of May 2002, USAID funded anti-trafficking activities and generated community support for child protection initiatives that continue to expand. Using a database of approximately 15,000 abducted persons, the programs work with communities to trace, resettle and reintegrate abductees back into their home community.

SWAZILAND

Swaziland is an absolute monarchy, and political parties are technically banned although some operate under government surveillance. The Government's human rights record was poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses. Police used excessive force on some occasions, and

there were reports that police tortured and beat some suspects. Impunity was a problem. Government respect for the rule of law remained problematic and caused the entire Court of Appeals to resign in late 2002 with no further developments in 2003. A lack of administrative efficiency and capacity within the judiciary made access to justice prolonged and difficult. Legal and cultural discrimination, violence against women and abuse of children remained problems. Worker rights remained limited. There was anecdotal evidence that trafficking in persons occurred.

In light of these concerns, the U.S. human rights and democracy strategy consists of highlighting the importance of respect for the rule of law, developing ways to improve administrative efficiency within the judicial system, increasing women's political awareness and improving respect for internationally recognized workers' rights. Embassy officers also worked to improve public understanding of constitutional principles and democracy.

Although the constitution has been suspended since 1973, in May 2003, a Constitutional Drafting Committee released a draft of the constitution for public debate. In June, King Mswati and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner discussed the release of the draft constitution. To support this initiative, the Embassy used Economic Support Funds (ESF) to sponsor a civic education program, administered by the International Development Law Organization, which improved public understanding of the draft constitution, political participation, accountability and transparency in government and the need for political participation. Through the civic education program, which targeted civic groups, parliamentarians, judicial officials and other government representatives, the Embassy stressed the importance of participating in the 2003 national elections, which installed a parliament with some pro-democracy members.

Government respect for the rule of law did not improve in 2003, and it refused to respect court decisions that it found politically threatening. The United States used Public Diplomacy programs and the Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) to raise public awareness of the danger of this trend and the importance of an independent and efficient judiciary. The lack of a court of appeals and overall administrative inefficiency within the judiciary has caused the already significant backlog of unheard cases to worsen. To address this concern, the Embassy developed an ESF program that will bolster the technological capacity of all elements of the judicial system and strengthen the use of pre-trial case management to reduce the backlog and improve litigants' access to the courts. The Embassy also used the International Visitor program to expose the judiciary to the U.S. court system, thereby building an awareness of the need for transparency and accountability within the judiciary.

Women and children are traditionally disadvantaged groups. The Embassy used the DHRF to bolster respect for and improve the political awareness of women. One half of the DHRF



allotment for 2003 supported a women-managed non-governmental organization (NGO) that played a critical role in running civic education programs on the rights of women under the proposed constitution. The NGO also used the grant to help women seeking election to parliament develop campaign strategies. Embassy officers also sought opportunities to speak publicly on the critical role women play in the most developed societies. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has left an increasing number of children vulnerable to child labor. As their parents become sick and die, the children lose their means of support and cannot pay school fees. To combat this trend in part, the Embassy worked to persuade the Government to take part in a U.S. Labor Department-sponsored program to reduce child labor and keep children in school. The government's agreement to join in this program is significant because it marks the first official acknowledgment of the Kingdom's growing child labor problem.

Increasing government and business community respect for internationally respected workers' rights has continued to be a critical component of the Embassy's human rights strategy. In 2003, the United States undertook an investigation into whether the Kingdom's General System of Preferences privileges should be revoked because respect for workers' rights is lacking. Although that investigation is still pending, the Embassy worked to improve the industrial relations environment by supporting tripartite workshops that clarified union recognition procedures in the garment sector. As a result of these workshops, tripartite partners have said that labor relations within the sector have improved.

TANZANIA

The United Republic of Tanzania is a multiparty state led by the President of the mainland, Benjamin Mkapa. Zanzibar, although integrated into the country's governmental and party structure, has its own President and legislature and exercises considerable autonomy. While there



have been improvements with respect to human rights in recent years, the Government's overall record remains poor. Police were more disciplined during the year; however, members of the police and security forces mistreated suspected criminals. Fair and expeditious trials were problematic due to an inefficient, understaffed judiciary subject to corruption. Prison conditions remained harsh and life-threatening. Child prostitution and child labor remained problems.

