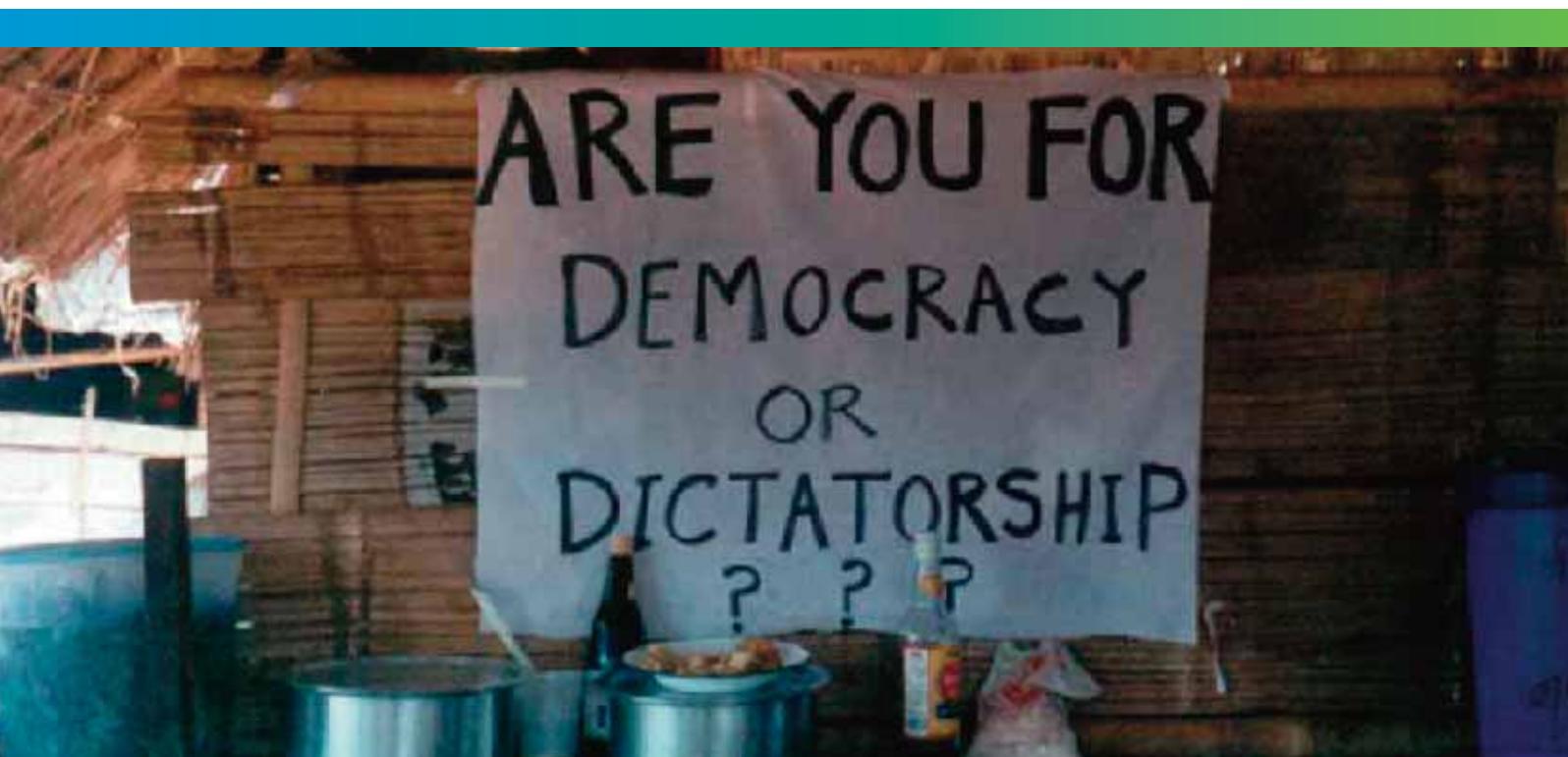
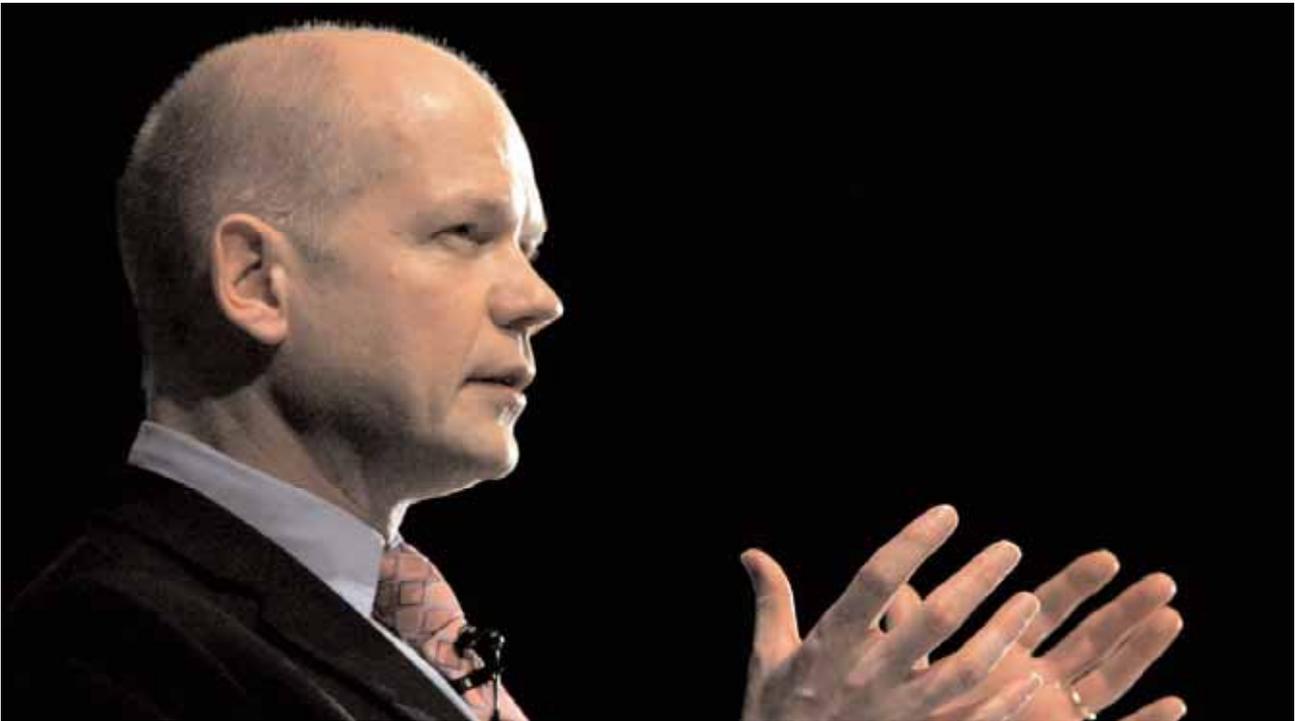


The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2007



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Foreword

by the Rt Hon William Hague MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary

I welcome the publication of the 2007 Conservative Party Human Rights Commission Annual Report and the detailed recommendations which have been put forward. These recommendations will be considered carefully as we develop our ideas for a future Conservative Government.

The Conservative Party benefits greatly from the Commission's tireless work in informing Parliament and campaigning for the rights of oppressed people worldwide.

Our time in opposition is our best opportunity to think afresh, and the Commission is making a crucial contribution both to the renewal of the Conservative Party and to the shaping of a principled foreign policy.

The report demonstrates that too many of the world's citizens continue to live without the basic freedoms – of speech, movement, religion, association and press, and freedom from fear, arbitrary arrest and torture.

As Shadow Foreign Secretary, I believe that we must conduct our foreign policy in a way that does not deviate from our values; central to which is a deeply-held belief in the primacy and inviolability of individual human rights.

Human rights do not apply solely to the Western world, nor do they reflect standards from which particular cultures or religions can choose to opt out. They are, or should be, universal.

While human rights are not the only consideration in forming a nation's foreign policy, if we allow human rights to suffer while we pursue our legitimate national interests we will, in the long term, have failed.

The Commission has made great strides since its establishment in 2005. I am delighted that the Commission has developed a focus on thematic issues and policy ideas, while continuing to monitor individual cases and countries and to campaign for them. Their work is invaluable, and I look forward to receiving their input in the months and years to come.

Introduction

2007 was another troubled year in terms of human rights abuse and restrictions on basic freedoms throughout the world. The brutal suppression of the monks' protest in Burma was merely the most visible and widely-reported attack on freedom and democracy. Elsewhere, the activities of many of the world's dictatorships persisted with little interest from mainstream media.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission (CPHRC) exists to challenge this state of affairs. By investigating and reporting on human rights abuses, and through formal advice submitted to the Shadow Foreign Affairs Team, the Commission is working to make respect for fundamental rights and democracy a key driver of our foreign policy.

Furthermore, by championing human rights now, even while still in opposition, Conservatives have played a constructive role in encouraging the Government to move with greater urgency and boldness when pressing for international action to protect human rights.

Over the past twelve months, the CPHRC has continued to monitor the world's worst human rights offenders. We have pursued our close interest in North Korea, Iran and Burma, taking formal evidence at public hearings and briefings. We have also looked at other forms of systemic human rights abuse such as caste-based discrimination in India.

The Commission has also embarked on a study of the institutions and mechanisms available to a future Conservative Government seeking more effective action against human rights violators. We have completed an inquiry into UN reform and will shortly begin a similar study of the machinery within the Foreign Office for promoting and defending human rights.

It was my privilege to take over as Chairman of the CPHRC mid-way through the year. Gary Streeter MP chaired the Commission superbly during its first two years and deserves enormous credit for the way he has championed freedom, democracy and human rights in Parliament.

I am delighted that Baroness Verma, Edward Macmillan-Scott MEP and Welsh Assembly Member Darren Miller have all joined the Commission this year. They bring with them considerable knowledge and expertise and will no doubt help the work of the Commission in the months and years to come.

I trust you will find this Annual Report useful and that it will give you both an insight into our work and a sense of the real passion within the Commission for putting concern for human rights at the heart of Conservative foreign policy.



