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routinely use wiretaps and intercept and open mail.

* A Print, Press, and Publications Ordinance, requiring the registration of printing presses and newspapers, was allowed to lapse in 1997 after several years of waning application.

* The effort to ensure that newspapers carry their statements or press releases sometimes leads to undue pressure by local police, political parties, ethnic, sectarian, and religious groups, militant student organisations, and occasionally commercial interests. Such pressure is a common feature of journalism, and when a group is extreme in its views, can include physical violence, the sacking of offices, the intimidation or beating of journalists, and interference with the distribution of newspapers.

* The government and universities generally respect academic freedom. However, the atmosphere of violence and intolerance fostered by student organisations, typically tied to political parties, continued to threaten academic freedom, despite the fact that a 1992 Supreme Court ruling prohibits student political organisations on campuses. On some campuses, well-armed groups of students, primarily from radical religious organisations, clash with and intimidate other students, instructors, and administrators on matters of language, syllabus, examination policies, grades, doctrine, and dress. These groups facilitate cheating in examinations, interfere in the hiring of staff at the campuses, control new admissions, and sometimes control the funds of their institutions. At Punjab University, the largest university in the province, Islami Jamaat-e-Tulaba (IJT—the student wing of

Pakistan

the religious political party Jamaat-i-Islami) imposes its self-defined code of conduct on teachers and other students.

* In February 1997, a mob looted and burned the Christian village of Shantinagar in Punjab. Local police participated in the attack and are suspected of having instigated the riot by inventing spurious charges that a Christian man had desecrated a copy of the Koran. Hundreds of homes and a dozen churches were destroyed, and 20,000 persons were left homeless. The central government took immediate relief action, deploying troops briefly to restore order, and the prime minister visited the village. The government has rebuilt damaged and destroyed homes, but has not provided compensation for personal property lost in the incident... The 86 persons who were charged with offenses related to the attack remain free on bail and there was no indication that authorities planned to bring them to trial.

* When blasphemy and other religious cases are brought to court, extremists often pack the courtroom and make public threats about the consequences of an acquittal. As a result, judges and magistrates, seeking to avoid a confrontation with the extremists, often continue trials indefinitely, and the accused is burdened with further legal costs and repeated court appearances.

* Use of the ECL authority to harass political opponents increased in 1998... The British director of the HUBCO Power Company was placed on the ECL on September 14, and

MQM moderate Senator Nasreen Jalil also was placed on the list and prevented from leaving the country after the imposition of Governor's Rule.

* Rape is an extensive problem. In 1997 the National Assembly passed a law that provided for the death penalty for persons convicted of gang rape. No executions have been carried out under this law and conviction rate remained low. This is because rape, and gang rape in particular, is commonly used as a means of social control by landlords and local criminal bosses seeking to humiliate and terrorise local residents. Therefore, police rarely respond to and are sometimes implicated in these attacks. It is estimated that less than one-third of all rapes are reported to the police. The police themselves frequently are charged with raping women. The HRCP in 1997 tallied 671 rapes in and around Lahore from press reports; 385 of the victims were minors, and 370 had been gang raped. FIRs were filed in 479 cases, and arrests were made in 87 cases.

* There is no federal law on compulsory education, and neither the federal nor provincial governments provide sufficient resources to assure universal education. The education system is in disarray, with studies showing that only 65 to 70 percent of children under the age of 12 are enrolled in school, less than half of whom actually complete primary school... Even those children who make it to the fifth grade are not assured of being able to read and write.

* Children sometimes are kidnapped to be used as forced labor, for ransom, or to seek revenge against an enemy. In rural areas, it is a traditional practice for poor parents to give their children to rich landlords in exchange for money or land, according to human rights advocates. These children frequently are abused by these landlords and held as bonded laborers for life. Landlords also have been known to pay impoverished parents for the "virginity" of their daughters, whom the landlords then rape. Incidents of rape and murder of minor teenage children are common.

* Government authorities afford religious minorities less legal protection than is afforded to Muslim citizens. Members of religious minorities are subject to violence and harassment, and police at times refuse to prevent such actions or to charge persons who commit them.

* The ILO has urged the government to lift prohibitions against union activity with respect to teachers, and radio, television, railway, forestry, hospital, and other government employees, as well as to rescind the existing ban on strikes. The ILO also expressed concern about the practice of artificial promotions that exclude workers from the purview of Convention 111.

* The Constitution and the law prohibit forced labour, including forced labour by children. However, the government does not enforce this prohibition effectively. Critics argue that the ESA's limitation on some worker rights, especially the right to quit, constitutes a form of compulsory labour. The ILO has objected to this violation of Convention 29.

* Illegal bonded labour is widespread. Bonded labour is common in the brick, glass, and fishing industries and is found among agricultural and construction workers in rural areas. There is no evidence that bonded labour is used in the production for export of sporting goods and surgical equipment.

* The Constitution and the law prohibit slavery. However, in the remote areas of rural Sindh bonded agricultural labor and debt slavery have a long history. Landlords have kept entire families in private prisons and families have been sold by one landlord to another. According to press reports, raids by government officials and human rights activists over a 2-year period from January 1995 to January 1997 resulted in the liberation of 349 bonded labourers.

* Child labour is common and results from a combination of severe poverty, employer greed, and inadequate enforcement of laws intended to control it. The Constitution prohibits the employment of children aged 14 years and under in factories, mines, and other hazardous occupations.

* In October 1997, soccer ball manufacturers, importers, the ILO, and UNICEF implemented an 18-month action plan agreed upon in February 1997 (the Atlanta Agreement) to eliminate child labor from the soccer ball industry. This project, based in Sialkot, monitored the production of soccer balls at newly established stitching centers, and had set up 154 rehabilitation centres for the education of former child labourers and their younger siblings by October. By year's end, approximately 5,400 children had been removed from the industry.