The U.S. strategy aims to improve respect for human rights and to foster an environment for free and fair elections that meet international standards in 2005. The United States consistently engaged the Government on a range of human rights issues and coordinated this strategy to effect change with all U.S. agencies in Tanzania.

Following the 2001 post-election violence, the United States has focused on decreasing tension between the long-ruling CCM party and the main opposition political party on Zanzibar. In 2003, embassy officials continued to meet frequently

with representatives from both parties. Embassy officials also met regularly in Zanzibar's Joint Presidential Supervisory Committee (JPSC) to voice continued U.S. support for the bipartisan "Muafaka" reconciliation accord. The accord, known by the Swahili term, mandates electoral reforms, establishment of a permanent voter registry and investigation of the post-election violence that took place in early 2001. The two major political parties negotiated this accord in the wake of massive electoral irregularities and conflict on Zanzibar following the late 2000 general elections. The JPSC continued to supervise the implementation of these provisions in 2003. Embassy officials observed the May Parliamentary by-elections on Pemba, which were a critical test for the "Muafaka," and found them to be free and fair.

The embassy's democracy assistance programs and the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) civil society strengthening program focus on long-term efforts to build the capacity of grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs). USAID allocated \$2 million toward a multi-year project to strengthen the national parliament's representative, lawmaking

and oversight functions. The Public Affairs Section sponsors experts and exchange programs about human rights, democracy and good governance to increase awareness of these issues.

With \$265,000 in funding from the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and its International Law Enforcement Academy, the Regional Security Office provided practical training and equipment to enable police to better safeguard security while upholding universal human rights standards. Civil Disorder Management Training, which continued in 2003, gave police the skills to manage large demonstrations, protect demonstrators' rights against ill treatment and build the Government's confidence in its ability to manage demonstrations so that more rallies may be authorized rather than being banned outright. In 2003 only one rally was banned. INL has also provided approximately \$300,000 in multi-year funding for a forensic laboratory to improve police investigation skills, speed up investigations (during which the accused is often locked up) and reduce the number of wrongful arrests and convictions.



One of the embassy's most effective tools for highlighting human rights practices has been its annual observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. In addition to focusing on U.S. efforts to protect human rights at home and by extension providing a model for Tanzania, the observance includes the naming of a "Drum Major for Justice" laureate each year. The prestigious award receives widespread publicity. In 2004, Ms. Justa Mwaituka, Director of the Kiota Women's Health and Development Organization (KIWOHEDE) received the award for her anti-trafficking work with vulnerable rural young women unprepared for city life. KIWOHEDE was a recipient of a Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) grant to build 16 drop-in shelters for abused and trafficked girls.

In 2003 the DHRF supported women's empowerment. One 2003 DHRF project supported a local NGO's participatory drama about female genital mutilation that traveled to 54 rural villages and reached an audience of 46,807 people. Another 2003 DHRF project supported legal education and human rights awareness for Maasai women. With an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in excess of 12 percent and growing, the rights of people affected by the disease is becoming an issue for national dialogue. USAID support helped create the Tanzanian Parliamentarians AIDS Coalition, an NGO of Members of Parliament who seek to use their positions to advocate against discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS, minimize stigma, protect orphans and vulnerable groups and ensure proper accounting for the public funds designated to fight HIV/AIDS.

The Embassy has consistently engaged the Government on the issue of refugee protection for the nearly 500,000 refugees in Tanzania and urged them to continue their tradition of hosting refugees. High-level demarches were made during the year to emphasize this point.

The U.S. Labor Department continues to support a large multi-year program to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Tanzania. As of

December 2003, 3,895 children had been withdrawn from four targeted sectors. The Labor Department also supports a program aimed at strengthening labor relations.

The United States has been active in raising awareness about trafficking in persons and is a member of a working group that includes representatives from the Ministries of Social Development, Gender and Children, Labor and Education, and the Police Force's Criminal Investigation Division, as well as international and local NGOs. The Embassy donated two shipping containers for use as outreach centers by a local NGO working with child commercial sex workers. The Embassy also released a public service announcement in Swahili, the local language, about the danger of trafficking. A result of the increased awareness of trafficking was the first-ever arrest for trafficking of children in Tanzania.

