

# Human Rights Watch

Americas Watch  
Asia Watch  
Helsinki Watch  
Lawyers Committee  
for Human Rights  
Fund for Free  
Expression

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## Reagan's Rights Record

The following article is excerpted from the introduction to "The Reagan Administration's Record on Human Rights in 1986," which was released by the Watch Committees and the Lawyers Committee at a press conference in Washington, D.C. on February 2. The report reviews the Administration's record in 31 countries where human rights abuses are of particular concern and where our organizations have undertaken substantial research; and examines the laws and treaties of the United States, U.S. actions at the United Nations, and Refugee Asylum and Immigration Policy. Copies of the report are available for \$8.00.

In early 1986, two especially brutal and corrupt dictators, Jean Claude Duvalier of Haiti and Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, were forced to flee their countries. The citizens they had for many years oppressed rose up and demanded that they should go. The U.S. had long supported these dictators. Ultimately, the Reagan Administration intervened to persuade Marcos and Duvalier to avoid great bloodshed and to depart.

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Joseph Skvorecky speaking at Helsinki Watch/PEN event. Left to right: Jeri Laber, Susan Sontag, Rose Styron, Maureen Howard, Timothy Garton Ash, Wendy Luers. Right: Tommy Flanagan and Michael Formanek performing in honor of the Jazz Section at Helsinki Watch/PEN event, January 26, 1986. (Photos: Janet Fleischman)

## Readings and Jazz for Czechoslovakia

### Charter 77 and Jazz Section Honored

On January 26, together with PEN American Center, Helsinki Watch sponsored an evening of readings and jazz entitled "Czechoslovakia: A Besieged Culture," before a standing-room-only audience. Well-known Western writers, including Kurt Vonnegut, Timothy Garton Ash, Susan Sontag, Rose Styron and Maureen Howard, read from the works of Vaclav Havel, Bohumil Hrabal, Eva Kanturkova, Jaroslav Seifert and Dominik Tatarka. The readings were interspersed with jazz performances by leading U.S. performers, including Tommy Flanagan, Michael Formanek, Dick Miller, John Bucher and Alex Foster.

Among the materials distributed during the evening was a new report by Helsinki Watch entitled "A Decade of Dedication: Charter 77, 1977-1987," which describes the Charter movement and in-



cludes biographical sketches of all the Charter spokespersons during Charter 77's first decade. The report states that "Charter 77—both a document and a movement—has endured for ten years, longer than any other human rights movement in Eastern Europe... it is a strong moral force within Czechoslovak society and a source of inspiration throughout the Eastern bloc." The report discusses the price that the Charter signatories have had to pay for their independent activities, but states that they have sustained their dedication, issuing some 350 declarations and statements over the past ten years that provide information not available in the official press. They have also encouraged independent cultural activities in Czechoslovakia. Copies of the report are available from Helsinki Watch for \$8.00.

Also released at the event was a petition, signed by 26 leading American writ-

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## Serious Abuses in Nicaragua

Contras Continue Severe Violations; Government Uses  
Emergency to Justify Restrictions

"In 1986, the human rights situation in Nicaragua remained extremely serious. The conduct of the military conflict, particularly by the *contras*, continued to have a severe impact on rural civilians, while the government continued to justify various restrictive and abusive measures on the basis of the emergency," according to a report released by Americas Watch. The 170-page report, "Human Rights in Nicaragua 1986," Americas Watch's tenth report on Nicaragua since May 1982, is based on frequent fact-finding missions in Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica during 1986 and in January 1987.

The report finds that the *contras* continue to "engage in selective but systematic killing of persons they perceive as repre-

senting the government, in indiscriminate attacks against civilians or in disregard for their safety, and in outrages against the personal dignity of prisoners." The government, which does not systematically violate the laws of war in military operations, continues to commit other violations of human rights "as a matter of policy," including denial of due process and abusive interrogation tactics against prisoners. However, the report finds that prison conditions in the penitentiary system have improved and that there have been "encouraging steps" in the treatment of the Miskitos on the Atlantic Coast.

The report was written by Tom Farer, Stephen Kass, Juan Mendez and Jemera Rone. Copies are available for \$8.00.

