

three human rights groups to organize a conference on the “disappeared.” The National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded private foundation, also provided grants to independent human rights groups.

On March 27, the State Department added the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat to its list of foreign terrorist organizations, a designation it had already given to the Armed Islamic Group.

The U.S.-government-run Export-Import Bank, which provided loans and guarantees to assist U.S. investment abroad, had an exposure in Algeria on September 30 of U.S. \$1.84 billion, second in the region only to the bank’s exposure in Saudi Arabia of \$1.88 billion.

The U.S. shifted its policy in favor of licensing private sales of night-vision equipment for counter-insurgency use by the Algerian government, according to various press reports published since late 2001. The equipment had been among the nonlethal materiel the U.S. had previously declined to license because of concerns about the human rights practices of the government. The State Department declined to comment when Human Rights Watch sought confirmation of this reported change in policy.

EGYPT

HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS

The government intensified its crackdown on real or suspected political opponents, tightened its control over civil society institutions, and clamped down on freedom of speech and expression. Thousands of political suspects remained in prolonged detention without trial under emergency legislation in force almost continuously since 1967, and there were a series of grossly unfair trials before military or state security courts in which defendants had no right of appeal to higher tribunals. The torture and ill-treatment of political detainees remained common, and the government continued to impose the death penalty.

The authorities carried out hundreds of arrests during 2002 of suspected government opponents, targeting principally alleged members of banned Islamist groups. The arrests were widely perceived as part of a wider crackdown on groups espousing Islamist ideologies in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Minister of Interior Habib al-‘Adli told journalists in February: “There should be a clear distinction made between human rights and crimes. I have no mercy for criminals who give themselves the right to threaten the nation’s well-being.” Many of those arrested were held under emergency legislation, in some cases allegedly tortured, and subsequently either released without charge or referred to trial before special courts that failed to meet international fair trial standards.

A small number of those arrested allegedly belonged to Talae’ al-Fatah (Van-

guards of the Conquest), a banned Islamist group believed to be an offshoot of al-Gihad al-Islami (Islamic Jihad). The vast majority of the Islamists targeted, however, were alleged members of the banned al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood), scores of whom were arrested in several operations carried out by state security personnel. Eight prominent members of the group were arrested on January 25 after allegedly participating in a secret meeting in the al-'Agouza district of Cairo. They included several university professors and doctors as well as an engineer. They were detained for fifteen days pending further investigation. A further twenty-eight people reportedly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested on July 12 in Cairo and elsewhere. They were charged with planning to stage a demonstration "allegedly to support the Palestinian cause and to criticize the government's policy in handling that issue," according to Interior Ministry officials. They were detained for fifteen days pending investigation. On July 21, thirty-four other alleged Muslim Brotherhood members were also held for fifteen days pending investigation. They were arrested the previous day near Cairo and accused of membership of an illegal organization, possessing literature promoting the group's ideology, and harming national unity. Among them were students, university lecturers, doctors, engineers and other professionals. It was not known how many of them remained in detention at this writing.

Violent clashes erupted in Alexandria on June 28 during parliamentary by-elections, as security and police personnel reportedly prevented Muslim Brotherhood supporters from reaching the polling stations to cast their votes. The two seats in the al-Raml constituency being contested had remained unfilled after the 2000 parliamentary elections. In the first round of the 2000 election, two Muslim Brotherhood candidates had defeated candidates representing the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP); the Ministry of Interior then annulled the results, stating that voting had been marred by irregularities. The election went ahead in June 2002 following an administrative court ruling and NDP candidates achieved a landslide victory. Some 150 Muslim Brotherhood supporters were arrested during the election-related clashes. Many of them were released shortly thereafter, but 101 were charged and brought to trial.

Scores of demonstrators were also arrested following protests against Israeli and U.S. government policies toward the Palestinians. On April 9, several thousand demonstrators, many of them university students, held a demonstration in Alexandria to coincide with the visit to Egypt of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Clashes broke out between the demonstrators and riot police, who reportedly used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds. One demonstrator was killed in the clashes, allegedly after riot police used shotgun pellets, and scores of others were injured. Some seventy student demonstrators were arrested and held under emergency legislation for up to ten days, accused of damaging public property and illegal assembly. They were later released without charge. In mid-May, several activists affiliated with the Egyptian Popular Committee for Solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada were also arrested in Cairo's Tahrir Square. They were reportedly distributing lists of U.S. goods and products and urging members of the public to boycott them. The authorities accused them of disrupting public order and held them for one day before releasing them without charge.