TOGO

President Eyadema, Africa's longest-ruling strongman (in power for 37 years), despite pledging earlier not to run, was declared the victor of the June 2003 election, which was marked by numerous uninvestigated charges of irregularities. The principal opposition leader, meanwhile, was disqualified on the pretext of non-residency. Opposition leaders remain divided as to how to proceed. Deep distrust between the regime and opposition prevails. Significant continuing problem areas in human rights include strong-arm methods by military and security forces, restrictions on the press, the poor status of women and trafficking in women and children. Security forces committed unlawful killings and beat civilians. Impunity was a serious problem. The Government jailed and at times abused political opponents and critics of the Government. Arbitrary arrest and detention were problems. Several political arrests occurred, and prolonged pretrial detention was common. The judiciary did not ensure fair and expeditious trials. Prison conditions remained very harsh. Discrimination

against ethnic minorities remained a problem. The Government limited workers' rights to collective bargaining, and child labor was a problem.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Togo promotes democracy and women's rights and combats trafficking in persons. The United States has cut off most bilateral assistance to Togo over the past decade, as have the European Union and international financial institutions, because of the government's success in stalling democratic reforms. Socioeconomic indicators suggest that Togo is increasingly fragile. The United States devotes such resources as are available to addressing democracy and human rights issues, HIV/AIDS and trafficking. A particular focus is urging both the regime and an increasingly frustrated opposition and populace to seek dialogue leading to consensual change and, in particular, to avoid violent methods such as those that have led to collapse of other states in the region.

The United States issued a statement following the June 2003 presidential election noting the irregularities and urging all sides to embrace a peaceful democratic process. The United States has worked tirelessly, in its contacts with regime

officials, opposition parties, civil society, international financial institutions, and other donors, to promote the need for compromise and coordination toward dialogue. In 2002, the United States used Economic Support Funds to support political-party-building activities by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), but the NDI team ceased its activities and departed in early 2003 after the Government made continuation of its work impossible. The Ambassador used his July Fourth reception to address 600 guests from across Togo's political spectrum to explain in terms relevant to Togo's political transition what "government of the people, by the people and for the people" means.

The Public Affairs Section devoted much of its effort in 2003 to the promotion of democracy. It organized three conferences in the lead-up to the June election on non-violent means for pursuing civil and human rights, and the conduct of elections, journalistic ethics and HIV/AIDS, addressing the issue of de-stigmatization. Of ten international visitors from Togo, six were sent to the United States on programs addressing democracy and good-governance issues, two were sent on



HIV/AIDS programs, and two career staff members of the legislature were sent to a conference of legislative staff.

The Embassy used the Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) to support a range of initiatives. It brought together local political party members and civil society leaders to promote democracy at the grassroots level. This funding was also used to promote freedom of the press through a workshop on the rights of journalists and a code of professional conduct, and to combat corruption through a seminar bringing government, civil society and labor unions together to focus on corruption strategies and transparency. The Embassy also printed and distributed 3,000 copies of a guide for the public on judicial rights and procedures.

Limited security assistance allocations for Togo are dedicated to professionalizing the military and expanding its sensitivity to human rights issues. International Military Education and Training funds are being used, for example, toward a seminar in Togo to ameliorate civil-military relations. The U.S. military's European Command has carried out projects at the village level to address HIV/AIDS and poverty in order to convey the image of a just military sensitive to human rights.

To address Togo's entrenched traditional views on women's rights and protection of children, the Embassy devoted DHRF money to a women's rights campaign directed at traditional rulers and notables in rural areas. Another campaign stressed the importance of women's literacy. Through DHRF, the Embassy printed and distributed 5,000 copies of a comic book promoting child welfare, followed by roundtables on child-welfare issues in selected schools. The Public Affairs Section issued small grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies to promote female literacy, health and equal opportunity.

