

# AFRICA OVERVIEW

## MAJOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Longstanding wars continued to plague several countries in sub-Saharan African countries; in others, political leaders and parties engaged in elections, some of them more satisfactory than others. Everywhere, human rights defenders continued the struggle to improve respect for basic human rights. The year 2001 saw new international attention to Africa, mainly focused on combating the scourge of diseases related to HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and on efforts to counter impoverishment aggravated by the globalization of the world economy. But African human rights issues, from those related to public health crises and the economy to the stark immediacy of repression, lost visibility as the international community turned to combating terrorism in the wake of the September attacks in the U.S.

## THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS: COLLATERAL DAMAGE IN AFRICA

Just how big an impact would the September 11 attacks in the United States have on Africa? It was a question which was on the minds of state and non-state actors alike across the continent as the year closed. Though everything remained fluid, the devastation wrought by the attacks could mean:

### **Political Fallout in a Number of Countries**

Pre-existing political tensions between Muslim and Christian populations in a number of African countries threatened to become more inflamed, and increasingly violent. Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania all faced the possibility of worsening communal tensions. Bloody riots between Muslims and Christians in Kano, northern Nigeria, following demonstrations against the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan, had already left a high death toll. A pro-Taliban demonstration was also reported in Kenya's predominantly Muslim coastal city, Mombasa.

### **Restrictions on Political and Civil Rights**

Governments in the region might manipulate and redefine terrorism to justify

crackdowns on legitimate dissension. The U.S. “with us or against us” mantra could set a trend in Africa with African leaders labeling their opponents as terrorists and justifying restrictions on civil liberties that would previously have seemed unacceptable. In the aftermath of the attacks, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal proposed the adoption of an African pact against terrorism. He said the move would help the continent “to team up with the world coalition against this evil” and commit each African state “not to accept on its territory individuals or groups with terrorist intentions.” Responding to President Wade’s call, more than ten heads of state and delegates from twenty other African countries attended a one-day summit on October 18 in Senegal to discuss terrorism-related issues and closed the meeting with a declaration against terrorism. In particular, there were growing concerns that these steps would detrimentally affect refugee populations, particularly Muslim refugees, and encourage growing xenophobia and anti-refugee sentiment.

### **Subordination of Human Rights Concerns to Diplomacy’s Antiterrorism Priorities**

The Horn/East Africa region, where a number of al-Qaeda cells were suspected, was seen as a likely focus of U.S. interest. Sudan enthusiastically announced its cooperation in the fight against terror, leveraging its intelligence resources regarding al-Qaeda to reshape its bilateral relations. Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea appeared ready to use the opportunity to marginalize reformist elements. African governments in a position to contribute to the global fight against terrorism by providing access to intelligence, airfields, and military bases might take advantage of a willingness on the part of more powerful nations like the U.S. to overlook abuses which might previously have come under greater scrutiny. For example, an October massacre by the Nigerian army of at least two hundred people in Benue State went all but unremarked during President Obasanjo’s visit to the United States just a few weeks later to discuss the antiterrorism campaign.

### **Declining Economic Activity**

Falling consumer demand in Western economies as a recession took hold might send commodity prices, already depressed, into a slump, and export-oriented countries into a nosedive; investment inflows would be dampened because of the combined effect of heightened perceptions of risk and the fall in prices for Africa’s exports. Almost every sector would be affected: travel and tourism, a mainstay of a number of countries, would be badly disrupted, and recession and unemployment among African immigrants in the diaspora would decrease remittances sent to support their relatives at home.

### **Reduced Humanitarian and Development Assistance**

The expected global downturn and a ratcheting up of security and defense expenditures in the west, could translate into major cuts in both development and humanitarian aid. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa warned on October 3

that: "We have to ensure that there is no possibility of these attacks creating negative consequences, whereby the development issues that we have been grappling with for decades are sidelined to the margins of the global agenda. The countries of the world must simultaneously deal decisively with terrorism and effectively address and defeat poverty and underdevelopment."

### **HIV/AIDS STRAIGHT TALK: AFRICA TAKES STEPS TO CHANGE**

To many Africans, the continent's key challenge was the response to HIV/AIDS. Of the estimated twenty-two million people to have died of AIDS-related illness worldwide by the end of 2000, seventeen million were Africans. The most severely affected region was southern Africa, including Botswana, with the highest known prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world, and South Africa, with the largest number of people living with AIDS in any country in the world. There were around twenty-five million Africans living with AIDS, 3.8 million of whom were infected in 2000 alone.

In the past year, AIDS in Africa gained an unprecedented level of media coverage. With it came some public and political will to fight the worst epidemic in the history of mankind, as well as growing scrutiny of the pandemic's root causes. Nearly every government from tiny Gabon to repressed Mauritania engaged in high-level discussions about the problem, and the failure or success of their programs. At a special summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Abuja, Nigeria, in April 2001, OAU member states pledged to use 15 percent of their annual budgets to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases. Whether this would happen, particularly in countries with notoriously opaque budgets, was yet to be seen. Even with the Abuja Declaration, the current cost of the recommended drug treatments remained unfeasible in much of Africa.

There was global pressure on the pharmaceutical industry to remedy this situation, through lowered prices, donations, and relaxation of patent laws. In April, following a sustained campaign against them, pharmaceutical companies dropped a court challenge to a South African law enacted in 1997, but not yet promulgated, that would allow the production and importation of generic AIDS drugs. It was a major victory for the treatment lobby both in South Africa and internationally, with potentially important benefits for health and human rights. A similar law was passed in Kenya in March, and was pending in other countries, but the flow of cheap drugs was yet to be seen. Drug firms in Uganda also appealed to the government to allow them to produce anti-retroviral drugs locally.

Botswana, a relatively rich country, announced that, hopefully by 2002, all such drugs would be free for its 350,000 infected citizens. In the first week of September, Nigeria announced that it would be the first country in Africa to launch trials with generic drugs, which, in initial phases, would treat 15,000 Nigerians, for around U.S. \$350 a year per person. Several countries moved first to provide the cheap, effective, and easy to provide drug nevirapine to women before giving birth in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission. But South Africa, despite its eco-

conomic resources and success in facing down the drug industry, was held back by the embarrassing performance of President Thabo Mbeki, who persisted in questioning the link between HIV and AIDS. An NGO, the Treatment Action Campaign, went to court to force the government to provide drug treatment that, it argued, would even save the government money.

### **SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA— THE ANCHOR COUNTRIES?**

Since the extraordinary political and constitutional transition of 1994, South Africa had established a reputation for openness, transparency, and rational leadership on a turbulent continent. But in 2001, President Thabo Mbeki's government seemed to prefer to invest political capital in fighting public relations skirmishes rather than addressing the economic and social challenges that confronted the country. In February, there were extraordinary allegations by Steve Tshwete, the minister for police, of a conspiracy by three politicians-turned-businessmen to oust Mbeki from office. Observers were alarmed by the willingness to use the tools of state security to tackle what seemed to be an internal party issue. The government was plagued by corruption scandals in connection with a multi-million rand arms deal. African National Congress Chief Whip Tony Yengeni, former chair of parliament's committee on defense, was charged with corruption, perjury, and fraud; other arrests were anticipated. President Mbeki's refusal to confront his country's catastrophic AIDS epidemic risked undermining all other achievements.

Although the president's reputation and standing had been damaged, most observers thought the situation was retrievable. By general consensus, the transformation of South Africa's political landscape over the previous seven years had been so profound that it was irreversible. South Africa could still count on one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, guarded by an impeccable Constitutional Court; vigorous independent news media, unions, and academia; ample provision for a constitutional opposition; and government policies that—despite ongoing controversies on their direction—generally managed to negotiate reconciliation of the demands for radical redistribution of wealth with the needs of economic growth.

South Africa's continued regional leadership was demonstrated late in the year, as the first of about seven hundred South African peacekeeping troops arrived in Burundi. Their task was to form a protection force for politicians returning from exile to join a power-sharing transitional government that was sworn in on November 1.

In Nigeria, the continent's most populous country, it seemed as though time might be running out for President Olusegun Obasanjo. In May 1999, sixteen years of military rule had ended. Though many Nigerians were skeptical, they had nonetheless hoped that the new civilian government would take the difficult steps to restore accountable government and the rule of law, as well as Nigeria's standing in the world. More than two years later, the country was a land of rising discontent, and questions multiplied about the president's leadership capabilities.