The government continued to refer civilian political suspects to military courts, the vast majority of them on charges of membership in banned Islamist groups and related offences. The trial of twenty-two people accused of membership in the Muslim Brotherhood opened before the Supreme Military Court in Haikstep on December 24, 2001. Most of the defendants were university professors, engineers, doctors, and businessmen, arrested the previous month after staging peaceful protests against U.S. military strikes in Afghanistan. The charges against them included attempting to recruit members to the Muslim Brotherhood and inciting the public against the government. On July 30, the court sentenced sixteen defendants to prison terms of between three and five years and acquitted the remaining six. In a statement issued after the verdict, the Muslim Brotherhood accused the government of targeting its members as part of a crackdown on Islamists carried out under U.S. pressure. In a separate case, noted above, 101 alleged Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters were brought before the state security court in Alexandria between September 2-4, charged with illegal assembly, rioting, assaulting police personnel, and obstructing voting following violent clashes with police and security forces during parliamentary by-elections in the city. On October 22, sixty-six of the defendants received three-month prison terms but were released since they had already served the time; the remainder were acquitted.

Fifty-one alleged members of a previously unknown Islamist group, Tanzim al-Wa'd (Organization of Promise), were convicted by the Supreme Military Court on September 9 following a trial that began in December 2001. They were among ninety-four defendants arrested principally in May 2001, initially accused of illegally collecting funds for Chechen separatists and the Palestinian group Hamas, and held for several months without trial. In October 2001, the authorities announced that the defendants would be referred to trial and charged additionally with plotting to assassinate senior government officials, Muslim and Christian religious figures, writers, and others, and plotting to organize military training for their members in Chechnya with the intention of perpetrating terrorist acts in Egypt. The defendants included several foreign nationals, among them three Russian nationals from Dagestan, while the Egyptian defendants included two prominent mosque preachers and two others who had received flight training in the U.S. Initially, seven of them were tried in absentia, but the trial was extended following the extradition of one of the suspects from Azerbaijan in April. Those convicted received prison terms ranging between two and fifteen years, and the remaining forty-three were acquitted. During the trial, a number of defendants said that they had been tortured under interrogation. They had no right of appeal before a higher tribunal and could only appeal for a review before the Military Appeals Bureau.

On October 20, the trial of twenty-six defendants charged with membership in the banned Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Liberation Party) opened before an Emergency Supreme State Security Court in Cairo. The defendants were among scores of suspects arrested in early April in Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria governorates, accused of belonging to a banned group aiming to "obstruct the legal system and to undermine state institutions" and to establish an Islamic caliphate. The majority was released following several weeks of incommunicado detention. The twenty-six referred to trial, among them three Britons—Ian Nisbett, Majid Nawaz,

and Reza Pankhurst—also faced additional charges of attempting to recruit new members to the Islamic Liberation Party and possession of anti-government literature. During the opening session of the trial, some of the defendants stated that they had been tortured during interrogation to obtain confessions from them, including through beating and electric shocks. The trial was ongoing by late November. If convicted, the defendants faced maximum prison terms of fifteen years and had no right of appeal to a higher tribunal.

Police and security personnel continued to routinely torture or mistreat detainees, in some cases leading to death in custody. A number of political suspects on trial before military or state security courts during 2002 on charges of membership in banned political groups and related offenses alleged that they had been tortured during interrogation while in the custody of State Security Intelligence (SSI). (See below.) Ordinary criminal suspects held in police custody also stated that they had been tortured to extract confessions from them. At least five deaths in custody were reported in 2002. According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), at least twelve detainees died under torture at police stations between January 2001 and June 2002. In a report released in May, the EOHR detailed eleven other cases of torture at the hands of the police during the same period.

In a positive development, the authorities referred a number of police personnel accused of torturing and causing the death of suspects in their custody to trial in four separate cases in 2002. For example, the Cairo Criminal Court on July 14 sentenced three police officers to five-year prison terms in connection with the case of Ahmad Taha Yusuf, who died in February after being tortured at Wayley police station in the city. On August 8, a Cairo Criminal Court sentenced two police officers to three-year prison terms each in connection with the death of Sayed Khalifa 'Isa, arrested on suspicion of car theft on January 26. He died in early March after being repeatedly beaten and reportedly subjected to electric shocks at a police station in Madinat Nasr.