In 2003, the United States allocated \$2 million

toward a five-year program to combat child trafficking, which is a serious human rights issue in Togo. CARE is the NGO in charge of implementing the program. In 2003, CARE conducted a study on child trafficking covering the entire country and developed strategies on communication and education in 60 villages to combat the practice. The United States worked with another NGO to organize awareness and training seminars for youth and families all over Togo. The embassy's Public Affairs Section sent two International Visitors to the United States on programs addressing trafficking in persons. The Ambassador participated in a film on child trafficking, produced by a key Togolese NGO. Using funds totaling \$117,000 from the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Under Secretary for Global Affairs' Trafficking in Persons Office, the Embassy purchased equipment for a new office in the national police headquarters dedicated to the fight against child trafficking.

Togo also participates in a sub-regional project of the International Labor Organization for HIV/AIDS Workplace Education. This multi-year project is designed to combat discrimination against people living with AIDS in the workplace.

UGANDA

President Yoweri Museveni was elected to a second five-year term under the current constitution in March 2001. Museveni came to power in 1986, and the constitution requires that he leave office at the end of his current term in 2006. However, Museveni's supporters are seeking to change the constitution to remove the term limit, despite assurances from Museveni's political organization during the last presidential campaign that this would be his final term. Uganda's democratization process is incomplete. Legal restrictions on political parties seriously constrain freedom of association. Parliament and the judiciary are weak relative to the powerful executive.

Corruption is serious and widespread. The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) carried out numerous gross violations of human rights, including killings, rapes, torture and abduction. There are credible reports of illegal arrests and abuse by security forces in non-official detention centers known as "safe-houses." Security forces committed unlawful killings. Torture by security forces and beating of suspects to force confessions were serious problems. Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening. The Government punished some security force officials who were guilty of abuses; however, impunity remained a problem. Forced labor, including by children, occurred, and child labor was common, mostly in the informal sector. There were reports of trafficking in persons. Vigilante justice remained a problem. More positively, Uganda has a vigorous free press and a populace that does not hesitate to air its political opinions. Uganda has also created a representative system of elected local government, which is increasing its capacity to govern and deliver services effectively at the local level.

The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in Uganda promotes democratization, respect for fundamental human rights, strong institutions, decentralization and transparency. The strategy also combats domestic violence, child labor and trafficking in persons. U.S. officials engaged President Museveni and cabinet-level officials throughout 2003. In June, President Bush and Secretary of State Powell encouraged President Museveni to accelerate democratic reforms, and the Secretary raised democratization again when he met with Museveni in November. The United States urged Uganda to prepare for a peaceful and democratic political transition under current constitutional rules. The Ambassador actively participated in the Donor Democracy and Governance Group, which identified specific steps the Government needed to take to make progress toward these goals. Utilizing public affairs programs and the Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF), the Embassy also engaged Ugandans through the media and at the grassroots to promote human rights and support government-

tal and non-governmental human rights institutions. Development programs, primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Democracy, Governance and Conflict Team, were central to the efforts. The Embassy also offered International Visitor (IV) program to political and community leaders from a broad spectrum of society, providing visitors with direct exposure to American systems and practices. Departments of Labor, Treasury and Defense programs also contributed to the Embassy's efforts to promote transparency, democracy and human rights.

U.S. officials promoted the protection of human rights by security forces and investigated alleged abuses. Embassy personnel visited prisons to inspect conditions and participated in an advocacy campaign for better treatment of detainees and prisoners. Embassy personnel also encouraged human rights groups to collect information from victims about alleged human rights abuses. The Embassy contributed to the Ugandan military's respect for human rights by sending military officers to civil-military training classes in the United States.

Embassy Kampala also addressed gross violations of human rights associated with the brutal LRA, a bizarre and cult-like group responsible for the displacement of more than one million Ugandans and the abduction of over 20,000 children. The LRA has conducted an insurgency in northern Uganda for 17 years, and has been operating from bases in southern Sudan. Embassy funds were used to help reintegrate rebels granted amnesty under a law passed in 2000. The Embassy provided funds, including \$1 million from Fiscal Year 2003 Victims of Torture funds, through a consortium of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for community peace-building and support for formerly abducted and other war-affected children and victims of torture. The United States also encouraged all sides to pursue a negotiated settlement and work out interim arrangements for improved delivery of humanitarian relief.