In the past year, Nigeria saw a surge of religious and ethnic conflicts at the cost of thousands of lives. Riots, the ravaging of churches and mosques, violent demonstrations, military and police abuses, and a general lawlessness continued to tear at the daily lives of Nigerians. In October, the Nigerian army was responsible for massacring at least two hundred unarmed civilians in central Benue State, in an area torn by ongoing ethnic conflict. Corruption remained rampant, despite the adoption of anti-corruption legislation in 2000, distorting economic management, corrupting law enforcement, and starving desperately needed public services. In his Independence Day speech on October 1, the president conceded that his administration had failed to lift most Nigerians out of poverty, end violence, and solve other huge obstacles that the country confronted. Yet he offered little hope that these issues would be addressed in the remainder of his term.

Nigeria still enjoyed a comparatively greater degree of freedom in contrast to the dark days of military rule, and a commission set up in 1999 to investigate human rights abuses committed under previous governments had somewhat dented the historical wall of impunity. But the country desperately needed a democratically enacted constitution, accountable politicians and civil servants, and restored respect for the rule of law. With government revenue coming almost exclusively from a single source, Nigeria's substantial oil and gas deposits, it would remain extremely difficult to create a functioning democracy.

### **BUCKING THE TREND?**

A few countries registered success in strengthening or maintaining democratic institutions. Botswana and Mauritius headed the table, and South Africa remained an example in many ways, but Mali, Mozambique, Ghana, and Senegal were also strong contenders for Africa's first division status. Botswana had the highest credit rating in Africa from the international ratings agency Moody's—four notches above that of South Africa—and ranked alongside central European countries. Mauritius was ranked second (behind Tunisia and ahead of Botswana) out of twenty-four countries surveyed in the World Economic Forum's Africa Competitiveness Report.

The connection between economic prosperity and stable political institutions was underlined by the September 13, 2000 elections in Mauritius. An opposition alliance, of the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (MSM) and Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), swept into power in a landslide victory with high turnout. Outgoing Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam gracefully accepted defeat. In terms of the electoral pact, the MSM leader Sir Anerood Jugnauth would be prime minister for the next three years and then hand over the reins to the MMM leader, Paul Berenger, for the final two years. In the meantime, they would introduce a constitutional amendment to give the president, a ceremonial figure, more power; Sir Anerood would become president. Berenger would be the first non-Hindu to occupy the premiership since Mauritius won independence in 1968.

Ghana saw a peaceful transfer of power when, on January 7, President Jerry Rawlings, who came to power in two coups and retained power through two sub-

sequent elections, stepped down from his nineteen year presidency and surrendered power to John Kufuor. Like Mali and Senegal, Ghana looked set to become one of the “democratic dominos” in West Africa. Once in power, the new president promised sweeping human rights improvements. In July, Ghana’s parliament voted unanimously to repeal the criminal libel law first introduced by the British colonial administration. At this writing, debate was underway regarding legislation to establish a mechanism for truth telling and reconciliation in relation to past abuses. Kufuor also agreed to exhume for positive identification and proper reburial the bodies of eight generals who had been executed in 1979 on charges of corruption and treason. This was the first official step towards confronting and resolving various extrajudicial executions which took place both before and during Rawlings’ reign.

Mozambique remained another African success story, though it faced some serious threats during the year. The country’s post-conflict stability continued to be reinforced by the generally human rights-friendly leadership of President Joachim Chissano, and by robust economic growth. The economy grew by nearly 15 percent in the first half of the year, recovering strongly from the devastating 2000 floods. But the government’s reputation was tarnished by attacks against journalists. In November 2000, unknown attackers gunned down journalist Carlos Cardoso, editor of the independent *Metical* who had been sharply critical of hard line elements in both the ruling party and the opposition in the wake of political clashes that left forty-one people dead. In a separate attack later the same day, a gang stopped Radio Mozambique journalist Custodio Rafael on his way home from work. The attackers reportedly told him, “You talk a lot,” before beating him and cutting his tongue with a knife. In January, a Mozambican parliamentary commission visited northern Cabo Delgado province to investigate the suffocation-deaths of more than one hundred imprisoned opposition demonstrators in the town of Montepuez. The commission had joint government and opposition membership. A Mozambican human rights group that carried out its own inquiry blamed the tragedy on both police negligence and retaliation for the killing of six police officers during the protests.

### **ELECTIONS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY DEMOCRACY**

A number of other African countries held presidential or parliamentary elections during the year. However, all were characterized by intimidation of the media and opposition, killings, and gross and widespread vote rigging. Leaders in Guinea, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and elsewhere attempted or were reported to be considering constitutional amendments to overcome term limits and remain in power.

Political and social unrest continued to plague Côte d’Ivoire during 2001, following presidential and parliamentary elections in late 2000. Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), was installed as president despite very serious concerns surrounding the legitimacy of the October presidential elections—over the widespread violence and the exclusion of principal opposition leader Alassane Ouattara from the contest. Gbagbo then used the same methods as

his predecessor during the December parliamentary elections, including incitement of religious and ethnic hatred. Ouattara was once again not allowed to run. In both October and December security forces arrested, tortured, and killed perceived opposition supporters, including foreigners and members of northern ethnic groups. After assuming office, Gbagbo failed to acknowledge the flawed manner in which he had become head of state, to promise new elections, to seek accountability for the violence, or to take adequate steps to ensure that, under his leadership, Côte d'Ivoire would be characterized by the rule of law, not by ethno-religious tension and military impunity.

In Benin, presidential elections in late March 2001 saw the reelection of President Mathieu Kerekou. Kerekou failed in the first round to gain a majority, so a runoff with the runner-up, Nicephore Soglo, was called. Soglo, citing widespread fraud, dropped out before the final round, and encouraged his supporters to boycott as well. The runoff was further delayed by the resignation of several members of the electoral commission in protest at the way the vote was organized. The third place contender also pulled out, leaving only the fourth-place primary finisher, Bruno Amoussou. This dubious run-off slate gave Kerekou the presidency, with 84 percent of the votes. Earlier in the year, on January 19, police beat up two journalists working for private media and violently broke up a demonstration they were covering in the capital, Cotonou.

The election campaign in Chad was marred by intimidation and violence, but on May 27 Idriss Deby was re-elected president with more than 67 percent of the vote. Opposition candidates alleged fraud and called for the result to be annulled, appealing to the constitutional court. A quarter of the members of the electoral commission resigned in protest in advance of the announcement of Deby's victory. On May 28, Brahim Selguet, an opposition activist, was shot and killed by the police as they violently broke up an opposition meeting. Six opposition presidential candidates were briefly detained at the meeting, and were again arrested in the morning of May 30 with some thirty other opposition activists and trade unionists. They were all released without charge the same day, but two of the opposition leaders, Ngarledjy Yorongar and Abderhamane Djesnebaye, were reportedly tortured, including being beaten with iron bars, during their detention.

Uganda's March presidential election and May parliamentary elections were both marred by manipulation and human rights abuses. As political parties are not allowed to operate freely in Uganda, opposition presidential candidates had to mobilize support and resources as individuals. Incumbent president Yoweri Museveni, however, relied on the administrative and political officials of the ruling "movement system" to bring in the vote. Harassment of journalists and editors, self-censorship, and inequality in media access intensified as the date for the poll neared. Supporters of opposition candidates were also threatened and harassed when campaigning for their candidates. In January, unidentified gunmen killed a member of President Museveni's campaign task force, and, in a separate incident, two supporters of opposition presidential candidate Dr. Kizza Besigye. At least one person was killed when members of the Presidential Protection Unit opened fire on opposition demonstrators on March 3. Both international observers and Ugandan human rights groups expressed concern at the role played by the Ugandan army in



the election and that elections took place on a far from level playing field. Museveni was declared the winner. At least seven people were shot dead on June 27, in violence surrounding parliamentary elections. On July 6, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, a national NGO, criticized the government's treatment of Besigye and strongly condemned what it called the authorities' "persistent, consistent and violent intolerance and disrespect for divergent views."

Gambia's tense presidential election was held on October 18. After pressure from the international community, President Yahya Jammeh had lifted a ban on opposition parties in July, inviting former politicians who had sought political asylum in other countries to return. On August 27, President Jammeh expelled Deputy British High Commissioner Bharat Joshi for attending an open press conference, which Jammeh alleged was an opposition party rally. The day before the election, security forces opened fire on a crowd of opposition supporters, killing at least one. In the days following the election, private radio station Citizen FM was shut down and state security agents reportedly detained its owner for four hours.