Authorities did not investigate the vast majority of allegations of torture, however, and new cases continued to be reported. In November, two local NGOs reported the deaths in custody in July of Nabih Muhammad al-Shahin and his cousin Muhammad Muhammad 'Abdul-Fattah, who were reportedly tortured at Zefta police station and Wadi Natrun prison. They were arrested in June in connection with a street fight. It was not known whether the authorities had opened a criminal investigation into their deaths.

Egypt's Child Law gave police broad powers to arrest children found begging, homeless, or skipping school, and police regularly detained these children for days without food and bedding in cells with adult criminal suspects and subjected them to beatings and sexual abuse and violence.

Egyptian courts sentenced at least fifty-eight people to death and the authorities carried out nineteen executions between November 2001 and November 2002, according to Amnesty International. All the sentences were imposed for ordinary criminal offenses, including murder, rape, and drug trafficking.

On June 10, a state security court in Alexandria sentenced Magdi Anwar Tawfiq to ten years in prison with hard labor after convicting him of spying for Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad. He had been arrested in September 2001 and accused

of communicating with the Israeli consulate in the city, allegedly with the intent of offering information related to Egypt's political and economic interests, and his trial opened on May 11. He had no right of appeal to a higher tribunal. In a separate espionage case, Sherif al-Filali, also charged with spying for Mossad, was convicted by the Emergency Supreme State Security Court in Cairo and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in late March. He had no right of appeal to a higher tribunal. The court had previously acquitted Al-Filali of the charge in a first trial in 2001, but a re-trial was ordered in accordance with emergency laws after President Mubarak's office refused to endorse the verdict. (See *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*.) His co-defendant, a Russian army officer, was sentenced in absentia to twenty-five years in prison.

The government continued to prosecute individuals for their exercise of freedom of expression. A Cairo misdemeanors court sentenced Shohdy Surur, a web designer for the English language newspaper Al-Ahram Weekly, to a one-year prison term on June 30 after he was found guilty under Egypt's publication laws of violating "public morality." He was arrested in November 2001 after he posted a poem on the Internet written by his late father, Naguib Surur, in the early 1970s. The poem, political in nature, was said by the prosecution to be sexually explicit. Shohdy Surur was released on bail pending appeal, but on October 14 the appeals court upheld the sentence, since, according to Egyptian law, Surur was required to be present at the hearing. Surur was abroad at the time, and had not returned to Egypt by late November.

The government also prosecuted individuals for exercising their right to freedom of conscience and religion. On September 28, a Cairo state security court sentenced Sayed Tolba Abu 'Ali, an employee of Egypt's Atomic Energy Authority, to a three-year prison term with hard labor on charges of blasphemy through the propagation of "ideas contrary to Islamic principles." A female co-defendant received a one-year prison term, and nineteen others, said to be followers of Sayed Tolba, were given one-year suspended sentences. The authorities arrested Sayed Tolba on March 21 in Madinat Nasr, seizing letters and a videocassette in which he allegedly claimed he was a messenger of God. The defendants had no right of appeal before a higher tribunal.

The government continued to prosecute individuals on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. On December 19, the Cairo Juvenile Appeal Court for Misdemeanors upheld the conviction handed down to a seventeen-year-old for "habitual debauchery," but reduced his original three-year prison term to six months. The boy was one of fifty-three defendants tried in 2001 in the so-called Queen Boat case, in which the authorities charged the defendants with "debauchery" under the Combat of Prostitution Law, and had already spent seven months in detention, including four months held with adult prisoners. (See *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*.) Of the twenty-three adult men convicted by the Emergency State Security Court for Misdemeanors, twenty-one received prison terms ranging between one and two years, and two others were sentenced to three and five year terms. In May, President Mubarak endorsed the verdicts against the latter two but rescinded those against the twenty-one, who were then released on bail. Their cases, together with those of their twenty-nine co-defendants who had been acquitted

ted by the court, were referred to prosecutors once again for review. A new trial for all fifty-two defendants opened on July 27 before an ordinary criminal court, and was ongoing at this writing. In a separate case, four other alleged homosexuals were convicted of “debauchery” on February 3 by the Court of Misdemeanors in Cairo and sentenced to three-year prison terms each. During their trial, some of the defendants said they had been beaten and otherwise tortured while in police custody. In the third week of September they were acquitted on appeal and released.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