Stephen Crabb MP
Chairman

Activities in 2007



Conservative Party Human Rights Commission meeting

In 2007, the CPHRC continued to gather evidence on human rights violations in a number of specific countries, and to raise cases and issues in Parliament through debates and Parliamentary Questions.

In addition, the Commission has adopted a more thematic approach, and has begun to develop a more policy-oriented agenda. It has begun contributing specific ideas for how a future Conservative Government might use the machinery of government and multilateral institutions to defend and promote human rights.

The Commission has had regular meetings with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other human rights Non-Governmental Organisations. In addition, the Commission has also had regular contact with the offices of the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Foreign Secretary, arranging meetings and briefings with them. For example, the Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron, and the Chairman of the Commission met Kenneth Roth, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch in June.

Following the Government reshuffle in July, the Chairman of the Commission wrote to the new Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Malloch Brown, to raise a number of specific human rights concerns. He challenged the Minister to make human rights a priority among his wide-ranging and varied portfolio of responsibilities.

Hearings

The Commission has held a series of hearings with expert witnesses throughout the year.

These included:

Caste-based discrimination: We heard evidence from a panel of four Dalit activists from India which included Dr Joseph D'souza, International President of the Dalit Freedom Network. The plight of the Dalits or "untouchables" in India was the primary focus of the hearing, held in the week that Britain marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The witnesses presented detailed evidence of serious human rights abuses occurring as a result of the caste system. The Commission heard extensive accounts of bonded labour, discrimination, rape, sexual slavery, beatings and killings among India's 250 million Dalits and "backward castes". In addition, the Chairman of the Commission made a fact-finding visit to India and initiated a debate in Parliament on the plight of the Dalits.

United Nations Reform: A panel consisting of the former UK Ambassador to the United Nations, Lord Hannay, the Director of Human Rights Watch, Tom Porteous, the leading human rights lawyer and author of *Crimes Against Humanity*, Geoffrey Robertson QC, and Joseph Loconte, a former member of the US Congressional Taskforce on the UN, presented their assessment of the UN system and its failure to address human rights concerns. The hearing focused primarily on the mechanism and performance of the new UN Human Rights Council, but we also considered the role of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Special Procedures, and the enforcement of the "responsibility to protect". A paper based on the findings from this hearing will be submitted to the Shadow Foreign Secretary.

Human rights in Iran: In July, the Commission turned its attention to human rights in Iran, and heard shocking evidence from a panel consisting of representatives of the Kurdish Human Rights Project, the Balochistan People's Party, the British Ahwazi Friendship Society and the Baha'i Community about the treatment of women, ethnic groups and religious minorities in Iran.

Conservative Party Conference

- **International Development debate:** The Commission arranged for Zoya Phan, a Burmese refugee and activist with the Burma Campaign UK, to address the Party Conference from the main platform as part of the International Development debate. The Deputy Chairman of the Commission also spoke.
- **Fringe meeting:** The Commission held a fringe meeting, addressed by Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague MP, the leader of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) Mohamed Nasheed, and Simon Coveney TD, an Irish Parliamentarian and former European Parliament Rapporteur on human rights.
- **Burma crisis fringe meeting:** The Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell MP, organised a special fringe meeting on the Burma crisis, at which Zoya Phan and the Deputy Chairman of the Commission spoke.

Briefings

- The Commission organised a briefing for the Conservative Parliamentary Party on Burma with former political prisoner Bo Kyi, founder of the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners (AAPP), Charm Tong of the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), and Mark Farmaner of the Burma Campaign UK.

Campaigns



The Rt Hon William Hague MP signing The Freedom Wall at Spring Forum

- **Stop Slavery. Full Stop:** At Conservative Party Spring Forum, the Commission launched a new campaign called “Stop Slavery. Full Stop”. The campaign focused initially on human trafficking, but will broaden to cover other forms of modern day slavery. The Commission organised a Freedom Wall and gathered hundreds of signatures from members of the Shadow Cabinet, senior Party members and activists for a petition in support of Stop the Traffik’s campaign. The declaration read: “People trafficking is wrong. I support Stop the Traffik in its call to: Prevent the sale of people, Prosecute the traffickers, Protect the victims.” Shadow Cabinet members who signed the Freedom Wall included William Hague, George Osborne, Oliver Letwin, Andrew Mitchell and Caroline Spelman.

- **North Korea:** The Commission has continued to monitor closely the situation in North Korea. As part of their investigations, the Chairman of the Commission accompanied two former North Korean prisoners to a meeting with the Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron. Following their firsthand accounts of torture and killings, Cameron joined calls for the respect of human rights in North Korea.
- **Burma:** The Commission has continued to make Burma a high priority. In addition to the activities detailed previously, the Chairman of the Commission has tabled numerous Parliamentary Questions, signed Early Day Motions and attended meetings of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma. The Deputy Chairman of the Commission has travelled to Burma’s borders four times in 2007, joined on various occasions by Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell MP and by John Bercow MP. He has also spoken at several protests at the Burmese Embassy in London, testified at a hearing in the European Parliament, and given evidence to the House of Commons International Development Committee during their inquiry into UK aid to Burma. During the crisis in Burma in August and September 2007, both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Commission were interviewed by various media, including BBC World, BBC News 24, Sky News and CNN.
- **The Maldives:** The Commission has continued to monitor the political and human rights situation in the Maldives closely, and has had regular meetings with concerned groups including Friends of the Maldives and the Maldivian High Commissioner. Gary Streeter MP visited the Maldives in January, and members of the Commission have tabled several Parliamentary Questions and Early Day Motions throughout the year.

PART ONE

Global Human Rights: Themes and Trends

1 – Slavery Today

Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could not be clearer: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”

Yet in 2007, modern day slavery in all its forms remains widespread. At least 12 million people are used for forced labour, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO); hundreds of thousands of children are forcibly conscripted as soldiers; and sexual slavery is widespread.

While slavery can be the direct result of policies of brutal regimes such as those in Burma and Sudan, the trafficking of persons by criminal gangs is the fastest growing means by which people are enslaved.

Of the 12 million in forced labour around the world, the ILO estimates that 2.4 million have been trafficked. Between 600,000 and 800,000 men, women and children are bought and sold – ‘trafficked’ – across international borders each year. Approximately 80 per cent of them are women and girls, and 50 per cent are minors, according to the US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report.

Human trafficking is the third largest source of income for organised crime, exceeded only by arms and drug trafficking, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime reports, and is generating \$7 billion per year in criminal proceeds.

The victims of trafficking are sold into prostitution, forced labour, military service, domestic service, forced marriage and forced illegal adoption. Some are orphans and street children, others are runaways, and others are sold by their parents. Some are forcibly abducted, while others are lured with false promises and false agreements.

The UK is a major destination for human trafficking. Each year thousands of victims of trafficking are brought into the sex trade in the UK, primarily from Eastern Europe and Asia. Yet in the period from 2004-2006, only thirty convictions were made. To date there have been no convictions for trafficking for labour exploitation.



The Freedom Wall at Spring Forum

In response to this major challenge, the CPHRC joined others in commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on 25 March 2007 by launching a campaign against slavery in all its forms – “Stop Slavery. Full Stop”.

The campaign has involved people at all levels of the Conservative Party. It began with a ‘Freedom Wall’, signed by Shadow Cabinet members, MPs, MEPs, Candidates, Councillors and Party members, with the simple statement: “People trafficking is wrong. I support STOP THE TRAFFIK in its call to: Prevent the sale of people, Prosecute the traffickers, Protect the victims.”

The Commission has worked closely with Stop the Traffik, an international coalition of organisations from over forty countries which aims to raise

awareness of human trafficking as a global problem and call for change. Our Freedom Wall formed part of Stop the Traffik's global petition delivered to the UN in November.

The CPHRC believes a future Conservative Government in the UK should adopt the following policies to combat human trafficking:

- Ratify and implement the *Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings 2005*.
- Promote schemes to educate and warn those most vulnerable about the threat of trafficking gangs.
- Encourage academic and economic opportunities in developing countries to combat the conditions of poverty and hopelessness which allow trafficking to flourish.
- Promote better cooperation internally, between relevant government departments, local government, law enforcement, international charities and victim support groups in this country, and internationally, especially with countries of origin.
- Promote educational campaigns persuading consumers and businesses to insist on fair trading practices and to recognise the signs of trafficking.
- Provide designated helplines both for women who are victims of trafficking and for men to call anonymously if they believe a woman is being forced to work as a prostitute.
- Improve coordination with, and support for, NGOs providing secure shelter, counseling and other practical support to the victims of trafficking.

2 – Rape as a Weapon of War



Stephen Crabb MP meeting displaced people in Burundi

Sexual violence, and particularly the use of rape as a deliberate weapon of war, is widespread and systematic in many conflict situations, from Burma and Burundi to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women said this year that "the woman's body has become a battleground and it seems to be taken for granted that this should continue."

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325, recognising the role of women in peace and security and acknowledging the dangers they face in conflict. The resolution calls in particular for measures to protect women from gender-based violence, including rape and other sexual abuse.

Five years since resolution 1325 was adopted, sexual violence continues to be used in order to terrify, denigrate and subjugate women. Rape as a weapon of war is often used in ethnic conflicts, as a means to perpetrate ethnic cleansing, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In some conflicts, the deliberate impregnation of women of another ethnicity is seen as a means of "diluting" that ethnicity. As in Rwanda in 1994, the deliberate spread of HIV/AIDS through rape is also practiced in some conflict and genocide situations.

Rape is not simply carried out by ill-disciplined troops taking the "spoils of war" or seeking sexual gratification. It can be a carefully and deliberately planned and promoted tool of warfare. Two of the most prominent current examples of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war are Sudan and Burma.

An Amnesty International report has highlighted the use of rape in Darfur as a weapon of war. They claim to have obtained the names of 250 women who have been raped in the Darfur conflict, and details concerning a further 250 cases. It is probable that there are numerous other cases that have not been registered.