On November 28, 2000, Mauritania's 40th anniversary of independence, President Ould Taya promised democratic reform, and on December 4, the government held consultations with political parties. It was announced that proportional representation in the legislature would be introduced in the 2001 elections, and that the government would fund political parties, based on their performance in municipal polls. Not a week later, Union of Democratic Forces leader Ould Daddah was arrested upon his return to Mauritania, and charged with "contact with terrorist groups." He was released on December 13. On June 14, 2001, three members of the opposition Front Populaire Mauritanien were jailed, accused of conspiring with Libya to foment the violent overthrow of the government. Their lawyers alleged numerous serious irregularities in the proceedings and initially withdrew in protest; they later agreed to represent the three men, while making clear their concern at government interference and other fair trial concerns.

In Guinea-Conakry opposition parties criticized a "constitutional coup d'état" and a "masquerade" a referendum held on November 11, 2001, in which 98 percent of those who voted supposedly supported changes to key constitutional provisions. The proposed changes would increase presidential terms from five to seven years and allow presidents to remain in office indefinitely, giving incumbent president Lansana Conte the option of a third term. An 87 percent turnout was reported, though observers estimated that only 20 percent of the population could have voted. In Malawi too, controversy surrounded the issue of whether President Bakili Muluzi should be allowed a third term in office when his current term expires in 2004, something that would entail alteration of the constitution. Malawi's two largest churches issued separate letters warning President Muluzi against standing for reelection, prompting a government statement in May denying that either the cabinet or the ruling party had discussed a constitutional amendment. But in August, a debate on whether the president should extend his rule into a third term resurfaced. "Muluzi will stand again in 2004 because people want him. We will change the constitution so Muluzi can stand," said a key supporter.

In two other countries whose leaders were mooted to be set to join "third term" campaigns requiring constitutional change, external and internal pressure pro-



vided a check on ambitions in that direction. But though President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya hinted at an exit at the end of his second and constitutionally-last term, he invested heavily in a careful succession plan and efforts to hinder a full constitutional review. In Zambia, which had appeared to be losing any claims to democracy, President Chiluba, with his party in revolt and facing massive public pressure and predictions of large-scale violence, on May 3 abandoned his efforts to change the constitution's two-term limit and announced that he would step down when his second term ended at the end of the year. The news sparked celebrations in the country.

## **SILENCING THE CRITICS**

In too many countries, effective mechanisms for querying, much less contesting or contributing to, government policy and operations were lacking. In the absence of autonomous electoral authorities, independent judiciaries, and the provision of equal access for competing political factions to government controlled media, opposition voices could only rely on getting their message across through the much-harassed independent media and the grassroots influence of trade unions or civil society organizations. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Kenya, Mauritania, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and numerous other countries remained reluctant to commit themselves to the imperatives of democracy and respect for human rights.

In Equatorial Guinea, the government continued to use military courts, repressive laws, and arbitrary arrests and prosecutions to restrict political freedoms. In November 2000, hundreds of copies of the latest issue of independent weekly *La Opinion* were seized by the authorities in Mongome, a town in the east of Equatorial Guinea. The newspapers were confiscated on the order of the government's representative in the district. According to the government, the paper was too close to the opposition. In February 2001, the mayor of Malabo closed the offices of the Equatorial Guinea press association.

On April 1, 2001, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso publicly apologized for the torture and "all other crimes" committed by his government in a blanket act of state contrition. However, the 1998 killing of journalist Norbert Zongo remained a source of both national and international outrage. To commemorate the two-year anniversary of Zongo's death, human rights advocates and opposition parties along with members of the international press attempted to gather in Ouagadougou in December 2000 to demand that the perpetrators be found and prosecuted. Many journalists were prevented from entering the country by security forces and riot police thwarted commemoration activities.

In Cameroon, police in Yaounde dispersed supporters of the opposition Social Democratic Front as they marched on November 27, 2000, to demand the creation of an independent electoral commission. Five opposition parties walked out of parliament on December 7, 2000, as the house passed a bill creating an election-monitoring body known as the Observatoire National des Elections, its members to be appointed single-handedly by President Paul Biya. In July 2001, police raided the

offices of independent newspaper *Mutations*, seized copies of the paper, and summoned the publisher, Haman Mana, to a hearing, accusing him of having published confidential state documents. Mana refused to reveal his source, citing Cameroonian law; he was released on August 3. On October 3, 2001, police summoned Jean-Marc Soboth, editor-in-chief of the independent *La Nouvelle Expression* and demanded that he reveal his sources for a story about security measures in the country's English-speaking provinces. The authorities maintained that the newspaper revealed a "defense secret." The journalist refused to do so, again citing privilege, and was released the same day.

Togolese police used tear gas on August 14, 2001, to break up a demonstration by opposition parties and human rights activists demanding the release of opposition leader Yawovi Agboyibor, sentenced to six months imprisonment for defamation. He had reportedly said in 1998 that the prime minister, Messan Kodjo, was associated with a militia whose members killed supporters of his party, the Comité Action pour le Renouveau.

Guinea Bissau saw new problems following an alleged coup plot in November 2000. General Ansumane Mané, the former leader of the disbanded military junta, was killed in early December 2000 in mysterious circumstances after challenging the president over military promotions. Despite national and international appeals, there was no independent investigation of his death. Ten opposition leaders, including several parliamentarians, who had also criticized the government handling of the promotions, were arrested without warrant between November 24 and 26, 2000. They were not freed until March. Journalists were also under threat. In March, the deputy procurator-general threatened to bomb a radio station, Radio Bombolom, in order to interrupt a radio debate about the alleged coup attempt. In mid-September the attorney general reportedly went to Radio Pidjiquiti and threatened its workers after they refused to give him the tapes of a program on which journalists had commented on his appointment.

Gabon's President Bongo promoted a constitutional amendment to give former heads of state immunity from legal prosecution. Several privately owned radio stations and television channels were regularly threatened with withdrawal of their broadcasting licenses by the authorities. But some news from Gabon was good. The satirical weekly *La Griffé*, banned two years before, was authorized in late July by the National Communication Council to begin publishing again. Two of its publishers, who had been sentenced to eight years in prison, received a presidential pardon on October 29th, 2000. Another satirical publication, *La Cigale Enchantée*, closed down at the same time for accusing the minister in charge of infrastructure of corruption, remained banned.

In the Horn of Africa, political liberties faced serious threats. Eritrea's strongman President Isaias Aferwerki cracked down harshly on those who dared to speak out. In February, the president removed the minister of local government after he questioned the country's leadership. In May, fifteen members of the seventy-five strong central committee of the ruling party published an open letter demanding reforms. Among the signatories were several former ministers and ambassadors, and three generals. On September 18 and 19, the government arrested without charge eleven signatories of the "G-15" letter—three others were abroad and one

had previously retracted his signature of the letter. In July, the government arrested student leader Semere Kesete for strongly protesting the government's management of the university's mandatory summer work program. On September 19, the government withdrew the licenses of all eight independent newspapers in the country, claiming they had violated media law and undermined national unity. The minister of information (previously the security chief) announced that he would review each newspaper to determine whether it could reopen. At this writing, none had reopened. The government-controlled media were left as the only source of information for Eritrea's citizens.

In neighboring Ethiopia, there was a marked erosion of civil liberties during 2001. The government jailed civil rights advocates, political rivals, students, and journalists without formal charges, and police used excessive force against unarmed civilians. In March, key members of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, the lead party in the government coalition, issued a twelve-point critique of the prime minister's policies. The dissenters, joined by members of other government parties, complained that the government had concluded a premature and unfavorable peace agreement with Eritrea. They also accused the prime minister, Meles Zenawi, of corruption.

In Rwanda, the government continued to disregard the constitution's guarantee of the right to form political parties. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) maintained a ban on the activities of all other parties, while the RPF itself recruited new members and campaigned in district elections. The government barred former president Pasteur Bizimungu from organizing a new political party and harassed party members and journalists reporting the story.