On June 3, the National Assembly passed a new law regulating the activities of an estimated sixteen thousand nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt, and the law was ratified by President Mubarak two days later. Law 84 of 2002 was intended to replace the controversial Law on Civil Associations and Institutions (Law 153 of 1999), which was overturned by Egypt’s Supreme Constitutional Court in June 2000 on procedural grounds. (See *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*.) The new version of the law contained an amendment, welcomed by a number of local human rights groups, allowing administrative courts to hear cases arising from disputes between NGOs and the authorities. However, it retained most of the stringent regulations imposed on the activities of NGOs contained in the original law. These included obliging NGOs to seek prior approval from the relevant government authorities for some of their key activities, such as seeking funding from abroad, becoming affiliated to organizations outside Egypt, and holding elections for board members. The law also contained new provisions giving the government even greater powers over NGOs, notably article 42 which authorized the Ministry of Social Affairs to dissolve NGOs without recourse to a court ruling. Among the grounds for dissolution were the participation of NGOs in political or trade union activity deemed prohibited by the authorities and the receipt of foreign funding without prior approval. The new law was condemned by both local and international human rights groups, as well as by funding institutions within the European Union.

On July 29, the Supreme State Security Court sentenced Saadeddin Ibrahim, director of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies in Cairo, to a seven-year prison term at the end of a second trial that opened on April 27. The trial, widely perceived as politically motivated and aimed at silencing real or potential criticism of the Egyptian government (see *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002* and *2001*), followed a decision by the Court of Cassation overturning previous verdicts against Ibrahim and twenty-seven co-defendants and ordering a re-trial. The defendants had been released on February 7, 2002, but a travel ban on Ibrahim, preventing him from seeking medical treatment abroad, had remained in force pending the re-trial.

In the second trial, marred by irregularities described below, Ibrahim was once again found guilty of receiving donations without prior official permission, disseminating false information designed to undermine Egypt’s stature abroad, and defrauding the European Union. Nadia ‘Abd al-Nour, the center’s chief accountant,

was convicted on the fraud charge and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment, as in the original trial. Two other employees of the center had their two-year prison terms for fraud reduced to one-year suspended sentences and were released shortly thereafter. Two other defendants had their five-year prison terms for bribery and forgery reduced to three years, while the remaining twenty-two sentences remained unchanged.

The outcome of the second trial was widely condemned by local and international human rights groups, as well as by member states of the European Union and the United States, and by U.N. human rights mechanisms. The trial was also marked by serious procedural irregularities, including denying the defense team adequate time to prepare its case and the failure of the presiding judges to respond to applications by defense lawyers for leave to challenge the constitutionality of the legislation under which two of the charges against Ibrahim were brought. The judges failed to respond to pleas for proceedings to be suspended to enable Ibrahim, diagnosed as suffering from a degenerative neurological disorder, to travel abroad for medical treatment. His health was reported to have deteriorated markedly during his incarceration. The authorities also refused to allow representatives of international human rights groups to visit Ibrahim and his co-defendants in prison.

In a victory for free expression, the verdict in the second trial was quashed on appeal on December 3 and a new trial, to be heard before the Court of Cassation, was scheduled for January 7, 2003. Ibrahim and three co-defendants serving custodial sentences were released pending the new trial.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

United Nations

During the year, Egypt’s human rights record was under scrutiny by a number of the United Nations’ human rights mechanisms. In October, the U.N. Human Rights Committee considered Egypt’s combined third and fourth periodic reports on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It welcomed positive developments in improving the status of women, the introduction of human rights training and awareness programs in educational institutions and for law-enforcement officials, and the creation of human rights divisions within certain government ministries. The committee expressed concern about the continuing state of emergency in the country and called for a review of the necessity of maintaining it. It also called for a review of the “very large number of offenses” punishable by death, with a view to abolishing the death penalty. The committee criticized “the persistence of torture” perpetrated by law-enforcement personnel and “the general lack of investigations into such practices, punishment of those responsible, and reparation for the victims.” It also “noted with alarm that military courts and state security courts had jurisdiction to try civilians accused of terrorism although there were no guarantees of those courts’ independence and their decisions were not subject to appeal before a higher court.” Among other things, the committee called on Egypt to refrain from punishing “private sexual

relations between consenting adults” and to review legislation governing the activities of NGOs to enable them to operate “without obstacles.”