U.S. officials supported the strengthening of democratic institutions. Embassy funds were used to improve the capacity of parliament and parliamentary staff to carry out their representative, legislative and oversight responsibilities. Contributions to the Office of Parliamentary Professional Development enabled lawmakers to better research issues and monitor and influence pending bills. A successful course on legislative drafting made individual Members of Parliament better prepared to initiate and amend future legislation. Other successful seminars focused on parliament's role in the budget process, review of a World Bank-mandated poverty reduction strategy and prospects for media reform. The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance developed an anti-money laundering strategy for the Government of Uganda and helped draft legislation to deal with the problem. The legislation is now pending before parliament.

Another embassy program supported the devolution of central government authority to local levels and trained local elected officials and administrators for new responsibilities. A complementary DHRF grant funded the distribution of a reference book to help local officials and community leaders better protect human rights in their communities. This reference book was also utilized in a weeklong seminar in Mbale District.

U.S. officials worked to strengthen democratic election systems in Uganda. A 2002 survey co-sponsored by the United States showed that only 21 percent of the electorate trusted the previous Electoral Commission (EC). In response, the Embassy in 2003 began a program to strengthen the new EC's technical capacity, promote electoral reform and advocate for specific improvements in electoral administration. Another embassy program assisted a consortium of NGOs with strategic planning to monitor democratization in the lead-up to 2006 elections. The Embassy also began a modest program to strengthen political parties and promote political pluralism.

The Embassy promoted freedom of speech and the press. A DHRF grant went to the Uganda Journalist Safety Committee to train radio and print journalists on how to cover human rights and democracy issues. The Embassy's public affairs section also continued its long tradition of journalism training, with a focus on the expansion and improvement of independent rural radio.

In support of religious freedom, the Embassy used DHRF funds to sponsor a successful series of seminars promoting inter-religious harmony among Ugandans. The Ambassador and other embassy personnel spoke to Muslim groups and attended various programs. The Embassy sponsored several fora to promote interfaith dialogue, forge interfaith coalitions to support peace-building in conflict areas and allow the Muslim population to voice its opinions on issues of bilateral interest. IV grants allowed influential Muslim leaders to travel to the United States, where they shared their experiences with fellow Muslims.

The Embassy utilized two DHRF grants to promote the rights of rural women and combat high levels of domestic violence against women in Ugandan villages. One DHRF grantee in Rakai District conducted seminars to increase public awareness of the problem of domestic violence. The organization also trained HIV/AIDS counselors and local officials on how to identify cases of domestic violence and ways to intervene to protect victims. Another grantee in Kotido District sensitized local officials to the need to protect women's rights and to prevent discrimination against women in the local court system.

To promote children's rights and combat child labor and trafficking in persons, the United States funded several projects. The Elimination of Child Labor project targeted children engaged in commercial sexual activities, street work and domestic labor. Another initiative sought to remove children from the worst forms of child labor in commercial agriculture. Under its Education Initiative, the U.S. Labor Department funded a program to expand the access and quali-

ty of education in war-torn northern Uganda for children at risk of exploitation as child soldiers or sexual partners.

To promote worker's rights U.S. officials met with trade union officials as well as government officials during a controversial strike at a textile manufacturer, and demonstrated support for worker rights at trade union elections. The United States also funded a four-year regional program to strengthen labor relations in East Africa, including Uganda. The program helped facilitate cooperation between the Government, employers and labor unions to better identify and resolve worker grievances. The program also supported efforts to reform and update Uganda's employment legislation. Under another new labor program, a local NGO worked to improve employer policies on AIDS in the workplace and to reduce discrimination against employees living with HIV/AIDS.

ZAMBIA

After restoring multi-party politics in 1991, the Republic of Zambia has been governed by the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy, the party of both President Levy Mwanawasa and his predecessor, Frederick Chiluba. Zambia has made strides toward democratic governance that protects human rights, but many challenges remain. The December 2001 election that brought President Mwanawasa into office was tainted by alleged irregularities and is being challenged in the courts. A series of subsequent parliamentary by-elections showed continuing weaknesses in Zambia's electoral system, but there were also signs of improved performance by the Electoral Commission. The government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. There are frequent reports of human rights abuses committed by Zambian law enforcement officers. Police officers committed several unlawful killings and tortured, beat and otherwise abused criminal suspects and detainees. The Government has begun to take steps to address

this long-standing problem through training initiatives and, with U.S. assistance, the Police Public Complaints Authority (PPCA). Arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention and long delays in trials were problems. The Government at times sought to restrict press freedom. Violence and discrimination against women remained widespread. Child abuse, child labor and discrimination against persons with disabilities were problems. Workers' rights were limited. There were reports of trafficking in persons.