Tanzania's image was badly tarnished by serious abuses in the semi-autonomous islands of Zanzibar during late January and early February. Police blocked a demonstration by opposition supporters against the much-criticized 2000 elections, marred by serious violence and described by the Commonwealth as a "shambles." A climate of harassment and repression of political activity continued for the better part of the year. On October 9, 2001, a deal was signed by the Zanzibar authorities and the opposition agreeing on tension-reducing measures including electoral reform, provision of equal access to all parties on state media, and the holding of by-elections for seats that remained vacant after the disputed 2000 elections.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's indifference to legal norms and encouragement of political violence persisted—threatening the entire southern African subregion with instability. Against the backdrop of a worsening economic crisis precipitated in part by the violent seizure of white-owned commercial land, the government continued its hard line attitude towards the political opposition, media, and judiciary. Widespread violence was visited on opposition supporters, especially in rural areas, and on the owners and residents of white-owned commercial farms by veterans of the liberation war and supporters of the ruling party. The police did little or nothing to intervene to protect those who were the victims of this violence; human rights organizations noted increasing politicization of the criminal justice system. The year saw the forced resignation of the chief justice, Anthony Gubbay, on the grounds that the government, which had itself scorned

court orders, could no longer guarantee his personal safety. Leading opposition leaders were also subjected to arrests on controversial charges of inciting violence and harassment of supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had worsened severely by the end of the year. In November, more than twenty MDC activists were arrested in Bulawayo, on charges of involvement in the murder of a war veteran leader; the MDC suggested that the veteran had been killed by the security forces to silence him. Zimbabwe faced increasing diplomatic isolation, including the first public criticism from its neighbors in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Also in the south the year was a difficult one for King Mswati of Swaziland. Under pressure to implement governmental reforms, faced with increased HIV infection in his population, a worsening economy, and an outspoken media, King Mswati attempted to maintain iron-fisted control. For its part, the opposition demanded an end to the twenty-seven-year ban on political parties and the state of emergency, and called for the creation of an interim government. In January, leaders of this movement were arrested and charged with "misconduct." Royal Decree No.2, promulgated on June 24, gave the king the power to ban any book, magazine or newspaper, prohibited anyone from impersonating or ridiculing the king, prevented legal challenges to any of the monarch's executive decisions, and eliminated bail for a range of crimes, including holding illegal public demonstrations. The decree also gave the justice minister the power to appoint and fire judges at will, and prohibited newspapers from challenging publishing bans. But one month later, the king bowed to international pressure and revoked the decree. After a four-month court battle the *Guardian*, an independent weekly, had a banning order against it overturned on September 3. In November, amid a crackdown on the opposition, President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique, speaking on behalf of SADC, expressed concern that the situation in Swaziland threatened the stability of the subregion.

Namibia, which had boasted one of the most liberal constitutions at the time of its independence in 1990, saw serious threats to its liberties during 2001. President Sam Nujoma's outspoken attacks on gays, lesbians, foreigners, and white Namibians, as well as his dismissal of several judges, created a troubling environment for human rights during the year. In March, the government imposed an advertising boycott on the independent *Namibian*, claiming the paper was too critical of its policies.

There was some good news on a different front. The internet became an ever more useful tool for the dissemination of information on the continent—despite the efforts of governments such as Zimbabwe's, where the pending Post and Communications Act would give the government unfettered powers to intercept postal and electronic communications. At this writing, however, eleven African countries had no private sector involvement in providing Internet service. In those countries, such as Ethiopia and Niger, costs remained exorbitant for local users, and government monitoring of communication easy. Lines could be cut off with no explanation, access to websites blocked, and owners of cyber cafés forced to supply government intelligence officials with copies of e-mails sent or received by them. Even in Mauritania, where the private sector was not barred, the two private Internet service providers had very close ties to the president.

## **SMOLDERING FIRES**

Wars continued to smolder and flare across the continent, most seriously in Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Despite repeated commitments to peaceful resolution of conflict, the warring parties remained heavily engaged in armed operations. In the Great Lakes area, the warring factions' forced recruitment of civilians, including children, appreciably escalated.

The war in the DRC continued to be characterized by shocking brutality. Talks meant to forward implementation of the Lusaka agreements to end hostilities resumed following Joseph Kabila's assumption of the presidency in January. International pressure on Uganda and Rwanda to withdraw their troops from Congo increased. A preliminary inter-Congolese dialogue took place in Gaborone in mid-August, with follow up "national dialogue" convened on October 15 in Addis Ababa. But incessant disagreements between Congolese rebels and the government and a shortfall in funding prevented much progress being made at the talks. Relations between Rwanda and Uganda worsened, owing to a combination of personal animosities between the top leadership and colliding interests in the DRC war, and further undermined progress towards a solid cease-fire and a political solution to the conflict.

Burundi endured its eighth year of civil war—intertwined with conflicts in neighboring DRC and Rwanda—with both governmental and rebel forces guilty of killing, raping, and assaulting civilians and destroying their property. Civilian casualties, however, were fewer than in previous years, and there were fewer large-scale massacres. Late in the year the government and opposition political parties hobbled towards implementing the Arusha Accord signed in August 2000. Following installation of a transitional government on November 1, rebel movements stepped up combat; one of them abducted hundreds of schoolboys, apparently to force them to become child soldiers.

In West Africa, the countries of the Mano River Union—Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea—were caught up in an ongoing subregional conflict which spilled across borders. From late 2000 to April 2001 fierce fighting occurred between Sierra Leonean rebels and their Liberian government allies in a series of border clashes with the armed forces of neighboring Guinea. Thousands of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea were trapped in the border attacks. For their part, the Guinean authorities allowed Liberian rebels to operate from their territory, and seemed at minimum to have provided logistical support and sponsored cross-border incursions into Liberia. The rebel incursion into northern Liberia continued to make gains, with serious abuses against civilians by both rebel and Liberian government forces. Thanks in large part to the deployment of British forces in 2000 and their continued presence, together with some 17,000 U.N. peacekeepers' move into former rebel strongholds in Sierra Leone, and the disarming of over 20,000 Sierra Leonean rebel and government troops, there was at year's end some hope of a lasting peace in Sierra Leone. However, there appeared to be no end to the renewed civil war in Liberia, and the continued instability in the subregion.

There also seemed no end to conflict in Angola, as attacks by the rebel National

Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi, and to a much lesser extent government troops, resulted in yet more civilian casualties. The continuing violence formed a grim backdrop to hints of a political deal to break the deadlock between the warring parties. In August, President José Eduardo dos Santos' announcement that he would not run in the country's next elections was greeted with surprise and skepticism. Many were aware of the reality that the refusal by the government to re-enter negotiations for a political solution would leave the country stuck in a military standoff.

In Sudan, war raged on, with President al-Bashir continuing his practice of dropping bombs on civilians in the south and preventing humanitarian aid from getting to them. Oil money, which first began to flow into the government's coffers in late 1999, continued to fuel intensified fighting in the south, with predictable results for human rights.

Just over a year after a U.N. peacekeeping force had been fully wound down in February 2000, the Central African Republic was plunged into an ongoing political and human rights crisis when former President Andre Kolingba spearheaded his third coup attempt in five years on May 28. Reports said fifty people were killed in the fighting to regain government control after rebels took over the airport, radio station, and other parts of Bangui's infrastructure. Although the coup was swiftly put down by the forces of President Ange-Félix Patassé, with the assistance of Libyan troops (not to mention Chadian troops and rebel troops from DRC), unrest continued in the months following as unarmed civilians, particularly members of the Yakoma ethnic group to which Kolingba belongs, were targeted for arbitrary detention and arrest. The government reportedly tortured and killed numerous civilians and members of the security forces.

The Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) continued to limp back to normalcy after the ferocious civil wars of 1993, 1997, and 1998. The past year was officially one of "national reconciliation," and a "non-exclusive dialogue" which was scheduled to end in April. A reconciliation convention was held, but no election date had been set at this writing.

### **FLEEING WARS, ONLY TO FIND MORE WOES**

War continued to swell the tide of refugees and internally displaced persons, spawning bleak, overcrowded camps, where responsible authorities were barely able to provide the necessities of life and violence often seemed uncontrolled. As of January 2001, there were at least 3,346,000 refugees in Africa out of a total 14,544,000 worldwide. The numbers of internally displaced people also remained high, with Angola, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, and Sudan having the largest populations. In many conflicts more people were internally displaced than crossed international borders: about 4.4 million Sudanese were internally displaced and 420,000 were refugees in neighboring countries. Yet international law and structures for protecting the internally displaced remained weaker than those for refugees.

The major refugee crisis of the year occurred in Guinea, which experienced enormous upheaval while serving as host to some 400,000 refugees from Sierra

Leone and Liberia. Several months of fierce cross-border fighting between Guinean government forces and Sierra Leonean rebels acting together with Liberian government troops drove refugees and local residents alike from their homes in border regions. At the same time, the Guinean government closed its border to new Liberian refugees who were trying to escape the civil war. As refugees moved inland to escape the border violence, they remained vulnerable to beatings, strip searches, extortion, sexual assault, arbitrary arrest and detention, and widespread intimidation at the hands of the Guinean authorities. Sierra Leonean refugees who fled the dire conditions in Guinea by walking home through Revolutionary United Front (RUF) territory were raped, killed, and abducted for fighting or forced labor by the RUF rebels as they attempted to reach Sierra Leonean government-held towns. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Guinean government finally agreed to move the camps further inland and to provide facilitated return by boat from Conakry to Sierra Leonean refugees who wanted to return home. The situation in Guinea remained difficult for both refugees and NGO workers through April 2001. By May 2001, an organized relocation program had moved some 60,000 refugees inland. Some 35,000 refugees were returned to Sierra Leone. By mid-2001, the situation seemed significantly calmer.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: RESILIENT IN A RISKY ENVIRONMENT**

The human rights community remained one of the most dynamic segments of civil society in Africa. But while human rights organizations were able to operate without hindrance from state agencies in countries such as Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa, security forces in numerous other countries closely scrutinized their activities. Activists were arrested, beaten and detained in Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. In Sierra Leone and DRC, among other places, an active human rights community challenged abuses despite a hostile environment.