The systematic use of rape as a weapon of war in Burma has been well-documented. The military regime's troops target women from ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Shan and Chin. Numerous reports have shown that the majority of rapes are perpetrated by officers, and in most cases the victim is gang-raped and often tortured and killed.¹

In addition to the use of rape as a weapon of war in Burma, a report by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland, *Catwalk to the Barracks: Conscripted women for sexual slavery and other practices of sexual violence by troops of the Burmese military regime in Mon areas* reveals evidence of widespread forcible conscription of women into sexual slavery by the Burma Army.

Amnesty International's Secretary-General Irene Khan has stated: "Patterns of violence against women in conflict do not arise 'naturally' but are ordered, condoned or tolerated. They persist because those who commit them know they can get away with impunity."

But the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence are, under international law, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Geneva Conventions both specify rape as a crime.

UN Security Council resolution 1325 calls on all parties to armed conflict to "take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse", and emphasises the "responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls".

The next Conservative Government should lead an international effort to see UN Security Council resolution 1325 fully implemented and enforced. It is time turn rhetoric into reality by acting against impunity.

¹ Licence to Rape (Shan Women's Action Network, 2002), Shattering Silences (Karen Women's Organisation, 2004), State of Terror (Karen Women's Organisation, 2007) and Unsafe State: State-sanctioned sexual violence against Chin women in Burma (Women's League of Chinland, 2007)

3 – Child Soldiers



The mother of an abducted boy from Batticaloa district holds a photograph of her son. © 2006 Fred Abrahams/Human Rights Watch

In 2006, as many as 250,000 children were serving as soldiers in at least twenty active armed conflicts, according to UNICEF. According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, more than half a million children under the age of 18 have been recruited into government forces or armed groups in over 85 countries.²

From Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda, to Colombia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Burma children below the age of 18 have been recruited – often by force – to join government forces, government-backed paramilitaries and militia, and rebel groups in armed conflict.

“Easily manipulated, intensely loyal, fearless and, most important, in endless supply,” according to the *New York Times*³, child soldiers are forcibly recruited, trained and forced to fight in horrific conditions. Human Rights Watch reports: “They wield AK-47s and M-16s on the front lines of combat, serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and act as spies, messengers or lookouts.” They are frequently beaten, tortured, raped and severely mistreated.

In Burma, for example, children are typically taken from street corners or bus stops. One former child soldier interviewed by the Deputy Chairman of the CPHRC described how he was waiting at a bus stop in Rangoon, when a truckload of Burma Army soldiers drew up alongside him, grabbed him and told him he had to join the army. When asked whether he had been given a choice, he said: “My choice was to join the army or to go to jail”.

In 2002 Human Rights Watch estimated that Burma has proportionately the highest number of forcibly conscripted child soldiers in the world, with as many as 70,000 children having been recruited to join the 350,000-strong Burma Army. In 2007, a new report by Human Rights Watch, *Sold To Be Soldiers*, confirmed that the practice is continuing in Burma.

In 2007, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, held discussions with Burma’s military regime which led to an agreement to establish a government department to work with the UN to end recruitment of child soldiers. It remains to be seen what the practical impact of this will be.

The majority of child soldiers in the world today are in paramilitaries or armed opposition groups, often fighting civil wars. It is estimated that the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda has abducted over 30,000 children as soldiers, while there are 6,000-9,000 child soldiers in the Maoist forces in Nepal. In Colombia, it is estimated that between 11,000 and 14,000 children serve in paramilitary and guerrilla forces.

The forced recruitment of children or their use in armed conflict is against international law. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000)*, and several UN Security Council resolutions prohibit the use of child soldiers.

The ILO *Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, signed by over 150 countries, prohibits the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under the age of 18 for use in armed conflict. The *1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* provides for the possibility of prosecuting those who recruit children below the age of 15. In 2005 Security Council Resolution 1612 called for the creation of a Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and of monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

² www.child-soldiers.org

³ Reuters Alert, <http://www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/1265/2007/04/2-160449-1.htm>, 6 May 2007

In February 2007, UNICEF and the French Government convened a major international conference in Paris to address the issue of child soldiers. The conference led to fifty eight governments signing the *Paris Principles* and the *Paris Commitments* on children in armed conflict. The *Principles* are a detailed set of guidelines for protecting children from recruitment and for providing effective assistance to those already involved with armed groups or forces.

Yet, despite these legal and political initiatives, little has changed and the recruitment and use of child soldiers continues. ISN Security Watch argues that they amount ultimately to “more talk, little action”.

In order to end the appalling and widespread abuse of children in this way, the CPHRC makes the following recommendations, to both the current Government and a future Conservative Government:

- To abide by and promote existing international law, and emerging international standards, including the *Paris Principles* and *Paris Commitments*
- To work with the international community to adopt appropriate measures to put pressure on persistent offenders, as set out in UN Security Council resolutions 1539 and 1612, including arms embargoes, travel bans and restrictions on the flow of financial resources to the parties concerned;
- To work with the international community to bring about the prosecutions of individual recruiters of child soldiers;
- To study the Child Soldier Prevention Act (S.1175)⁴ proposed by US Senators Richard Durbin and Sam Brownback, which seeks to limit military assistance to countries where child soldiers are used, and consider ways in which similar proposals could be adopted by the UK;
- To develop a closer dialogue with the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers⁵

⁴ The bill would restrict five categories of US military assistance (International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Financing, Foreign Military Sales, Direct Commercial Sales, and Excess Defense Articles) to governments involved in the use of child soldiers until they end any involvement in the recruitment or use of child soldiers.

⁵ www.child-soldiers.org

4 – New faces of apartheid: ethnic and caste-based discrimination in India



Stephen Crabb MP meets dalits during a fact finding trip to India © Christian Solidarity Worldwide

India is an increasingly important trading partner and strategic ally for the UK. It remains the largest and, in many ways, the most remarkable democratic nation on earth.

The Conservative Party enjoys a good relationship with the Indian Government and the Conservative Party Friends of India is one of the fastest growing groups within the Parliamentary Party. Yet for all the positive and exciting developments inside the new India, almost 200 million people remain victims of a systemic form of discrimination based on caste. This practice is thousands of years old and still today creates barriers to justice and to the full range of economic and social rights guaranteed under the Indian constitution.

Dalits, the so-called “untouchables” outside the main caste groups who number almost 170 million people, are known legally as the ‘Scheduled Castes’. Together with the ‘Scheduled Tribes’ (many of whom suffer similar forms of social exclusion) numbering 84 million, Dalits are vulnerable to numerous forms of discrimination and abuse.

On virtually any statistical measure of well-being that one may choose, the figures for Dalits are much worse than the Indian national average. The estimated proportion of Dalits living below the poverty line is significantly higher than for other groups, in both urban and rural areas. Similar disparities have been documented in the areas of child mortality, literacy rates, and the number of Dalits progressing to higher levels of education.

Despite a small number of Dalits having risen to positions of prominence in India, they are still poorly represented in civil society. A 2006 survey of key decision-makers in national media organisations in Delhi found that none were of Dalit background.

In December 2006 the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh became the first sitting Indian prime minister to openly acknowledge the parallel between the practice of “untouchability” and apartheid in South Africa, describing it as a “blot on humanity”.

Other Indians prefer to think that the situation facing Dalits is comparable to that faced by Blacks forty years ago in the southern states of the United States when, even though Supreme Court rulings had outlawed segregation, the reality of daily life for many was de facto segregation, barriers to advancement and continuing poverty.

Successive Indian governments have introduced measures to put an end to untouchability. But progress towards bringing the daily experience of Dalits in line with the theoretical freedom and protection offered under the constitution is slow.

Official records show that the rate of registered atrocities against Dalits continues at about 26,000 a year. That figure is enormous but is unlikely to represent anything like the true extent of caste-based violence against Dalits. Unofficial surveys show that Dalits are consistently faced with discrimination in police stations, including refusals to register cases. Dalits are consistently the worst victims of most human rights abuses in India, including bonded labour and human trafficking. Others face institutionalised sexual exploitation in the *devadasi* system of prostitution, and exploitative forms of labour, such as the manual cleaning of human excrement in some parts of India.

A recent NGO survey, entitled ‘Untouchability in Rural India’ (2006) investigated the practice of various forms of discrimination in majority rural India, and found that numerous forms of segregation are still common. In 73% of villages surveyed, Dalits were not permitted to enter non-Dalit houses. In nearly 50% of villages, Dalits faced discrimination in access to water facilities and burial grounds. In 38% of villages, Dalit and non-Dalit children would not eat together in schools.

On 6 March 2007 the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern that, despite the formal abolition of untouchability by Article 17 of the Indian constitution, de facto segregation of Dalits persists in respect of places of worship, housing, hospitals, education, markets and other public places, and water sources.

During 2007 the CPHRC conducted an investigation into caste-based discrimination inside India to help the Party develop a fuller understanding of the poverty challenge inside India.

In February 2007 the Chairman of the Commission visited India with Christian Solidarity Worldwide to meet Dalit activists and to see the effects of caste-based discrimination. Following the visit, the Chairman secured a parliamentary debate in which he urged the Government to work closely with the Government of India to challenge the persistence of the caste system that threatens the social stability and the economic progress of India.

This was followed in March 2007 by a hearing held in Parliament with a panel of Dalit activists who were visiting the UK. Four leading Indian campaigners presented detailed evidence of serious human rights abuses as a result of the caste system, particularly regarding extensive accounts of bonded labour, discrimination, rape, sexual slavery, beatings and killings.

The CPHRC is encouraged by the appetite that exists within Indian society itself to see untouchability eradicated. Earlier this year, a BBC World Service poll found that 55 per cent of Indians think that the issues relating to caste are holding their country back.

The Commission supports the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Indian Government that they should intensify their efforts to enforce the *Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955)*, especially in rural areas, by effectively punishing acts of untouchability, by taking effective measures against residential segregation and segregation in public schools, and by ensuring equal access for Dalits to places of worship, hospitals, water sources and any other places or services intended for use by the general public.

The Foreign Office describes the nature of the UK’s relationship with India as “strong, wide and deep”. This close relationship provides a positive context in which the UK can provide development aid and assistance in eradicating caste-based discrimination in India.