Since mid-2002, the Mwanawasa Government has made fighting corruption one of its top priorities. Several senior officials from the previous government, including former President Chiluba and some of Mwanawasa's own appointees, have become the subjects of independent corruption investigations. Some are currently on trial. The judiciary enjoys considerable independence, but is hampered by a lack of resources, inefficiency and corruption.

In view of Zambia's poor human rights record and building on the demonstrated will of leaders both inside and outside of government to undertake reforms, the U.S. human rights and democracy strategy for Zambia consists of promoting democratic governance, improving the professionalism of law enforcement agencies and ending child labor. All of the democracy and governance activities undertaken by the United States are coordinated through an inter-agency working group chaired by the Ambassador.

U.S. efforts to foster democratic, transparent and fair governance in Zambia include support for legal and institutional reform and technical assistance for the Zambian government's campaign to combat corruption. In the area of institutional reform, the main focus is the Parliamentary Reform Project initiated in 2002 by Zambia's National Assembly. Following the successful conclusion of a one-year pilot project, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) joined the National Assembly and the governments of four other nations on December 5, 2003,

in committing \$1 million to support a three-year project. The goal of the Parliamentary Reform Project is to help the National Assembly become an effective, independent legislature that can act as an equal partner in the governance of Zambia, rather than a rubber stamp for the executive branch.

As a complement to U.S. support for parliamentary reform, USAID has also funded grants to civil society organizations advocating constitutional reform. The Government and reform advocates agree that Zambia must revise its constitution in order to make the Government more accountable and to protect human rights; consensus has not yet been reached, however, on the process to follow in effecting constitutional reform.

U.S. assistance for Zambia's fight against corruption began in August 2002 with a grant from USAID to the Ministry of Legal Affairs to improve the capacity of the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. In 2003, anti-corruption assistance expanded to include a broad program of technical assistance from the U.S. Treasury Department to help Zambian investigators and prosecutors learn how to manage cases of unprecedented complexity and scope. U.S. assistance to Zambia's Task Force on Corruption, which coordinates the work of investigators and prosecutors in a wide range of landmark corruption cases, helps the Zambian Government and civil society establish an improved climate of accountability, the best defense against corruption.

The United States has supported training with significant human rights components for Zambian law enforcement officers and members of the military. Over 120 police officers have received training at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Gaborone, Botswana through 2003. The curricula for these courses include important human rights components. The United States has sent two members of the Zambian Armed Forces

to the United States for a year's training; each will receive at least 40 hours of human rights instruction. Another five individuals from the Zambian military received human rights training while attending four- to eight-week courses in the United States. In addition, U.S. Department of Defense trainers made several visits to Zambia in 2003 to improve the capacity of the Zambian Defense Force to participate in international peacekeeping operations. The courses included significant components on human rights training.

As part of an effort to improve the professional standards of Zambia's law enforcement agencies, the Embassy provided a grant in 2003 for the PPCA. The PPCA is now operational, and in late 2003 issued its first public reports on complaints of police abuses. As a result of the PPCA's work, the Government took significant disciplinary actions against the officers involved, including dismissal in some cases.

Child labor and child prostitution are the most serious trafficking-in-persons problems in Zambia. In 2003, Embassy Lusaka continued its support for several U.S. Labor Department programs aimed at combating child labor. The Labor Department funds the International Labor Organization's (ILO) implementation of the International Program on the Elimination of





Child Labor, which in Zambia also includes a project under the Child Labor Education Initiative. USAID support for the Zambian Government's Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program is an important counterpart to these projects, as it helps to ensure that children who might otherwise be engaged in labor have an opportunity to go to school.

The Embassy has also supported an ILO-implemented U.S. Labor Department project to strengthen labor administration in Zambia and three other southern African countries. This project helps build the ability of the Government, workers and employers to work together to safeguard workers' rights.

The Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) was another source of support for workers' rights in Zambia in 2003. DHRF projects in Zambia include Civic Education for Workers' Rights, which organized workshops on conflict resolution, women's rights and related issues for residents of industrial areas.