In Guinea-Bissau, soldiers and state security police arrested Fernando Gomes, former president of the Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos (LGDH), at his home on November 25, 2000. He was severely beaten in the presence of his family and neighbors and, although seriously ill as a result of the beating, was denied medical treatment while in detention. After his release on November 30, 2000, he was refused permission to travel abroad for treatment until January 2001.

In Angola, Rafael Marques, a leading critic of the government and representative of the Open Society Foundation, faced harassment by government officials twice during the year. In December 2000, Marques was prevented from leaving the country. In July 2001, Marques was assaulted and arrested by police for taking pictures of tents in the Viana resettlement camp. A week prior to Marques' arrest, government demolition of houses in the Boa Vista section of Luanda, in order to force residents to Viana, had resulted in two deaths. Yet the Angolan government did allow greater discussion of concerns about the ongoing war.

Four members of Cameroon's Collectif contre l'Impunité were arrested in April



and detained at the central police station in Douala. The authorities alleged they had held an illegal demonstration, though it appeared that their detention was in fact related to an investigation of the January “disappearance” of nine youths. The U.N. Human Rights Committee in June ruled that the government of Cameroon pay U.S. \$137,000 to Cameroonian human rights activist Albert Mukong, in compensation for abuses committed against him by Cameroonian authorities in 1988 and 1990, when his book *Prisoner Without a Crime* was banned and he was detained incommunicado.

In Chad, the period following the May election saw a violent crackdown on human rights defenders. The government banned gatherings of more than twenty people. On June 11, tear gas canisters and what was believed to be a grenade were hurled into a crowd of peaceful demonstrators gathered in front of the French embassy in the capital N’Djamena. Among those injured was leading activist Jacquy Moudeina. Numerous pieces of shrapnel lodged in her leg and she was hospitalized. Several human rights defenders fled Liberia and applied for political asylum. The Liberian Bar Association conducted a boycott of the courts in October to protest the harassment of colleagues who were detained for calling for due process protections in the courts. Despite intensifying state harassment, a few brave activists continued to work undaunted.

The head of Amnesty International in Gambia, Mohammed Lamin Sillah, was detained incommunicado for four days in late October after he had been picked up by state security agents for “questioning.” Sillah’s arrest was one among a reported score of arrests in the wake of the presidential poll.

There were efforts to tighten regulatory regimes on NGOs in a number of countries including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Rwanda, and Uganda. In Uganda, NGOs operated generally quite freely and became more outspoken during 2001 in their critique of the human rights practices of their government. But a draft law, the Nongovernmental Organizations Registration (Amendment) Bill, would require that NGOs obtain a special permit from the registration board before they could operate. It would also increase the registration board’s powers to reject or revoke an NGO’s registration; and it would stiffen the penalties for operating without official sanction, potentially criminalizing legitimate NGO activities.

In Rwanda, a restrictive NGO law came into force in April, giving the government wide-ranging powers to interfere with the work of NGOs, and to suspend or dissolve associations. The Rwandan government was also preparing a decree to increase the government’s control over the day-to-day work of NGOs. The government stepped up harassment of the leading human rights NGO LIPRODHOR after the organization published a statement critical of prison conditions.

In neighboring Burundi, local authorities threatened a human rights observer from Ligue Iteka, one of the main human rights NGOs in the country, who was leading an investigation into the government’s arming of civilians.

Conditions for human rights defenders worsened in the Horn. The Eritrean government tolerated the operation of only one human rights organization, Citizens for Peace in Eritrea, but only so long as it limited advocacy to the rights of war victims. In Ethiopia, police arrested two leading activists, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam and Dr. Berhanu Nega, in early May and held them in custody until June. The gov-

ernment leveled spurious charges against both that they had “incited students to riot.” Mesfin was the founding president of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO). On the day of the arrests, the government raided and sealed the EHRCO offices, although the closure was lifted after ten days.

Two of the main human rights organizations in Mauritania, SOS-Eslaves and the Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme (AMDH) continued to be denied registration by the government and were therefore restricted in their activities.

African activists Kodjo Djissenou and Ndungi Githuku, of Togo and Kenya respectively, were two of the four winners of the Reebok Human Rights Award for activists under age thirty. Kodjo Djissenou, a youth activist, had been working to protect human rights in Togo since the age of twelve. Ndungi Githuku, who had used his talents as a playwright, graphic artist, and performer since the age of nineteen to raise awareness of police torture, political corruption, and democratic principles, became the first artist to win the award. In October, D. Zacarias Camuenho, president of the Bishops’ Conference of Angola and Sao Tome, won the Sakharov peace prize—indicating the growing role of the churches as a possible mediator between the two parties in the Angolan conflict.

## **REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

### **African Union: Making Over the Organization of African Unity**

The year marked what was touted as the beginning of a new era for African cooperation. At the July summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Lusaka, members agreed to set up a new organization, the African Union (A.U.); its first summit would be held in 2002, in Pretoria, South Africa. Ivorian diplomat Amara Essy was elected secretary-general after an all-night round of voting. The A.U., like the OAU, would be based in Addis Ababa.

The treaty establishing the A.U. had important new provisions strengthening the (theoretical) commitment of its member states to human rights. The A.U. would also be looking into a common currency, a continental parliament, and a court of justice. The summit decided to incorporate the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management, and resolution as one of the organs of the A.U. It conspicuously failed to do the same for the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, also an OAU body—this was said to be an oversight that could be corrected.

The launching of the African Union coincided with the introduction of the New African Initiative (NAI), intended to address Africa’s chronic failure to address its economic and political problems. The plan was announced by the outgoing chair, President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, and was later formally launched on October 23 at a ceremony in Abuja, Nigeria, attended by presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. The NAI was a merger of the Millennium Partnership for

the African Recovery Programme (MAP) proposed by the governments of South Africa, Nigeria, and Algeria and the OMEGA plan proposed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. In October, the NAI was renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

At first glance, the concept of the African Union looked promising. But, apart from words, it was far from clear that it represented any real progress. The core ideal continued to be that continental cooperation should be a means to facilitate and consolidate respect for democracy and human dignity across the continent. But the obstacles that had prevented the OAU from achieving these aims remained. The African Union would need to overcome the same ingrained clash of cultures and egos that perennially split the Anglophone, Francophone, and Arab constituencies of the organization. The refusal of member states to surrender their veto power had ensured that the OAU had served merely as a clearinghouse for discussions that could be ignored at will. Moreover, the OAU had failed to insist that its members respect democratic and human rights norms. The much stronger human rights language of the African Union might prove no less difficult to enforce. At the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, just a few weeks after the last OAU summit, African countries largely refused to see racism and other forms of intolerance as a problem that affected them internally—except with regard to black-white relations especially in southern African countries—and focused instead on the demand for reparations for the Atlantic slave trade.

Clear leadership from South Africa and Nigeria in particular would help to address these issues. President Olusegun Obasanjo expressed a strong determination to make the new initiatives succeed. In his words: “Within and outside Africa we must put the Afro-pessimists and other cynics to shame by coming together to work for the success of NAI.” Most probably President Obasanjo meant well. But it would take more than presidential assurances to deliver a system that could be relied on to fight effectively for peace, good governance, human rights, and economic development.

### **Southern African Development Community**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had struggled to find common ground and speak with a unified voice in 2000, hit its stride in mid-2001 and made significant progress toward increasing its ability to engage in conflict resolution in the region. SADC tended toward greater cohesion in the past year, attending the G8 conference in Genoa as a block instead of as individual states, and in its efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis—seen as a threat to the entire subregion. Considered the most significant step taken by SADC in its twenty-year history, but with unclear consequences for human rights, was the creation of a southern Africa free trade zone, which came into effect on September 1, 2000.