The Conservative Party foreign affairs team, and the Conservative Party Friends of India, should aim to meet Dalit activists during visits to India. The next Conservative Government should not allow sensitivity over Britain’s colonial history in India, nor concerns about current commercial and economic interests, to prevent it

from raising the issue of caste-based discrimination with the Indian Government. The following policy recommendations should be adopted:

- The UK should continue to raise this matter with India at both bilateral and multinational levels, through the EU and UN;
- The UK should specifically encourage the Indian Government to fully engage with and implement the recommendations of the UN CERD;
- A portion of UK aid to India should be targeted specifically at Dalits, with the aim of closing the gaps between life outcomes for Dalits and those of the wider community;
- The UK should provide assistance to organisations in India that represent and provide a voice for Dalits;
- The UK Government should provide advice and assistance to help the machinery of Indian Government to stamp out caste-based discrimination and to work more effectively for Dalits and those of lower castes;
- The UK Government should see to the formation and observance of informal guidelines for UK companies who invest in India to build into their investment plans corporate social responsibility plans aimed at seeing their investments deliver real gains for Dalit communities.

5 – Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons



Internally displaced people in Toungoo, Burma © FBR

A refugee is defined in international law as someone with a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, who is outside of his or her country of nationality and unable or unwilling to return.⁶

Refugees are forced from their countries by war, civil conflict, political strife or gross human rights abuses and may find themselves in situations as diverse as the vast camps bordering African conflict zones or the tiny refugee boats crossing the sea from South East Asia to Australia. There is also a large worldwide population of people who have been displaced from their homes, but who remain within their own countries and are often reliant on assistance from NGOs and the United Nations.

According to UNHCR, through to the end of 2006, there was a significant increase in the global population of persons of concern to UNHCR⁷ as compared with the previous year, and the figure currently stands at approximately 33 million.⁸ In 2006 the global refugee population increased for the first time since 2002, to an estimated 10 million.⁹ In addition, at 5.8 million, the number of stateless persons more than doubled in 2006 compared with 2005.

A significant part of the increase in the worldwide refugee population can be attributed to the ongoing instability in Iraq. According to the Forced Migration Review, at present one in six Iraqis is displaced and they are the second largest refugee group in the world. Over two million Iraqis are in exile and a further two million are internally displaced.¹⁰

Pakistan is the asylum country currently hosting the largest number of refugees, followed by Iran. At the end of 2006, both countries together hosted one in five of all the world's refugees. Afghanistan remains the leading country of origin of refugees with 2.1 million refugees currently in 71 different asylum countries. Three other main source countries of refugees are Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. In the last year, the global number of refugees from Burma has also increased by 23 per cent as a result of ongoing violence and political repression.

Throughout 2006, hundreds of thousands of people became newly displaced within their own countries, notably

6 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)

7 Persons of concern to the UNHCR include refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returned refugees, returned IDPs, stateless persons and other persons of concern.

8 UNHCR, 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons, Division of Operational Services, June 2007. Revised 16 July 2007.

9 UN figures do not include the 4.3 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

10 Forced Migration Review, <http://www.fmreview.org/iraq.htm>

in Colombia, Iraq, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. In addition, the number of IDPs benefiting from the protection of UNHCR in Sudan as a result of the ongoing crisis in Darfur was approximately 1.3 million at the end of the year.¹¹

Statelessness remains a critical challenge for the UN, NGOs and host states. There are currently approximately 5.8 million people worldwide who remain stateless, without automatic rights to reside in any one country. Latest figures for stateless persons in a number of countries have been significantly revised upwards as a result of more reliable data, notably including Nepal and Burma.¹²

The UNHCR recommends three long-term solutions for refugees: voluntary repatriation to the home country; local integration in the country of asylum; and resettlement in a third country. Although voluntary repatriation is generally considered the preferred option, during 2006 the total number of returnees under the responsibility of the UN was the second-lowest in the last 15 years.

The CPHRC has been working hard throughout the year to highlight the plight of people in places such as the Sudan and Burma, where violence and repression have generated so many refugees and internally displaced persons. The Commission recommends that the current Government and a future Conservative Government demonstrate its commitment to protecting the rights of refugees (both in Britain and elsewhere) and internally displaced persons throughout the world by:

- Showing commitment to the *Refugee Convention* in terms of interpreting it in evolutionary terms, taking into consideration the changes that have occurred in the period since its conclusion;
- Placing focus on state-driven commitments to prevention of refugee flows through the resolution or avoidance of conflicts or political situations that produce refugee flows in the first place;
- Providing assistance to those countries of first asylum which, being adjacent to the countries producing the flows, are usually as poor and under-resourced as the source countries;
- Engaging in dialogue and working closely with UNHCR and other refugee rights advocates and NGOs to inform political leadership and guidance on both domestic and foreign refugee protection policy.

¹¹ UNHCR, 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons, Division of Operational Services, June 2007. Revised 16 July 2007.

¹² UNHCR, 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons, Division of Operational Services, June 2007. Revised 16 July 2007.

6 – Prisoners of Conscience



North Korean defectors meet Stephen Crabb MP and Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Leader of the Opposition

The term “Prisoner of Conscience” was first coined by Amnesty International to describe “someone imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of their beliefs”.¹³ It includes anyone imprisoned because of their religion, race, language, sexual orientation, or belief, provided they have not used or advocated violence.

The human rights of such prisoners are systematically infringed, their right to assembly, to fair trial, and to freedom of speech and religious expression is ignored. According to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* recognised and further defined those rights.

When a totalitarian regime places severe restrictions on freedom of expression and this is combined with individuals who have the courage to defy the abused authority of the state, prisoners of conscience inevitably result. It is a source of great reproach to universal human rights that those who dare to speak out are denied their voice. Our duty remains to work concertedly to bring these cases to an end. Aung San Suu Kyi, perhaps the figurehead of all prisoners of conscience implored us to act when she said, “Please use your liberty to promote ours.”¹⁴

The Conservative Party is committed to campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience. Conservative Members of Parliament through Parliamentary debates and other mechanisms, such as Early Day Motions, have brought the plight of individuals to the attention of the Government. They have encouraged the Foreign Office to make strong and uncompromising representations to foreign Governments in our bi-lateral relations and through international forums.

Members of the CPHRC continue to lead, encourage and support the party’s advocacy in this important area. By keeping a watching brief on our “Countries of Focus” and through our engagement with a range of human rights organisations, we are able to pro-actively ensure that the party as the main opposition party is holding the Government to account and keeping the plight of these individuals on the political agenda amidst domestic concerns and more general international relations.

In June 2007 the Chairman of the Commission accompanied two North Korean defectors – one former prisoner and one former prison guard – to meet David Cameron. They described the horrendous conditions of North Korea’s gulag. Speaking after the meeting David Cameron said:

“I was honoured to meet Ahn Myeong-Cheol and Shin Dong-Hyok, and moved to hear at first hand their accounts of the horrors of the North Korean gulag. I am pleased that these brave North Korean defectors have chosen to tell their stories in the UK, drawing attention to their experiences and the plight of the estimated

¹³ see: http://www.amnestyusa.org/Individuals_at_Risk/Prisoners_of_Conscience/page.do?id=1106638&n1=3&n2=34&n3=53

¹⁴ <http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/>

200,000 political prisoners in North Korea. It is vital that news of their situation reaches the outside world.”

The attention of the international community once again turned to Burma in September, at the sight of the brutal treatment of Buddhist Monks and others who marched in protest. Alas, they were not joined by the many others who have been prevented from expressing their opposition; they have been imprisoned in an attempt to silence dissent. As Shadow Foreign Secretary, William Hague, pointed out in a recent article in *The Independent* newspaper, “more than 1,100 prisoners of conscience remain in jail, subjected to severe torture and inhumane conditions, and 127 political prisoners have died in detention since 1988.”¹⁵

Following the pro-democracy protests in September, around 300 people were reportedly arrested and detained in the ensuing police crackdown.¹⁶ The Chairman of the CPHRC urged for “the UK to take the lead in proposing a UN Security Council resolution that would set out clear benchmarks of progress, with deadlines attached. These should include the release of political prisoners including Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, and the beginning of meaningful dialogue between the regime, the democracy movement and the ethnic nationalities.”¹⁷

John Bercow MP, a member of the Commission and former Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, led the calls for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi in EDM 1868¹⁸ on the occasion of her 62nd birthday. The Commission will continue to campaign for the release of all political prisoners and a peaceful transition to democracy for Burma.

Members of the Commission also called for the release of the blind human-rights activist, Chen Guang Cheng.¹⁹ The 34 year old lawyer was imprisoned for acting on behalf of women who had been forcibly sterilised or forced to have abortions in China. His case has been widely publicised by groups such as Amnesty International, Jubilee Campaign and Time Magazine. After nearly five years imprisonment, MPs called for Mr. Guang Cheng to be released without delay. Chen Guang Cheng remains under detention by the Chinese authorities.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a Vice-Presidential candidate, Marie Therese Nlandu was imprisoned tried before a military tribunal in contravention of Article 156 of the Constitution of the DRC and the principles set out by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. The most severe sentence the tribunal could impose was the death penalty, and indeed, has done so in the past. Members of the Commission expressed concern over reports of Ms. Nlandu’s deteriorating health and urged the Congolese authorities to allow her access to medical care. The Commission joined calls upon the British Government to raise her case at the highest level with the Congolese government.²⁰ Ms. Nlandu was released and has rejoined her British family in London.

Prisoners of Conscience occupy a special position in the human rights lexicon; they offer us hope. It can seem a sick irony: in fighting for freedom, they are deprived of it. However, the freedom of conscience cannot ultimately be infringed – and it is this truth to which prisoners of conscience bear witness.

¹⁵ <http://comment.independent.co.uk/commentators/article1090896.ece>

¹⁶ <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=11032>

¹⁷ http://www.conservativehumanrights.com/news/Sept07/29.09.07_crabbonburma.htm

¹⁸ <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=33718&SESSION=885>

¹⁹ by singing EDM 586, see: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/edmi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=32252&SESSION=885>

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org.