ZIMBABWE

Since its disputed victories in Zimbabwe's 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has disregarded human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the welfare of its citizens. The Government's human rights record remained poor, although political violence declined in 2003 compared to the previous year. The executive branch continued to aggrandize its power at the expense of the judiciary and the unicameral parliament, and stepped up efforts to hamstring a weakening independent media. The Government closed the country's only independent daily newspaper for four months and is pursuing court action to close it down permanently. Repressive laws were exercised selectively to constrain the activities of the Government's critics. Ruling party supporters continued to harass and to intimidate critics with relative impunity. Legislative activity during the year scaled back due process protections and retroactively overrode court judgments and legalized past illegal acts of the Government. The executive branch frequently ignored court orders

and sought to intimidate sitting judges in politically sensitive cases. Urban and rural council and parliamentary by-elections during 2003 were marred by violence and other irregularities. The National Youth Service program was implicated in a host of human right abuses, generally associated with suppressing political opponents of the Government. The nation's highly polarized and stalemated political climate was compounded by a mutually reinforcing economic implosion that touched every sector of society.

Complicating U.S. efforts to address Zimbabwe's deteriorating political situation is the government's growing xenophobia toward the West. A liberation party that has ruled the country since independence, ZANU-PF has had difficulty sustaining its popularity in recent years. Its political insecurity is compounded by the disastrous failures of its economic policies, including the corrupt and often violent implementation of a land reform program. Central to the ruling party's political strategy is its portrayal of Zimbabwe as under siege by "neocolonial" forces intent on undoing land reform and robbing the country of its sovereignty. The Government employs the dominant state media relentlessly to paint political opponents and critics as lawless agents of a racist conspiracy headed by the United States and the United Kingdom. U.S. actions and statements are consistently distorted or fabricated to substantiate conspiracy theories and ostensibly to justify a stronger hand against regime critics. In this environment, many ruling party and government officials avoid association with U.S. officials, and embassy access to the Government of Zimbabwe is limited.

Underpinning the U.S. human rights strategy in Zimbabwe is a recognition that resolution of the nation's political crisis is a necessary precondition for addressing the country's myriad problems, including its human rights situation. Facilitating such a resolution is a central U.S. priority. It was in this vein that President Bush consulted with President Mbeki in support of steps to resolve the crisis in July 2003. In addition to

ongoing U.S. consultation with the South African Government on Zimbabwe, U.S. diplomats have engaged other governments with potential influence in Zimbabwe to coordinate mutually supportive approaches.

Against this backdrop, U.S. officials routinely spotlight publicly, and when possible highlight privately, the need for the Government to improve the environment for free and fair elections and to strengthen rule of law. Politically motivated violence, flaws in the electoral process, concerns over judicial independence, limits on freedom of association and abridgement of free speech were among many themes pursued by U.S. officials on Zimbabwe. Official travel and financial restrictions were maintained against key government officials and members of the ruling party to signal official disapproval of their policies and to press for change. Statements by U.S. officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner and Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Lorne Craner, regularly received prominent play in the independent press, including the country's most widely circulated newspaper. Foremost among these was a June op-ed piece by Secretary Powell on the eve of the President's visit to the region and a December interview with the Ambassador by two independent newspapers in Zimbabwe. The Embassy generally assured wide dissemination among Zimbabwe's media, legal fraternity, civil society, academics, and government and party officials of human rights-related reports by the State Department, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations. Prominent coverage of human rights themes at the embassy's public affairs resource centers (approximately 100,000 visited the one in Harare) and the Zimbabwe-specific programs of the Voice of America influenced opinions inside Zimbabwe and throughout the region.

To document Zimbabwe's human rights situation, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a well-respected human rights

organization that comprehensively gathered and disseminated information on cases of alleged abuses. In addition, U.S. programs assisted victims of political violence, including documentation of atrocities, and supported centers for victims of torture and political violence in urban centers throughout the country. The Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) and USAID further enhanced provision of legal services to victims of political crimes. U.S. diplomats also personally interviewed victims of political violence and maintained a visible presence at politically significant events, including party rallies and election activities. To bolster domestic election observation capabilities, the United States facilitated an independent local election observation NGO on capacity building and deployment costs. The Department sponsored three Zimbabweans for human rights-related International Visitor (IV) programs in 2003, and the embassy's resource center helped local human rights organizations

access human rights material on the Internet as a means to develop their capacity and effectiveness.