At a meeting in Windhoek in March, through a Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, SADC turned the chairmanship of its security organ into a one-year rotating position with clear reporting lines to the heads of state. President Robert Mugabe had held this position since 1999; he was replaced by President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique. This summit committed the community's

fourteen members to resolving conflicts in the region and for the first time adopted operational principles and rules for the security organ. Nevertheless, going into the August summit in Blantyre, Malawi, all sources pointed to a continuation of low key “quiet diplomacy” towards Zimbabwe. But the final communiqué of the Blantyre summit for the first time publicly “expressed concern on the effects of the Zimbabwe economic situation on the region,” and in the months following, SADC took a more active role in trying to find a solution. When an initially promising deal brokered in August by the Commonwealth in Abuja, Nigeria, started to break down, SADC leaders convened a further meeting in Harare in September. There they were reported to have pressed President Mugabe to settle the crisis, and some appeared ready to break ranks with him, a big change from “quiet diplomacy.” The meeting ended with a recommitment by Harare to end land seizures in exchange for funding by Britain of its land reform program; once again, the commitment seemed to have little effect. Meanwhile on September 20, SADC agreed to create a special ministerial task force on land issues in the region, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate.

### **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

Like its southern African counterpart, ECOWAS added force to its Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security, signed in Lomé, Togo in December 1999. However, human rights considerations remained low on the various diplomatic agendas pursued, and ECOWAS member states demonstrated a general unwillingness to criticize each other’s human rights records.

ECOWAS took the lead in rejuvenating the troubled Sierra Leonean peace process by facilitating a ceasefire agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), signed on November 10, 2000 in Abuja, Nigeria. In December 2000, the heads of state of the fifteen-member organization directed the deployment of a force along the borders of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. But the entire plan was abandoned after it ran into major hurdles. Guinea argued that force’s mandate was too weak; neither Guinea nor Liberia signed the status of forces agreement; and ECOWAS insisted upon U.N. Security Council involvement and funding.

In May 2001, the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, the United Nations, the Government of Sierra Leone, and the RUF met in Abuja to review the implementation of the peace deal. The review meeting stressed the need for the Sierra Leonean government to facilitate the restoration of authority to areas previously under RUF control where UNAMSIL, the U.N. peacekeeping force, had been deploying. During the meeting, a six-member RUF delegation agreed to withdraw its combatants from Kambia district, a point of departure for infiltration into neighboring Guinea. The withdrawal would enable the deployment of troops from the Sierra Leone Army to ensure the cessation of armed incursions into the two countries.

Some progress was also recorded towards the implementation of the Plan of Action of the April, 2000 Accra Declaration on War-Affected Children in West

Africa. In March, ECOWAS and Canada signed an agreement for the establishment of a Child Protection Unit within the ECOWAS Secretariat.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

### **Human Rights on Hold?**

The events of September 11, 2001, seemed destined to reduce yet further the chances of serious diplomatic attention to human rights issues in Africa by the wider international community. With the spotlight on efforts to build and maintain a global anti-terrorism coalition, there was likely to be more tolerance towards countries that had previously been castigated as human rights abusers. At this writing, it was already evident that talk about human rights, good governance, and accountability was markedly reduced, and abuses more easily tolerated, as the U.S. in particular became more preoccupied with short-term considerations such as access to intelligence, airfields, and military bases.

But the more the international community uncritically aligned itself with autocratic regimes in exchange for their support, facilities, and cooperation, the more it risked unwittingly creating long-term instability, perfect conditions for further terrorist support. A more prudent policy would seek to prevent security issues from disproportionately influencing dealings with Africa. First, it would be essential to continue to support movement toward democracy and respect for human rights on the basis of explicit benchmarks. Second, as supplements to human rights protection, economic and social uplift would be key. Third, external pressure—rather than silence and condemnation—would be a prerequisite for meaningful political and economic development.

### **United Nations**

The U.N. was engaged in a wide variety of African crises, including those in Angola, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and showed a greater sense of urgency and commitment than in the previous year.

There was a renewed focus on demobilization, the peace process, political dialogue, and economic rehabilitation in the DRC. Two groundbreaking reports, in which the U.N. showed an increased willingness to “name and shame” individuals involved in the illicit arms-for-diamonds trade, examined the link between the exploitation of natural resources and the fueling of conflict. On Liberia/Sierra Leone, U.N. efforts centered on deploying targeted sanctions to stem the flow of illicit diamonds and arms flows; in May 2001, the purchase of diamonds exported from Liberia (believed to originate mainly from rebel-held territory in Sierra Leone) was banned; and in December 2000 and November 2001 the committee monitoring these sanctions followed the example of the Angola committee in issuing hard-hitting reports. There was also some forward movement toward the setting up of a special court for Sierra Leone and enhancing the capability of the U.N. peacekeeping force to protect the civilian population there—though the human

rights agenda was still often trumped by political considerations. With respect to Angola, the main activity concentrated on monitoring and verification by the sanctions panel on arms and illicit diamonds and on improving the response of government and U.N. agencies to the needs of internally displaced persons.

The U.N. began to engage with the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, so key for Africa. The Security Council discussed AIDS three times over eighteen months, including a meeting in the summer of 2000 in which, for the first time, the pandemic was characterized as a security concern. In late June 2001, the first ever General Assembly session about a disease was held. Secretary-General Kofi Annan officially declared the creation of a Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, hoping to raise U.S. \$7-10 billion for the purpose. However, nothing like this sum had been pledged by November, while NGOs criticized a lack of transparency in administering the fund and an implicit refusal to use the money for treatment as well as prevention. Annan also met with the executives of the seven major drug firms to investigate ways of lowering the price of HIV/AIDS drugs. Both the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS welcomed the offers by Indian pharmaceuticals manufacturer Cipla to provide drugs at low prices. The WHO advocated “differential pricing” of drugs on the basis of a country’s economic strength to the World Trade Organization; though this was partly a concession to drug company resistance to a global reduction in prices. The International Labor Organization put out guidelines on AIDS in the workplace and joined UNAIDS. The World Food Programme launched several special feeding projects for people living with HIV/AIDS, including one in Congo. Though criticized as tokenistic, they were at least a recognition of the need.

### **European Union**

Though the lack of coherence in European Union (E.U.) policy towards Africa endured, there were attempts to remedy the problem through improved coordination. France and the United Kingdom, the dominant players, continued to state a commitment to ending their tradition of competitive foreign policies toward Africa, though the practice did not always live up to the rhetoric. Clear policy differences among key European players remained, and were evident in policy conflicts among E.U. member states, especially the U.K. and France, regarding Côte d’Ivoire, the Mano River Countries, the Great Lakes, and Zimbabwe. While Britain spoke out strongly against President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, for example, France’s President Jacques Chirac received the president in Paris after a special OAU summit in Libya focusing on the African Union. The British foreign office was quoted as being shocked by the French decision.

Under the Swedish presidency, the E.U. appointed Hans Dahlgren, the state secretary of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as its special envoy to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, responsible for framing a coordinated E.U. policy on the three countries and promoting cooperation with the U.N. and the Economic Community of West African States. Dahlgren affirmed the E.U.’s support for sanctions against Liberia. An E.U. delegation led by Dahlgren visited Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia between May 29 and June 1. Talks focused on the serious

humanitarian and political crisis in the region. The visit included meetings with the presidents of the four states and representatives of relief organizations and civil society. The E.U.'s special envoy to Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sen. Rino Serri, appointed in December 1999, played an important role in ensuring that human rights issues were highlighted in Europe's response to the conflict between and developments within the two countries.

The E.U. invoked article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, the human rights clause of the document regulating its relations with members of the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) group of countries, in relation to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Zimbabwe in 2001, calling for consultations on worsening respect for human rights, democratic principles, and rule of law. The E.U. also acted in unison in protest at the crackdown by the Eritrea government on dissenters. All member states recalled their ambassadors for consultations after Eritrea expelled the Italian ambassador following his critical comments about the government's human rights record. At a meeting in October with the heads of state of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and the representative of Egypt's head of state, E.U. officials committed the union to supporting the NAI.

However, the same coordinated approach was absent in policy regarding the Great Lakes, where the E.U. seemed to defer to Belgian and French leadership. The United Kingdom continued its support for Rwanda and Uganda, while other member states, especially France and Belgium, leaned more toward Kinshasa. On June 30, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstad signaled the resumption of bilateral cooperation with the DRC by signing a new aid package, dedicated to health, education, and infrastructure. He also pledged to use Belgium's six-month presidency of the E.U. to lobby other member states to reengage with the DRC. The E.U.'s special envoy for the Great Lakes, Aldo Ajello, continued to be active on the diplomatic front for the E.U. The region was also visited by several high-level European delegations, including the Belgian prime minister and foreign minister, and E.U. commissioner Poul Nielson. For his part, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine visited the region in August.