7 – Torture



Since the end of World War II, governments throughout the world have agreed to ban torture without exception, even when at war or facing acts of terrorism. International treaties banning torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading practices are among the most widely ratified treaties in existence.

However, torture remains widely practiced in many places, by governments of all political persuasion, and is often carried out in secret, behind closed doors and away from public scrutiny. In addition, in the aftermath of 9/11, further terrorist incidents in the UK, Spain and elsewhere, and the consequent actions taken by governments to investigate and eradicate terrorist groups, the global debate around the legality and practise of torture has intensified.

Throughout the last year, well known offenders such as North Korea, Burma and Iran have continued to practice torture and abuse against their citizens. International human rights organisations have highlighted wide ranging abuses taking place on every continent and in countries like Papua New Guinea, Kurdistan, Libya, Lebanon, Bosnia, Senegal, Ukraine and Russia.²¹

Offences have included inhumane treatment of prison detainees, torture of individuals deemed a threat to repressive regimes, and returning detainees to countries where they face risk of torture. Although heavily criticised by the international community, regimes who practice torture have remained evasive and non-responsive.

In recent years the United States has also attracted global attention for its actions as part of the “war on terror”. Revelations of torture and degradation at Abu Ghraib and other US detention facilities have galvanised both proponents and opponents of torture and opened up a new debate on the implications of the US openly expressing its wish for legal exceptions to be made for the use of inhumane treatment against terror suspects.

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch and editor of *Torture – A Human Rights Perspective*, explains that the US response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 made clear its determination to use torture and abuse against terror suspects. Although claiming US interrogators would not torture anybody, the US government virtually defined away the term of torture and many kinds of abuse were permitted. In 2005 a prolonged battle took place between Senator John McCain and the Bush administration over an exception it was attempting to insert into legislation proposed by McCain saying that the prohibition on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment should not apply to the CIA.

²¹ Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org.

²² Amnesty International, European Union: Stopping the Trade in Tools of Torture, 27 February 2007.

Although the international legislative frameworks designed to outlaw and bring an end to the practice of torture worldwide have continued to be largely ignored, some interesting developments have taken place. On 31st July 2006, European Union governments consented to the European Commission bringing into force the: *European Trade Regulation No. 1236/2005 concerning trade in goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 27 July 2005, (the regulation)*.

Designed to prevent torture by ending the trade in “torture equipment”, the regulation presents some promising progress. However, international human rights groups point out that it remains flawed in certain areas and that EU member states should work harder to strengthen and implement the regulation.²²

The British Government has also come under scrutiny regarding torture in the last year, adversely affecting its efforts to present itself as a global opponent of the practice. Human Rights Watch reported in November 2006 that the Government was seeking measures which would allow it and the courts to balance the risk of torture against national security, allowing terrorism suspects to be deported even where they were known to be at risk of torture on return.

Additionally, according to Human Rights Watch in November 2006:

“In a related effort, the British government is trying to persuade the European Court of Human Rights to weaken the ban on torture. It has intervened in the Strasbourg court in the case of an Algerian, Mohammed Ramzy, and asked that a 1996 case, Chahal v. the UK – a key judgment affirming the absolute ban on returns to torture – be set aside. London has persuaded Lithuania, Slovakia and Portugal to do the same. British Home Secretary John Reid claims that those who defend the Chahal judgement ‘just don’t get it’ by failing to understand what is at stake.”²³

Fortunately, a British court ruled in April this year that the government could not deport two terrorism suspects to Libya, representing a major setback to the government’s efforts to deport national security suspects to countries where they risk torture.

The CPHRC recommends that the current Government and a future Conservative Government demonstrate its commitment to ending the practice of torture around the world by:

- Returning to a position of leadership in confronting torture worldwide by continuing to encourage other governments to sign up to the optional protocol to the UN Convention against Torture;
- Taking a leading role in looking at ways of strengthening the European Trade Regulation regarding torture equipment and ensuring that EU Member States adhere to its provisions;
- Following the example set out in the United States by Senator John McCain and other torture ban advocates, which ensured that no exception for torture was allowed in 2005 defence legislation relating to anti-terrorism measures taken by the US government;
- Continuing to speak out against governments practicing torture against their citizens across the world.

8 – Freedom of the Press

Progress in the promotion and protection of press freedom has been disappointing in the past year. The big analyses of the state of press freedom are published in time for World Press Freedom Day²⁴ on May 3rd. Paris-based Reporters Without Borders published its Worldwide Press Freedom Index²⁵ of 169 countries, finding that there has been a slight improvement in G8 countries (except Russia) and that European countries almost all make the top 50, with Bulgaria and Poland just missing out. It also demoted several countries for violations against bloggers and online dissemination of information.

Washington-based Freedom House's 27th annual Global Survey of Media Independence²⁶ painted a discouraging picture. Just 18% of the world's population live in countries classed as having a Free press, with 39% living in countries where the press is Partly Free and 43% where it is Not Free. These figures are somewhat distorted by the huge populations of India (Partly Free) and China (Free) but do reflect a negative trend in recent years.

The World Association of Newspapers has recorded²⁷ 105 killings of media employees in from January to October 2007. This is almost the same number as the whole of 2006, 110, and almost four times the number just nine years ago. The turbulence in Iraq accounts for 45 of them, far more than any other country.

Within the same period of 2007 the Committee to Protect Journalists estimates²⁸ that there have been 55 journalists murdered because of their work, as well as 11 media employees²⁹ and a few journalists classed as missing.³⁰

The most significant development in the issues surrounding press freedom in recent years is the ever-increasing use of the internet in both emancipation and oppression. The internet promises to be one of the greatest tools for democracy and free speech there has ever been. Anybody with access to it can be exposed to news and views that don't have the stamp of approval from a censoring government. The internet can be a double-edged sword: authoritarian governments do have ways of tracking internet activity and have clamped down on activists and activities that they otherwise would not have known about. However, that is outweighed by the power the internet has given to so many activists that they would have otherwise lacked.

The unrest in Burma is an excellent case study in how the internet can be a force for freedom. Even though less than one per cent of the population have access to the internet in Burma, it only took a small number of people to feed the world's press with enough reporting, images and video for sustained coverage of the monks' protest. Unlike the uprising in 1988 these protests made a real mark on the world's conscience and without that coverage there would undoubtedly have been levels of violence more comparable to 1988. This phenomenon seemed to catch the Junta off-guard as they and other repressive regimes are more used to stopping information from coming in to their countries than stopping it from going out. "Cyberdissidents" can usually find loopholes and remote servers for searching the web, accessing popular email providers' accounts and uploading photos – technology is very difficult to contain. The Junta only succeeded in stemming the flow by taking the drastic step of completely shutting the internet down³¹ (and most mobile phone networks), something only Nepal has done before when it went under martial law in 2005.

China has over 120 million internet users, and growing, but according to the Open Net Initiative³² it "operates the most extensive, technologically sophisticated, and broad-reaching system of Internet filtering in the world". China accounts for 50 of the known 64 cyberdissidents to be imprisoned around the world.

23 Human Rights Watch, UK: A Dangerous Policy on Torture, November 2006, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/11/02/uk14482.htm>

24 <http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org/>

25 http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24021

26 <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop/2007/fopessay2007.pdf>

27 <http://www.wan-press.org/rubrique873.htmlv>

28 <http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed07.html>

29 <http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed07.html#media>

30 http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/missing_list.html

31 <http://opennet.net/research/bulletins/013>

32 <http://www.opennetinitiative.net/studies/china/>

Now that so many people have the capability of getting a message out to the world using new technologies and that there is a broad consensus in favour of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, regimes are careful to appear superficially democratic and accountable. This goes some way to explaining the rise of “democratators” who tend to be elected by popular vote and have checks on balances on paper, but who try their best to stifle opposition behind the scenes. That they feel the need to censor opposition covertly rather than overtly is an encouraging trend but it does not make much difference in the short-term. Their subtle methods of inducing self-censorship include giving financial support to supportive media outlets through advertising, and imprisoning journalists for long enough to teach them a lesson but short enough to pre-empt high profile campaigns by groups like Amnesty International. This is not to say that the worst offenders such as Eritrea’s President Issaias Afeworki (bottom-ranked by RSF) do not still commit blatant, unashamed acts of violence and intimidation against those who speak out against them, but that they seem to be doing so less.

With regard to what we can do to encourage press freedom, there are several bodies working in this field, and referenced here, that could use more resources. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), a UN body that aims to “to improve media pluralism and strengthen the capacities of media professionals in developing countries”, decided at its annual meeting³³ in March to commit approximately £1million to 74 media development projects around the world this year. This budget seems to be very small for such an important task. The CPJ’s International Press Freedom Awards³⁴ that salute the courage of persecuted journalists are also worthy of strong support. They do not change the situations that forced the journalists to be brave, and such acclaim isn’t the incentive for them, but any initiative that raises the profile of those situations is doing something worthwhile. For that reason, it would be good to see a senior British politician mark the next World Freedom Day with a speech on the subject.

³³ http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24351&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

³⁴ http://www.cpj.org/awards07/awards_release07.html

9 – Freedom of Religion



Religious freedom is a basic human right, protected in Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Yet in many parts of the world, people of all religious beliefs and backgrounds face different forms of restrictions, discrimination and persecution.

In some countries, the perpetrators of violations of religious freedom are state actors – governments, through restrictive and discriminatory legislation, or police and other local or national authorities. In other countries, the violations are committed by non-state parties, either extremists from other religions, communist or Maoist groups, or terrorists and drug cartels.

It is widely accepted that the world’s worst, most systematic violators of religious freedom include North Korea, China, Burma, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea and Sudan, all of whom are listed by the US State Department as “Countries of Particular Concern”. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, for example, concludes that “there is no religious freedom in Saudi Arabia”. The same Commission notes that “there are no personal freedoms in North Korea and no protections for universal human rights, including religious freedom.”³⁵

While there have been some improvements in conditions for religious freedom in China in recent years, religious organisations continue to be required to register with the State authorities, and in parts of the country failure to register is dealt with severely. “House church” and unregistered Protestants, “underground” Roman Catholics, Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims and practitioners of Falun Gong can face long prison sentences, torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Similar measures to control religion have been introduced in countries such as Cuba and Belarus. It is widely acknowledged that there has been some progress in Vietnam, although restrictions and persecution continue, particularly against the Hmong Christian population.