To fortify the integrity of democratic pluralism in Zimbabwe, USAID provided a range of assistance to strengthen legislative committees, one of the few venues where civil political discourse between the ruling and opposition parties still occurs openly. In addition, the United States funded training for organizational and leadership development, internal and external communications, and financial management within selected democratically oriented organizations. The United States cultivated grassroots democratic capabilities by bolstering accountability mechanisms among democratically elected municipal officials and facilitating their contact with international counterparts. To help build a foundation for active citizen participation in political life, the United States funded a number of civil society





organizations, providing them with training and technical assistance to help them advocate to the parliament on issues of national significance. USAID provided \$486,000 to assist a number of grassroots organizations that work with municipal authorities. DHRF funds supported the establishment of an Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University, and USAID/American Schools and Hospitals Abroad funded the infrastructure construction costs for the Institute. The State Department slated Zimbabweans to attend IV programs on governance-related themes .

To bolster access to balanced information, Economic Support Funds supported Voice of America broadcasts to Zimbabwe five times a week. The program featured interviews by Zimbabwean announcers with U.S. policymakers and Zimbabwean opinion makers on a range of key political, economic and cultural topics. The program is the only broadcast of its kind on both AM and short wave radio that targets Zimbabweans who have limited access to independent media. The United States also worked with other media outlets to provide Zimbabweans with alternative sources of news about their coun-

try. The United States has funded activities to fortify the capacity of Zimbabwe's strained independent press, and public diplomacy efforts have devoted particular priority to concerns about freedom of press. In addition, the United States has funded services that will allow ordinary Zimbabweans to access independent media sources via the Internet. The United States also funded capacity building and training for a public opinion institute to conduct polls and gauge public opinion on topical issues, including governance, and to hold public seminars that review findings and inform policy makers. The State Department facilitated participation by two prominent Zimbabwean journalists in a slate of activities in the United States under a Voluntary Visitor program.

In supporting religious freedom, the Embassy has collaborated closely with clerics involved in pressing for resolution of Zimbabwe's political crisis. Through public and private statements and dissemination of relevant public documents such as the Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the United States has underscored official concern about the government's

arrest and intimidation of religious figures who criticize the Government.

Advancing women's issues, DHRF funds helped the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association print a civic awareness manual to educate rural women on their voting and other civic rights, and to present the manual. DHRF funds also enabled a parliamentary women's caucus to hold workshops and build capacity among women members of parliament. The Department sponsored a Zimbabwean activist for an IV program on "Women as Political and Economic Leaders." The Embassy also sponsored a workshop on domestic violence for law enforcement officials and interested civic society representatives.

Supporting workers rights through an American trade union organization, the United States funded a \$300,000 Solidarity Center program to assist trade unions in Zimbabwe to become more accountable and responsive to their members and more effective at representing the interests of their constituents. The United States funded professional economic and legal advisors, new offices, staff travel to membership chapters in the field and training in economic literacy and organizational development. On several occasions, the Embassy advocated to the Government on behalf of the American organization representative in

Harare in connection with difficulties he had in maintaining his legal residency. Finally, the State Department sponsored a visiting expert who spoke to wide Zimbabwean audiences on alternative conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly in the context of labor relations.

The Embassy has promoted interest in and scrutiny of trafficking-related issues among civil society and NGOs generally concerned with human rights in Zimbabwe, and has expressed official concern about trafficking issues in Zimbabwe through public and private statements and dissemination of public documents such as the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report.

Restoration of an acceptable human rights regime in Zimbabwe will hinge largely on the ability of Zimbabwean players themselves to resolve their political stalemate and of the Government of Zimbabwe to subject itself to the will of the Zimbabwean people and the rule of law. The United States must foster resolution of a political crisis while sustaining crucial democratic institutions through perilous times. In the longer run, the Zimbabwean democratic institutions the United States is helping to sustain – free press, independent judiciary, civil society, equitable electoral process – must serve as the foundation of a healthy polity that now seems so distant.