The ACP-E.U. Joint Parliamentary Assembly sent a delegation on a fact-finding mission to Sudan from June 26 to July 2, 2001. In a September report, the delegation urged the Sudanese government to improve its record in human rights and also noted that the record of rebel groups on human rights "is also very far from being acceptable." By resolution of November 1, 2001, the ACP-E.U. Joint Parliamentary Assembly stated that it believes the SPLM/A should not seek formal control over any E.U. funding, which would then allow for resumption of E.U. humanitarian assistance to SPLA areas. It also called on the government of Sudan to take more effective action against torture, discrimination against Christians, and abductions (which particularly affect women and children).

### **United Kingdom**

Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom pledged to make Africa a priority of the Labor Party's second term. In July 2001, during the G-8 Summit in Genoa, the prime minister announced plans to build on the launch of the U.S. \$1.5



billion U.N. global health fund with a five-point “modernization plan” for Africa linking trade, aid, investment, conflict resolution, and the fight against AIDS to combat poverty in the world’s poorest continent. Britain would provide \$200 million to the U.N. fund. While debt campaigners criticized the fund as “inadequate” and “a gimmick,” it did at least represent a commitment to the continent rare among Western leaders. Britain was one of the few wealthy countries that actually increased aid to Africa during the year, though from a low base. Government officials linked the commitment to a government white paper of December 2000 entitled “Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalization Work for the Poor.” Like other European countries, however, Britain refused to accede to the demand made at the World Conference Against Racism that the historical slave trade be acknowledged as a crime against humanity for which reparations were due.

The United Kingdom backed the “New African Initiative,” under which poor countries would receive financial help and better access to rich Western markets in return for cleaning up their governments and economic reform. The prime minister renewed his pledge in September at a meeting with six “reforming” African presidents—of Botswana, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania—focused on trade, good governance, and conflict resolution. The only public statement from the meeting, however, was a response to the September 11 attacks and the question of terrorism.

Additionally, the U.K. continued to play a central role in the stabilization of Sierra Leone. Jonathan Riley, the then British brigadier commanding in Sierra Leone, pledged in January that British troops would stay until the RUF was either defeated militarily or diplomatically. The U.K. also continued its commitment to rebuild the Sierra Leonean army and police. From June 2000 through September, some six hundred British troops were involved in training 8,500 Sierra Leonean Army soldiers. After September 2001, the 360 U.K. military personnel who remained would continue to play a major role in advising and directing military operations, including the staffing of key positions within the Sierra Leonean defense headquarters. Other sectors which benefited from British aid included demobilization programs, human rights and civil society groups, rehabilitation of the legal system, humanitarian aid and programs, and the restoration of local government. Concerns remained, however, that among the newly-trained soldiers were many human rights abusers.

International Development Minister Clare Short showed unusual interest in the DRC. In early August, she made a focused three-day visit to the country. On top of her agenda was the role the United Kingdom could play in supporting the demobilization and reintegration of armed groups in the region. In previous years, she had focused her attention principally on Rwanda and Uganda—problematically offering uncritical support for those governments.

## **France**

France reiterated previous statements of the main elements of its rethought Africa policy: loyalty to a tradition of commitment and solidarity, modernization of France’s cooperation machinery, and the opening up of France’s policy to

embrace the whole of the continent. In April, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin insisted that his country's approach marked a new era: a break with the imperialist past and a new pragmatism which would be based on noninterference in domestic African issues. During an official visit to South Africa, Prime Minister Jospin insisted that Paris had decided to break with its networks of influence in its former colonies. South Africa, he said, was a country he called "a strategic axis not only in French African policy but also in French international policy." His statements were supposedly put to the test by an attempted coup d'état in the Central African Republic. France did not intervene in Bangui. However, France was also reluctant to openly criticize "old friends," or apply diplomatic pressure aimed at improving human rights in former French colonies, including Burkina Faso, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire (where new president Laurent Gbagbo's longstanding links to socialist politicians in Paris protected him from serious pressure to ensure accountability for election atrocities).

France's military training program in Africa, the *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (Recamp), continued. In May, military officers and diplomats from fifteen African countries and twenty non-African partners met to prepare for a military exercise scheduled for Tanzania in February 2002, the first big Recamp event in non-francophone southern Africa. Britain, previously skeptical about the initiative, also attended; future U.S. cooperation was discussed, with its own Africa Crisis Response Initiative up for review. However, Recamp did not effectively screen trainees for the purpose of excluding known human rights abusers.

### **International Monetary Fund and World Bank**

In February 2001, the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank undertook an unprecedented tour of Africa, visiting Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Tanzania, and meeting leaders from most of sub-Saharan Africa. The Bank's vice-president for Africa asserted, "We are working with Africa very differently from the way we have worked in the past," underlining a shift in jargon of the Bretton Woods institutions over the previous two years from the predominance of "structural adjustment" to "poverty reduction."

The two institutions worked more proactively toward rapid implementation of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program in twenty-three countries, nineteen of which were in Africa. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia reached their "decision point," at which it was decided that they qualified for relief under the enhanced HIPC Initiative. The twenty-three countries were receiving relief which could amount to some U.S. \$34 billion over time. Uganda and Mozambique reached "completion point," indicating they had established a track record of good performance under the original HIPC initiative and qualified for additional relief. Zambia (\$2.5 billion), Tanzania (\$2 billion), Mozambique (\$2 billion), Cameroon (\$1.3 billion) and Uganda (\$1 billion) topped the December 2000 list of the African countries receiving the greatest dollar value of committed debt relief.

Guinea-Bissau had the greatest percentage of debt reduction, at over 80 percent. Yet the World Bank itself acknowledged that any benefits expected from HIPC would likely be wiped out by a worldwide slump in commodity prices. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the IMF gave assurances that it would be ready to make additional resources available to African countries experiencing problems as a result of a downturn in the world economy.

The IMF, backed by the U.S. and U.K., refused to renew lending to Kenya in August, citing corruption. In September, responding to the crisis in Zimbabwe, the IMF announced that it had barred the country from future IMF loans or use of its general resources. An agreement with Nigeria, however, was extended in August, despite the failure of the government to observe the conditions set, and both the World Bank and IMF ramped up their support for the DRC. They facilitated the preparation of the government's program for a meeting of bilateral and multilateral donors in early July in Paris. In late July, the IMF approved a staff-monitored program and a U.S. \$50 million grant for the economic recovery program. The two institutions also expressed willingness to assist the DRC to address its debt of U.S. \$800 million owed to them.

The World Bank, under the leadership of James Wolfensohn, came to see HIV/AIDS as one of the central issues it had to address. However, instead of the debt reduction hoped for in severely AIDS-affected countries, the bank played an old tune, offering U.S. \$500 million in additional loans for sub-Saharan Africa, to be used almost exclusively for prevention.

## **United States**

Even before the September 11 attacks, Africa had low expectations of the new U.S. administration under President George W. Bush. During his campaign for the presidency Bush barely mentioned Africa. When specifically asked about his vision for the continent, his reply was terse: "While Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests, as far as I can see them."

But after coming into office, the administration's approach was somewhat nuanced. Confronted by the continuing armed conflicts that ravaged large parts of Africa, including the wars in Angola, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the administration started sending signals that it would continue to play a role in resolving Africa's crises and in particular would seek to play a more neutral role in the Great Lakes wars. But U.S. interest in peacemaking or peacekeeping remained minimal and official statements still focused mainly on trade and investment, revealing a fundamental lack of engagement with human rights issues. However, the administration exhibited some interest in training African armies to perform peacekeeping functions, and the U.S. trained battalions during the year from Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, and prepared to train troops from Guinea. Walter Kansteiner, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, told Congress at his May confirmation hearing: "Sub-Saharan Africa is a priority for this administration. We are not immune from Africa's problems," and proceeded to list them as being the spread of HIV/AIDS, rampant poverty, and civil strife. In line with this tack, it was not surprising that senior U.S. officials argued that the mandate of UNAMSIL, the

U.N. peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone, should be extended not because of the civilian population at risk, but because of the criminal networks in the country that would undermine U.S. economic and political interests.

Secretary of State Colin Powell undertook a trip to the region in May, visiting Mali, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa. Powell stated: "We cannot ignore any place in the world, and Africa is a huge continent in great need—so we have to be engaged." A major focus of the trip was HIV/AIDS. He also discussed regional conflicts, including with leaders of the DRC and Sudan, but the broad message throughout the trip appeared to be that Africa's future depended on the actions of its own leaders, not the international community. Echoing the administration's plans to use trade as a major tool and to send aid primarily to countries it viewed as making economic and political progress, Powell said, "Money loves security and stability." The United States Trade Representative for Africa revisited this theme in a speech to the Congressional Black Caucus on September 28, when he reiterated the administration's belief that the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was the primary vehicle for U.S. trade and development in Africa. This underlined the continuity in Africa policy since the Clinton administration. Although there was a change in attitude and style towards Africa, the strategic priorities remained the same, namely economic. For the Bush team, this implied greater interest in free trade and open markets; though the concessions to Africa offered by AGOA were in fact limited.