One of the aspects of religious freedom most under threat in the world today is the right to convert. In the Islamic world, changing one’s religion from Islam to another faith amounts to apostasy and can carry the death penalty. Meanwhile, in India seven states have introduced anti-conversion legislation, imposing severe restrictions on freedom to change religion, imposing harsh penalties for conversion and threatening a wide range of legitimate religious activities. A similar anti-conversion bill remains before a Standing Committee in the Sri Lankan Parliament. Such legislation contributes to a wider atmosphere of intolerance and religious tension.

Tensions and violence as a result of the rise of extremist Islamism and the introduction or threat of Sharia law continues in countries such as Nigeria and Indonesia. Religious minorities in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan have suffered increased violence and intimidation.

35 US Commission on International Religious Freedom, Annual Report, May 2007 – see www.uscirf.gov

In Pakistan, religious minorities face increasing threats of forced conversion and violence from Islamist extremists. Laws in Pakistan prohibiting blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed carry the death penalty, while defiling, damaging or desecrating the Koran carries life imprisonment. Although no one has yet been executed by the state, the accused are subjected to physical and mental abuse. While in prison, their lives may be in danger and some blasphemy suspects have been murdered by extremists while awaiting trial. The laws are frequently misused to intimidate reformist, moderate Muslims and religious minorities, or to settle scores. On 11th August 2007 the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA) organised a major rally of tens of thousands of representatives from the religious minorities, to appeal for religious freedom and the repeal of the blasphemy and other discriminatory laws.

The CPHRC recommends that the current Government and a future Conservative Government demonstrate its commitment to protecting and promoting freedom of religion as a basic human right around the world by taking the following steps:

- The role of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Freedom of Religion Panel should be expanded, formalised and strengthened. This body currently exists in an irregular format and meets sporadically. It consists of representatives of religious freedom NGOs and religious communities, who are brought together to discuss religious freedom themes with officials. It should be given a permanent advisory status and required to produce regular reports, policy papers and recommendations for foreign policy.
- A permanent Special Representative of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Freedom of Religion Panel should be appointed. The Special Representative would act in a similar capacity to the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion and Belief, and the US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and would have responsibility for monitoring and addressing violations of religious freedom around the world.

10 – Institutions of democracy

This year has shown, once again, that the worst human rights violations do not take place in rich countries which enjoy a stable political environment. Instead, the worst breaches thrive in an environment of political instability and dictatorship, and feed on a background of extreme poverty.

It is not surprising that Burma, North Korea and Sudan were among the worst offenders in 2007. All three countries are run by brutal dictators and suffer from extreme poverty. In order to ensure the respect of human rights, the international community has to promote democracy as a stable form of governance. In this process, special attention must be given to the institutions of democracy, particularly the rule of law, free and fair multi-party elections and the respect of fundamental individual freedoms.

In too many countries around the world the institutions of democracy are simply non-existent. One of the best examples of countries which are not founded on the principles of electoral democracy is Laos. The 1991 constitution makes the Lao People's Revolutionary Party the sole legal political party and grants it a leading role at all levels of government. Unsurprisingly, this year Laos was ranked among the worst human rights offenders by Freedom House.

Another phenomenon that is predominant in emerging democracies is the discrepancy between legislation and practice. In many of these countries, the institutions of democracy exist in name only. For instance, despite having an apparent multi-party system, Equatorial Guinea has never held a credible election. Opposition leaders are arbitrarily detained for political reasons, and sometimes imprisoned following unfair trials or without any trials at all.

The UK has to adopt a more proactive approach in assessing the viability of the institutions of democracy in the countries it works with. In doing so, it must not only look at the legislation in place, but also liaise with international NGOs and local bodies to establish the effectiveness of these institutions. However, in its assessment of institutions of democracy, the UK should not limit its approach to the common understanding that institutions are only systems that provide rights and opportunities granted or guarded by the state.

There is a much more forgotten dimension of these institutions which refers to the ability and willingness of citizens to exercise those fundamental rights guaranteed by the state. This is of particular concern in the case of incipient democracies where civil responsibility and democratic exercise has just started becoming part of the political culture.

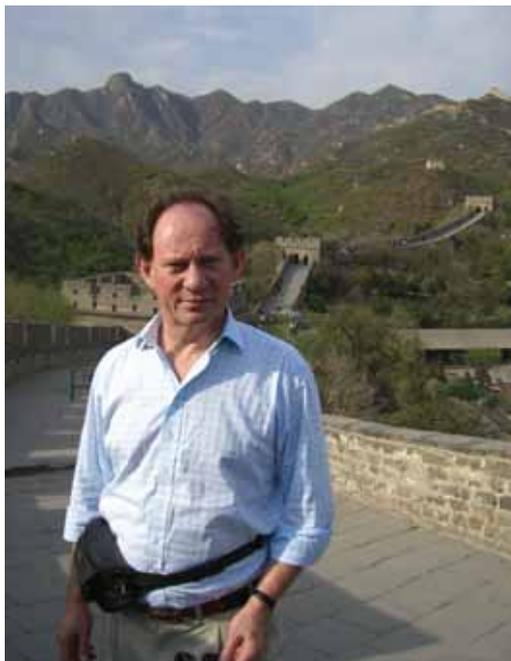
This is indeed one of the areas where the international community has failed to deliver. UN and EU observers have been relatively successful in ensuring that elections follow the democratic process. However, far too few programmes have been promoted by the UN and the EU to ensure that the democratic exercise is not restricted to the voting day.

The CPHRC recommends that a future Conservative Government should be at the forefront of the international community in designing and funding programmes which will encourage greater participation of the citizens in the institutions of democracy, particularly in the case of emerging democracies.

PART TWO

A programme for action: Putting Human Rights at the heart of foreign policy

1 – The structures and mechanisms of the UK Government: the role of embassies, diplomats and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Edward McMillan-Scott MEP at the Great Wall of China

The United Kingdom has considerable influence in the world. As a leading member of the European Union, NATO, the G8 and the Commonwealth, as well as one of the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council, the United Kingdom has many opportunities to defend and promote human rights around the world more actively than it currently does.

A future Conservative Government should re-examine the structures, systems and mechanisms of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the role and responsibilities of individual diplomats and embassies, in order to develop a foreign policy that truly has human rights at its very heart.

While there are outstanding individuals at all levels within the FCO who demonstrate inspiring dedication and commitment to the promotion of human rights, the CPHRC believes that responsiveness to human rights violations around the world is inconsistent and too dependent on the calibre and attitude of

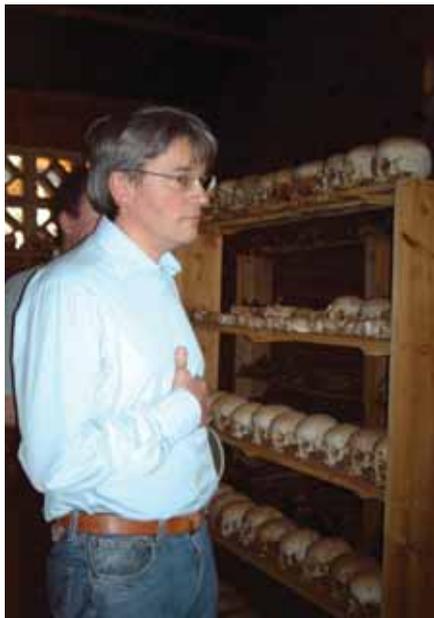
individual diplomats. There is a need for clear policies to raise the profile of human rights promotion within the FCO, improve its capacity to address human rights issues, and standardise and synchronise conduct and policy.

The CPHRC therefore proposes that a future Conservative Government should introduce an International Human Rights Act in Parliament, which would include the following measures:

1. Place the promotion of democracy and human rights as one of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's top strategic priorities. Human rights promotion is currently relegated to an issue within the category of 'sustainable development', which is seventh in the list of strategic priorities.
2. The appointment of a Minister of State for International Human Rights within the FCO's whose sole responsibility would be the promotion of human rights and who would have the right to attend Cabinet meetings and senior security and foreign policy Cabinet committees.
3. An Ambassador-at-Large for International Human Rights should be appointed, to work with the Minister. This person could be either a senior diplomat with a known commitment in this field or a prominent and respected expert from outside the diplomatic service. The Ambassador-at-Large would co-ordinate the work of embassies and diplomats around the world in promoting and defending human rights and would lead an expanded Human Rights, Democracy and Government Group within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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4. A permanent Human Rights Advisory Group should be created, consisting of specialists from respected human rights NGOs, to meet on a regular basis with the Minister and the Ambassador-at-Large, to inform them of key human rights situations and cases, and advise on action.
 5. The role of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Freedom of Religion Panel should be expanded, formalised and strengthened. This body currently exists in an irregular format and meets sporadically. It consists of representatives of religious freedom NGOs and religious communities, who are brought together to discuss religious freedom themes with staff of the Human Rights, Democracy and Governance Group. It should be given a permanent advisory status with an established programme of work and schedule of meetings. It should be required to produce regular reports, policy papers and recommendations for foreign policy.
 6. A permanent Special Representative of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Freedom of Religion Panel should be appointed, to work closely with the Minister for International Human Rights and the Ambassador-at-Large for International Human Rights. The Special Representative would act in a similar capacity to the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion and Belief, and the US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and would have responsibility for monitoring and addressing violations of religious freedom around the world.
 7. A Code of Conduct should be drafted setting out the expectations and requirements with regard to human rights promotion for each Ambassador, all key embassy staff including Consular staff and Visa Application officials, and London-based Heads of Section and country desk officers. Embassies should be required to meet regularly with dissidents and human rights campaigners in-country. Embassies should be required to hold events on key anniversaries such as International Human Rights Day on 10th December.
 8. Exceptional performance in defending or promoting human rights should be recognised and rewarded, and failure to respond appropriately to human rights concerns, whether presented through internal FCO mechanisms or by external parties, should lead to disciplinary action. Desk officers should be trained extensively in how to respond appropriately to requests for action on human rights issues.
 9. The Annual Human Rights Report should be presented to both Houses of Parliament by Ministers and made the subject of a full debate on the floors of both Houses.