## Lawyers Committee: Recent Missions

In January, Michael Posner and Rahiya Omaar of the Lawyers Committee visited Uganda to assess human rights conditions under the year-old Museveni government. The delegation met with several senior government officials, including the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces; the recently formed National Commission of Inquiry, which is examining the gross human rights abuses of the past two decades that have left an estimated 500,000 people dead; and a new nongovernmental human rights organization, Uganda Human Rights Activists, which is the first domestic human rights monitoring group in Uganda. U.S. Ambassador Robert Hodek provided extensive cooperation to the delegation.

Also in January, Diane Orentlicher and Floyd Abrams travelled to Thailand to discuss the findings of a report on security problems affecting 250,000 displaced Cambodians in Thailand. A draft of the report, which will be released shortly, had been sent to the Thai government one month earlier. In addition to meeting with government officials, the delegation met with members of the relief community and officials of the KPNLF (Khmer People's National Liberation Front), a non-communist group opposing the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia whose troops have been responsible for many of the abuses chronicled in the report. The Thai and KPNLF officials described measures recently taken or planned that seek to address the abuses discussed in the Lawyers Committee's report.

## Human Rights Monitors Honor Marchenko

On January 22, the Congressional Friends of Human Rights Monitors joined with founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group — Yuri Orlov and Ludmila Alexeyeva — to honor Anatoly Marchenko. Marchenko, a co-founder of the Moscow Group, died in a Soviet prison on December 8 after suffering persistent beatings and an extended hunger strike to protest abuse of political prisoners in the USSR. January 23rd would have been Marchenko's 49th birthday.

The Congressional Friends of Human Rights Monitors, a bipartisan organization made up of 96 Members of the House of Representatives and 24 Senators, was founded by the Watch Committees in 1983 to support the work of persecuted human rights monitors around the world. The group, which is staffed by Holly Burkhalter, has made appeals on 100 human rights cases, including Mr. Marchenko and other Soviet human rights activists.

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ers, artists and musicians, on behalf of the Jazz Section. The petition, signed by writers such as E.L. Doctorow, Arthur Miller, Toni Morrison, Susan Sontag, William Styron, John Updike and Kurt Vonnegut, and by prominent jazz musicians such as Dave Brubeck, Gil Evans, Tommy Flanagan, Mel Lewis, Wynton Marsalis, Gerry Mulligan, Sonny Rollins, Billy Taylor and Cecil Taylor, stated that "the arrest of the Jazz Section has already tarnished the image of Czechoslovakia as a country that

## Korean Torture Death Symptom of Wider Abuses

The recent revelations about the torture and death of a South Korean student, Park Jong-chol, have focused attention on the human rights practices of the government of President Chun Doo-hwan. According to Korean police, Park Jong-chol died by suffocation on January 14 when his throat was pressed against the edge of a tub of water into which his head was repeatedly being submerged. An autopsy of Mr. Park's body before it was cremated found numerous burns and abrasions. To diffuse public criticism, the government dismissed the Chief of National Police and the Minister of Home Affairs and initiated prosecutions against two lower level police officers allegedly responsible for the death.

In order to stimulate action in the Congress, Asia Watch helped initiate a congressional letter to Secretary of State Shultz expressing "concern about increasing repression in the Republic of Korea." Citing the death of Mr. Park, the letter requested Shultz to urge President Chun to "investigate deaths in detention or allegations of police brutality and to take strong

### Congressional letter expresses concern about increasing repression

action against those responsible." The letter also urges the Executive to suspend South Korean trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences "in light of Korea's record of abuses against labor unionists."

In November, Julie Brill conducted a mission to South Korea for Asia Watch. Ms. Brill met with opposition figures, human rights activists and government officials, and obtained information on issues relating to the administration of justice. Just before her departure, Ms. Brill was briefly detained by Korean authorities and nine documents were confiscated which contained allegations of torture and a statement by 270 Korean lawyers protesting persecution of opposition members. Despite protests by Asia Watch and the State Department, none of the documents has been returned.

promotes and supports jazz music; a conviction, however, would cause irreparable damage to the state of culture in Czechoslovakia."