Notwithstanding Colin Powell's vow of engagement, in practice the Bush administration remained detached from African issues, seemingly preferring, with the exception of Sudan, to defer to the Europeans, or to the so-called anchor states of South Africa and Nigeria. Sudan galvanized sustained high-level attention because of a powerful coalition of religious and conservative forces that pressured the administration to take a stronger line against the Khartoum government. The establishment in September of the position of special envoy to Sudan mirrored that pressure. President Bush named former U.S. Senator John Danforth to the position, saying, "Sudan is a disaster for all human rights. We must turn the eyes of the world upon the atrocities in Sudan."

The withdrawal of the U.S. delegation from the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in South Africa from August 31 to September 8, showed disregard for African activists as well as the efforts devoted to the event within the region. What could have been an excellent opportunity for the U.S. to contribute to the understanding and remedy of such serious issues as discrimination against refugees, sexism, and the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on people of color resulted instead in disappointment.

In the wake of the September attacks, it was likely that the administration's interest would be focused on the Horn and East Africa (embracing Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania). Sudan was reported to have offered extensive cooperation with the U.S., including sharing intelligence on the al-Qaeda network. Reports suggested that beyond Afghanistan, Somalia might be a target of U.S. military operations in pursuit of al-Qaeda cells. That would significantly reshape U.S. relations with the subregion, with potentially serious human rights implications. Throughout the continent, there was concern that enhanced cooperation

with the U.S. on the terrorism agenda would silence criticism of allies' attacks on domestic political enemies. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice insisted that in building alliances, it was "clear our job is to make certain that we draw a line in all our discussions between legitimate dissent or legitimate movements for the rights of minorities, and the fact that there may be international terrorism in various parts of the world." However, past conduct by the U.S. on making such human rights issues a priority—prior to the September attacks when the stakes for the U.S. were much lower—did not back her assurances.

For example, in the case of Ethiopia, the U.S. had rarely spoken out and exerted no meaningful pressure when abuses—including excessive force against demonstrators, silencing of dissent, and the violent repression of minorities in restless regions—were perpetrated by the government. On the contrary, the government was rewarded with generous aid packages. In the wake of September 11, exchanges between Ethiopia and the U.S. increased, but were focused exclusively on antiterrorism rather than any human rights concerns. In one of the only three telephone calls to African leaders reported prior to launching the strikes against Afghanistan, President Bush spoke with Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia on October 5, thanking him for his offer to cooperate in the campaign against terrorism and discussing his intent to take action against terrorists and their sanctuaries. Mainstreaming human rights considerations was not on the agenda.

Colin Powell, during his whirlwind tour of Africa, had praised democratic trends in Kenya but emphasized the importance of constitutional rule, hinting at Kenya's need for a thorough constitutional review. His comments were widely viewed by observers as a diplomatic way of saying that President Moi should step down from the presidency in 2002, as he was required to do so by the constitution. But September 11 might have pushed such concerns to the back burner. According to a White House press release, the president spoke with President Moi of Kenya on October 5, emphasizing the need for cooperation on many fronts—financial, intelligence, diplomatic, and military. He suggested further talks between the United States and Kenya on how to meet the challenges ahead. Again, there appeared to be no room for valuing human rights as integral to regional security.

When a State Department spokesperson was asked about the implications of coalition making for U.S. policy regarding Sudan, he responded that cooperation with the U.S. would not relieve Sudan of its responsibility to terminate its abusive domestic practices, including denial of humanitarian access, bombing attacks on humanitarian operations and civilian targets, and religious discrimination. The spokesperson contended that all those issues remained firmly fixed on the U.S. agenda despite an alignment with Sudan to fight terror. It remained to be seen, however, whether the demands of the terrorism coalition would override human rights and humanitarian concerns, in this and other cases.

## **THE WORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

While focusing on areas of prolonged conflict, Human Rights Watch continued to cover all of sub-Saharan Africa and to expand monitoring of French-speaking countries. We carried out research and advocacy on Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire,

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Conakry, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Additionally, the Africa division tackled cross-country, thematic research on arms flows, natural resources and corporate responsibility, national human rights commissions, and the rights of children, women, refugees, and the internally displaced. We also increased the level and scope of our monitoring of non-state actors, placing special focus on the violence perpetrated by rebel forces, and practical methods to influence them through dialogue and third country leverage.

We fielded investigative and advocacy missions to Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Gambia, Guinea-Conakry, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Human Rights Watch maintained field offices in Kigali, Rwanda; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Bujumbura, Burundi.

Human Rights Watch continued its strong collaboration with national human rights organizations. Behind the scenes, we continued to build the capacity of local NGOs to effect change on the human rights record in their countries. When human rights defenders were harassed, Human Rights Watch pushed for diplomatic measures to end the problem. In October 2001, Human Rights Watch published a briefing paper, *Freedom of Association at Risk: The Proposed NGO Bill and Current Restrictions on NGOs in Uganda*, about a new law before the Ugandan parliament that would severely limit or curtail the rights of NGOs whose work did not conform with "government policies or plans."

The Great Lakes region remained a priority, as the conflict in the DRC continued to involve and spill over into all neighboring states. In meetings with senior officials in Washington, New York, Brussels, Berlin, London, and in the region, and in presentations to United Nations bodies, Human Rights Watch continued to highlight the exploitation of resources and illegal importation of arms that added fuel to the conflagration. In a March 2001 report, *Uganda in Eastern DRC: Fueling Political and Ethnic Strife*, we explicated the role of Uganda in escalating the conflict in eastern Congo, and called on the Ugandan government and rebel groups to alleviate the suffering they were causing there.

Enhancing the organization's work on economic and social rights, Human Rights Watch published two reports addressing the indivisibility of human rights. In *Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda*, we detailed the government practice of forced villagization and dispossession of land of tens of thousands of impoverished Hutu and Tutsi in the countryside. In *Unequal Protection: The State Response to Violent Crime on South African Farms*, we highlighted rural violence and abuses against farm workers. Another report on South Africa, *Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*, complemented previous work on violence against women in South Africa by considering the danger girls faced in schools as a violation of the right to education.

Human Rights Watch extended its Africa-wide advocacy through the publication of a major report on the performance of government-sponsored human rights commissions, *Protectors or Pretenders? Government Human Rights Commissions in Africa*. The study reported on the often disappointing record of these commissions, which had received large sums of money for their creation from the donor com-

munity. The report found that many commissions did more to deflect international criticisms of their government than to solve human rights problems, but also singled out the commissions of Uganda, Ghana, and South Africa as exceptions. The study was widely circulated amongst donors to national human rights institutions—including the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Program—as well as to high-level government officials and the human rights commissions themselves, and catalyzed a larger debate about the roles and expectations of such commissions.

Violence surrounding elections was a particular focus of the division during the year, with a report on the manipulation of the electoral system and accompanying violence in Uganda (*Uganda: Not a Level Playing Field*) and a detailed report on Côte d'Ivoire (*The New Racism: The Political Manipulation of Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire*) published at the time of the World Conference Against Racism in Durban. The latter report chronicled wide-scale torture, murder, and rape, and the official manipulation of ethnic tensions during presidential and parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire in late 2000, garnering intense media interest. Human Rights Watch also alerted the international community to governmental interference and irregularities in local elections in Rwanda.

Throughout the year we remained active on international justice issues. Human Rights Watch experts took part in genocide trials in Belgium and at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, acting as expert witnesses on the human rights situation in the Rwanda. We also called upon the international community to invest in the future of Sierra Leone by funding its special court for the prosecution of crimes related to the decade long conflict.

Human Rights Watch intervened regularly to protest abuse of refugees and internally displaced. Our report on the treatment of refugees in Guinea, *Refugees Still at Risk: Continuing Refugee Protection Concerns in Guinea*, documented harassment and assault of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees by Guinean security personnel and civilians, leading to changes in the provisions for those in refugee camps there.

## ANGOLA

### HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS

Civil war persisted in Angola, accompanied by a dramatic escalation of violations of the laws of war. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a rebel group led by Jonas Savimbi, killed, abducted, and terrorized civilians with impunity. Government forces abused civilians during forced relocations and beat or killed civilians displaced in the course of looting, extortion, and forced recruitment of boys and men.

The situation worsened since the breakdown of the Lusaka Peace Protocol in mid-1998 when UNITA resumed fighting. In 2001, the numbers of internally dis-