2 – Human rights and human wrongs: making the UN Human Rights Council work



Andrew Mitchell MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, visits the site of a massacre in the 1994 Rwandan genocide

The former United Nations Commission for Human Rights, which was intended to be the leading UN mechanism for promoting and defending human rights, was widely perceived as an embarrassing failure for the UN system.

The size and composition of the membership was one of the major failings of the UNCHR and it remains a key test of reform for its successor, the UN Human Rights Council, which came into existence in 2006.

Instead of the substantial cut in membership envisaged by many human rights champions when the Council was established, in the event it was only reduced by five to forty eight countries. Low income countries which have some of the worst human rights records continue to enjoy a structural majority³⁶ and members are not subject to scrutiny of their own records on human rights before taking their seats on the Council.

The Council is applying its scrutiny systems to fewer countries than it should.

Although several international issues were covered at the Council's Fifth Session in June 2007, the Occupied Territories and Palestine remain the overriding preoccupation – as it was under the former Commission for Human Rights which enjoyed a reputation for overt anti-Israel/pro-Arab bias. The Occupied Territories was the only permanent agenda item at the Fifth Session and it formed the basis for a special session of the Council both in the Fourth and Fifth sessions.

As Lord Hannay observed in evidence to the CPHRC,

“Divisions along bloc lines may have been exacerbated by the slight trimming of the membership and disadvantaging of WEOG³⁷. The Organization of the Islamic Conference is highly coordinated and wields increasing influence in relation to other blocs.”³⁸

The lack of a balanced and wide-ranging freedom agenda on the new Council is disappointing and provides more evidence that further reform is needed if the UN is to have a truly effective human rights body. It is not a question of Palestine or Burma – it is a case of thoroughly, and persistently, investigating human rights concerns wherever they occur.

It would be unfair to deny that the new electoral system to determine membership of the Council has had some successes. The notion that regional votes would put pressure on countries with notably poor human rights records seeking election did, to some extent, work. For example, in May 2007 Belarus, which has a poor record of human rights abuses³⁹, failed in its bid to take a seat on the Council. But it is only by comparing these modest steps to the appalling record of the previous Commission that the new electoral arrangements look effective.

On the same day that Belarus was defeated, Egypt was elected after running for membership unopposed. Belarus has, however, benefited from being removed from the list of countries subject to special investigation by the Council – because China objected to the criteria for monitoring. Elected Council members include China (which received only two fewer votes than the United Kingdom); Cuba, Russia, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

The UK, as a member of the Council, must take the lead in advocating the reform of the organisation's membership. So far, the UK Government has not made this a priority and it is our hope that a future Conservative Government would choose to do so.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Western European and Others Group

³⁸ Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Chair, UNA-UK, Written submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, 22 May 2007

³⁹ See, for instance, Freedom House assessment <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7134&year=2007>

One option for improving the Council, originally proposed by the United States, would be to refuse membership to any government that is subject to UN Resolutions. But, whilst we agree that no government subject to UN Resolutions or sanctions should be able to seek election to the Council, this would not actually change the current membership of the Council. To date, eleven countries face current UN sanctions, none of which are members of the Council.

A second option, put forward by Human Rights Watch, would be that prospective member states only qualify for election if their governments have to ratify core international human rights treaties – although some have suggested this would exclude the United States itself from membership of the Council.⁴⁰

The CPHRC is very concerned about the increasing ‘Europeanisation’ of the UK’s approach on the Human Rights Council.

The UK has not acted as the representative for the European Union member states at Council meetings – this included at the 4th session in 2006 when much of the procedural programme was drawn up and at the 5th session when the abolition of observers in all countries (except Israel) took place. By contrast, China took an active part on two of those country assessments in the 5th session, including Belarus – when it was decided to abolish the special Rapporteurs.

At the meeting on 18 June 2007, Canada sought to stop the abolition of the Rapporteurs, including for Belarus, Cuba, North Korea, Burma, Somalia, Sudan and Uzbekistan. But Canada was let down by the European Union countries. The EU countries threatened to pull out of the Council altogether if the abolition of twelve of the thirteen human rights envoys proceeded.⁴¹

Yet the only walk-out was the EU walking away from that negotiating position. At no point in the process was EU’s negotiating position effective. It took an initial position which would have threatened the future of the Council, and then compromised to the extent that few, if any, of the “red lines” were satisfactorily met.

Our concern is that the negotiating position of the EU could be strengthened further by the proposed Treaty on Institutional Reform. Under Article 9e of the Treaty, a new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy would be appointed. In other words, the EU would have a foreign minister, who would chair foreign ministers’ meetings, have their own diplomatic service and will even, under some circumstances, speak for the UK Government at the UN Security Council. This has the potential to reduce the voice of the UK Government.

This concern is heightened by the appointment of Lord Malloch Brown as UK Minister for Africa, Asia and the United Nations. In his previous position as Deputy Secretary General, Lord Malloch Brown expressed the view that the UN would benefit from a common EU negotiating position.⁴² If serious reform is to be undertaken of the Human Rights Council, including the membership of the Council, then the voice of the UK must remain strong within the whole UN system.

Whilst the UK has failed to make its voice effectively heard on the Human Rights Council, there would be no benefit in reducing the voice of the UK in favour of the collective position of the EU. It is disappointing therefore that the Government Minister now responsible for the United Nations has expressed the view that a common EU position would be advantageous. Given the failure of the common EU position on negotiations so far on the Human Rights Council, we can see no advantage in increasing the EU’s voice under the proposed Treaty through a High Representative on the Security Council.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “EU in rift with developing nations over human rights”, Financial Times, 15 June 2007.

⁴² See for example, <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/BUSINESS/03/10/guru.mallochbrown/index.html>

3 – Economic policy: the role of business and the place of sanctions

In a global economy, Britain's economic decisions can be a powerful tool promoting universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The preamble of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* calls on "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance." The UN Global Compact made similar calls on global business to "support and respect the protection of international human rights within their sphere of influence."⁴³ The economy is a vital organ of society. It provides work, security, food, opportunity; a stable and successful economy is among the primary priorities of Government.

Two corresponding duties therefore emerge: the duty to respect and observe human rights and the duty to establish and maintain a stable and successful economy. Any approach that exercises the "soft power" of the economy must recognize both of these duties. Regrettably, these duties are often falsely portrayed as being at loggerheads but as former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, points out "business and human rights need not be in conflict but rather that both need each other"⁴⁴. If we subscribe to the notion of universal human dignity, we have a duty – as a nation state, as individuals and as corporations – to uphold and respect human rights, whatever the economic cost.

Businesses themselves are in an ideal position to take positive steps to promote human rights. Corporate Social Responsibility is the term most commonly used to describe this process. In short, Corporate Social Responsibility recognises that corporations have wider societal obligations. This is particularly pertinent to Trans National Corporations (TNCs) who operate in regions of conflict or where human rights abuses are manifest.

These corporations benefit from a progressive approach to human rights. Amnesty International and the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) observe several commercial benefits of incorporating human rights in corporate Social Responsibility, including:

- Enhanced reputation;
- More secure license to operate;
- Improved employee recruitment, retention, motivation;
- Improved stakeholder relations.⁴⁵

TNCs and other companies are able to voluntarily accept human rights obligations – they are not yet legally binding. However, although no legal requirements currently exist on businesses concerning most human rights norms, there remains a moral duty to act where a capacity exists to positively alter a humanitarian crisis. Mandatory legal requirements may be introduced in the not-too-distant future. The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno Occampo, has said that he intends to bring multinational companies before the ICC, when the prosecution can establish that companies have participated in violations that form part of the remit of the ICC, i.e. gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity and genocide.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the UN Draft Norms on the Responsibility of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises,⁴⁷ though unsuccessful thus far, set out to impose binding legal norms for TNCs.

Over the past 12 months, the Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell MP, has been at the forefront of calls for targeted divestment from Sudan where the world's worst humanitarian disaster continues to rage.

⁴³ principle 1, UN Global Compact

⁴⁴ see Introduction by Mary Robinson on Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, <http://www.blihr.org/>

⁴⁵ Human rights: Is it any of your business?, International Business Leaders Forum and Amnesty International, April 2000, page 25

⁴⁶ under article 15(2) of ICC Statute

⁴⁷ UN Doc.E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/12 (2003)

Along with the Chairman of the CPHRC and colleagues from across the political divide, Mr. Mitchell has called on “companies with a commercial relationship with government or government sponsored projects which impart minimal benefit to the country’s people and have demonstrated no substantial corporate governance policy regarding the Darfur situation to cease their financial support for the Sudanese government”. He also asked the Government “to look into ways of changing national and international business behaviour in the face of the manifest gross violations of human rights.”⁴⁸

This approach implicitly excludes any companies imparting social benefit such as food through agriculture or aid, employers of large numbers of people. It is targeted and will thus be more effectively measured and will thus impart minimal hardship on the people of Sudan; and reasonable so that companies might fairly be required to heed such requests.

The Government should support and promote the UN Global Compact and encourage more UK Business to accept the nine principles. The Government should seek to increase transparency and accountability in the business community so that corporate activities in countries and regions of concern may be monitored more effectively. The UK should also encourage other nations, especially economic superpowers like China and India to do likewise.

However, where TNCs fail to act satisfactorily or as a means of condemnation following a breakdown in diplomatic negotiations, sanctions remain a useful tool of intervention. More needs to be done to look into the effects of sanctions and what effect it has on the local populations, as well as the diplomatic outcome. They are broad and will always contain some unsatisfactory elements – sanctions can destroy economies before they cripple regimes. Is it possible to cripple a totalitarian regime without first hampering the economy? What will be the cost to the ordinary person in that jurisdiction? The key question in the use of sanctions is proportionality: a variety of factors must be weighed in the balance. But sanctions are vital in exhibiting to the global community the censure that may follow human rights abuses. For all their problems and limitations, economic coercion is a far more attractive instrument – and usually ought to be first exhausted – than the use of force. Targeted sanctions aimed at sectors dominated or controlled by a regime, and at the personal assets and business interests of leading members of the regime, are an essential and valuable tool for pressure.

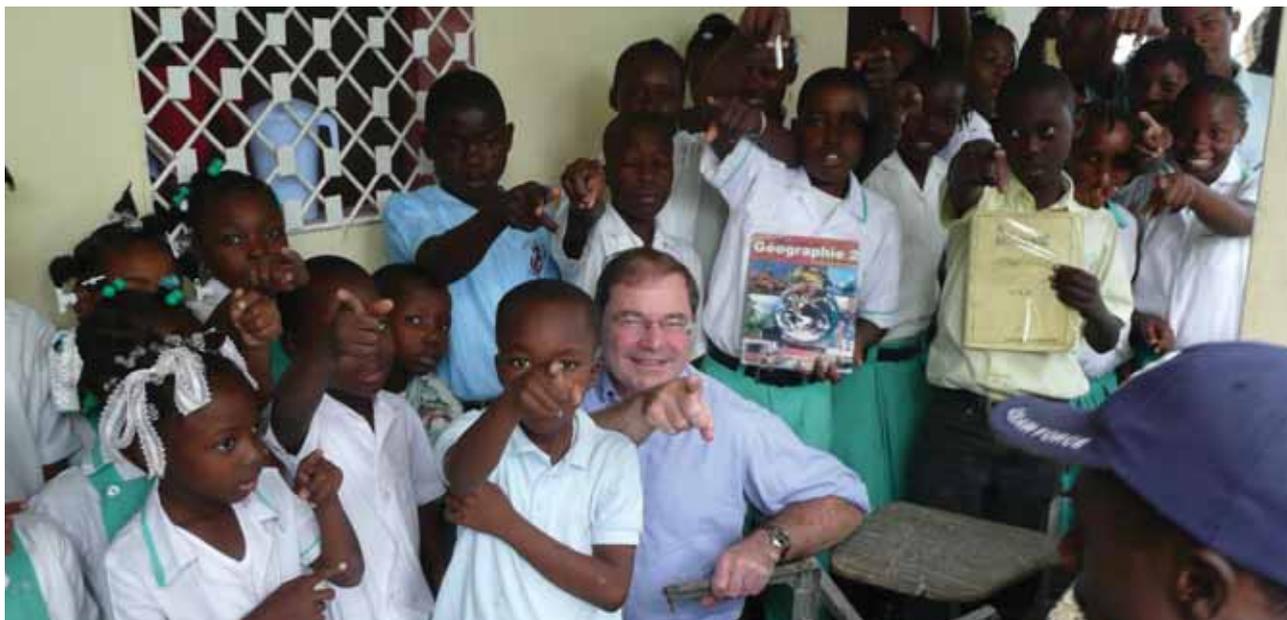


Andrew Mitchell MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, with internally displaced people in a camp on the Thai/Burma border

In sum, economic policy is a vital part of the UK’s ability to champion human rights. The Conservative Party must continue to encourage companies to act responsibly. TNCs stand to play an ever increasing role in world affairs; they must understand, as any Government must understand, that in our own enlightened self-interest respect and defend human rights. There is no society that can function without human rights, and no business that can function without society.

48 see EDM 1338, <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=33113&SESSION=885>

4 – Democracy promotion: what the UK can do better



Shadow Minister for International Development Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP in Haiti as part of a visit to discuss European Partnership Agreements

Winston Churchill described democracy as the worst form of governance apart from all of the others. The crying need in so many emerging countries is good governance and history teaches us that the only sustainable way to get it is through a system based on true democracy.

The heart of a democratic state is the ability of the people to elect and remove its government through verifiably free and fair elections. But to endure, a democracy must involve much more than that.

Democracy must be underpinned by freedom of speech and a free and independent press; a vibrant civil society; the rule of law exemplified by an impartial, independent judiciary; together with a commitment to human rights at every level. These democratic institutions are essential in producing good governance. Where these assets are real the people thrive; where they are absent, the people suffer.

A thriving democracy, with all of the checks and balances in place is the only long term solution. Each nation must achieve this for themselves, but the right kind of outside help can make a huge difference.

The UK has over 800 years' experience of the struggle to create and maintain a sustainable democracy and we have still not arrived at the perfect place. We have experiences, good and bad, to share with other countries seeking to build a democratic government.

The UK's primary organisation to promote democracy is called the Westminster Foundation for Democracy⁴⁹ (WFD) (established in 1994 by the Major government), which spends roughly £4 million of tax payers' money building democratic capacity in the developing world, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe.

The WFD carries out its duties in two ways: first, through grants to civil society organisations and, second, by facilitating party-to-party work between the Westminster parties and like-minded politicians and parties in the developing world. This is in part a recognition that democracies cannot work without politicians, people willing to put themselves forward for election. Much of the know-how we have gained over the centuries can be passed on much more concisely to others whose own experience of democracy might only be since the Berlin wall came down. Naturally, WFD is particularly well placed to help with other parliamentary democracies, much of the world, where the framework was established on our model. WFD recognises that the detailed expression of

49 www.wfd.org/

50 www.iri.org

51 www.ndi.org/

any system will be different in every country and culture – one size does not fit all, even if the raw principles may be the same.

In recent years the FCO has created a scheme known as the Global Opportunities Fund that seeks to promote democratic principles, especially in the Middle East.

Finally, the Department for International Development (DFID) has recently established a major fund to spearhead its own focus on good governance and democratic principles. The amount spent by the UK on these issues is a pittance compared to the significant investment made by the USA, particularly through two main US organisations – the International Republican Institute⁵⁰ and the National Democratic Institute⁵¹ – and the widely-respected German political foundations.

The Conservative Party has built up a network of sister right parties throughout the world. Much of our capacity building work since 1994 has helped fledging parties in Eastern Europe grow strong and now seen them enter into responsible power. Our party conference in 2007 was attended by over 60 delegates from all over the world, many of them appreciating at first hand how we do things here. We have been able to pass on, not just political techniques of campaigning and policy formation, but also free market principles and democratic values.

In a world with little further appetite for military intervention from the West, there is an increasing need to see the skilful application of “soft power”. The CPHRC strongly believes that the UK is well placed to take a leading role in promoting good governance and democratic values.

There is a compelling argument for the next Conservative Government to significantly increase the focus and resources available to democracy-building in its attempts to build a safer world. One model is to look to transform WFD into a major institution that can bring together the work currently carried out by itself and both the FCO and DFID in a far more strategic fashion to bring more co-ordination and focus to our work. British expertise, honed over centuries could be unleashed wherever it can make a difference.

We could also look to expand the range of activities offered by a revamped WFD to include human rights, expertise in how to establish a truly independent judiciary and press and personal freedoms.

Our heritage, stability and our international reach, leave us extremely well placed to significantly increase our work in this crucial area.

Members of the Commission



Stephen Crabb MP – Chairman

Stephen is Member of Parliament for Preseli Pembrokeshire since 2005. He is a member of the House of Commons International Development Select Committee.



Benedict Rogers – Deputy Chairman

Benedict is a human rights activist, journalist and author. He stood as the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for the City of Durham at the 2005 election.



Jenny Parsons – Treasurer

Jenny has a professional background in media and politics. She is currently Chief of Staff to Andrew Lansley MP, Shadow Health Secretary.



Gary Streeter MP

Gary is Chairman of the Conservative Party International Office and Vice Chairman of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. He was Chairman of the CPHRC from 2005-2007 and was Shadow Secretary of State for International Development from 1998-2001.



John Bercow MP

John is Member of Parliament for Buckingham. John Bercow is a former Shadow Secretary of State for International Development and is currently a member of the International Development Select Committee. He is Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Burma, Vice-Chair of the Genocide Prevention Group and Secretary of the Human Rights Group.



Michael Gove MP

Michael is Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath and Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Before entering Parliament, he was a journalist with The Times and regularly appeared on BBC Radio 4's "The Moral Maze". He was also Chairman of the think-tank Policy Exchange.



Mark Pritchard MP

Mark is Member of Parliament for The Wrekin and Joint Secretary of the Conservative Party's Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.



Edward McMillan-Scott MEP

Edward is Member of the European Parliament for Yorkshire and the Humber, and Vice-President of the European Parliament. He is Chairman of the European Parliament's Democracy Caucus, and has special responsibility for relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments, and the Arab world.



Baroness Verma

Sandip Verma is an Opposition Whip in the House of Lords and a spokesperson on Innovation, Universities and Skills.



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Darren is Assembly Member for Clwyd West and Shadow Minister for Environment and Planning. He is a Member of the Assembly's Sustainability and Audit Committees.

**Warren Davies**

Warren is a Human Rights Barrister. Previously he worked in the Political Section at Conservative Central Office. He currently serves as a Councillor on Welwyn Hatfield District Council.

**Samuel Burke**

Samuel is Parliamentary Assistant to Lord Alton of Liverpool.

**Martin Smith**

Martin is Public Affairs Manager for the Forum of Private Business, representing small businesses in Westminster and Brussels. He is also a former vice-chairman of European Democrat Students (EDS), a pan-European Centre-Right youth organisation.

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Rado is reading an MPhil in Chinese Studies at Cambridge, he is the Southeast Asia director of foreign policy for the Henry Jackson Society and previously worked at the think tank Policy Exchange and for the young Conservative organisation Wave Network.

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Samuel is Deputy Editor of leading political website ConservativeHome.com, having previously worked for the Liverpool Echo and Daily Post newspapers.

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**Sarah Son**

Sarah is a freelance researcher and editor and has an academic background in international relations and human rights law. She is currently a PhD candidate researching human rights in East Asia.

**Richard Blakeway**

Richard is an adviser to Tony Baldry MP, he has also worked as an aide to the Chairman of the Select Committee on International Development, an adviser on the Conservative Party's Global Poverty Policy Group and an editor for the International Development Magazine.