In November, the Committee against Torture considered Egypt’s fourth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Among other things, it welcomed the enactment of legislation banning flogging in prisons and measures taken to regulate procedures for unannounced inspections to places of detention. The committee criticized the absence of mandatory inspections of prisons by an independent body, the numerous complaints of torture and ill-treatment, including of minors, and the absence of prompt and impartial investigations into torture and related deaths in custody. It made a series of recommendations, among them the abolition of incommunicado detention, enabling victims of torture to obtain full redress, ensuring that prisons under state security jurisdiction be subjected to mandatory inspection, and holding minors separately from adult detainees and protecting them from abuse. The committee also urged Egypt to abolish the use of administrative detention, to grant those convicted by military courts the right of appeal before a higher tribunal, to allow human rights NGOs to “pursue their activities unhindered,” and to agree to a visit by the special rapporteur on torture. In his March report to the Commission on Human Rights, the special rapporteur had detailed scores of cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment, including two cases of death in custody, which he had transmitted to the government between May and November 2001.

In her February report to the Commission on Human Rights, the secretary-general’s special representative on human rights defenders, Hina Jilani, expressed concern about procedural irregularities in the state security trial of Saadeddin Ibrahim and his co-defendants. She warned that “the conviction of these members of civil society for their human rights activities will have a chilling effect on the activities of other human rights defenders in Egypt,” and she expressed concern about the use of laws to restrict sources of funding for human rights defenders and to impose related penalties. Jilani said her April 2001 request to visit Egypt remained pending, and she had received no response from the government by July when Jilani submitted her report to the General Assembly.

The special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Abid Hussain, said in his January report to the Commission on Human Rights that he had received an invitation to visit from the Egyptian government, but by the end of November the visit had not taken place. In his report, the special rapporteur detailed several cases transmitted to the government, among them the referral of twenty-two alleged Muslim Brotherhood members to a military court. (See above.)

During a visit to Egypt in February, High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson met with relevant government officials and representatives of human rights and other NGOs. Among the issues of concern reportedly raised by Robinson was the continuing state of emergency and its adverse effect on human rights protection in the country, particularly in allowing the trial of civilians before military and state security courts.

On May 6, 2002, Egypt ratified the International Labor Organization’s Conven-

tion concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ILO Convention 182).

European Union

On November 29, 2001, the European Parliament passed a legislative resolution giving its assent to the conclusion of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between Egypt and the E.U., which had been signed in June 2001. On the same day, the European Parliament passed another resolution expressing concern about aspects of Egypt’s human rights record. The resolution stated that “despite substantial efforts, progress still needs to be made . . . with regard to human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of religious conscience,” and in strengthening the role of civil society. It called on Egypt to take steps to ensure greater respect for fundamental rights and to abolish the death penalty. The resolution urged the European Council and the European Commission “to devise practical arrangements for regular assessments” to improve “regular and impartial monitoring of developments in the field of human rights and the extent to which human rights activists are free to act and speak out in defense of the rights of others.” During a visit to Egypt by External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten in October, Foreign Minister Ahmad Maher announced that the Association Agreement would be forwarded to the People’s Assembly for ratification during its forthcoming session. The agreement provided for a budget of 351 million euros for the period 2002-2004, of which twenty million euros were earmarked for support to social development and civil society in 2003.

On July 4, the European Parliament passed a resolution expressing concern at the Egyptian authorities’ decision to retry fifty-two Egyptian men charged with “debauchery” and related offenses (see above), noting that this contravened article 14 of the ICCPR, since the defendants had already been tried in an earlier trial. The resolution urged the government to halt “all prosecution of citizens on grounds of homosexuality and to protect their individual freedoms.”

Commissioner Patten denounced in a July 30 statement the guilty verdict handed down to Saadeddin Ibrahim and his co-defendants in the Ibn Khaldun case (see above), and he criticized the continued use of state security courts to hear such cases. He said that the “questionable procedures used in the conduct of this high profile trial, the decision to retry these defendants after a successful appeal, the deteriorating health of the principal defendant, and the harsh outcome of the new trial must concern those who most support Egypt in its ambitious program of economic, social and political reform.” An E.U. Presidency statement issued on the same day also expressed “its surprise at the hurried fashion in which the sentence was handed down, which can throw doubt on the respect due . . . this trial.”

In a September 5 debate on the human rights situation in Egypt, European Parliament member states expressed concern about the continued imprisonment of Saadeddin Ibrahim and some of his co-defendants, as well as the prosecution of alleged homosexuals on grounds of their sexual orientation, the arrest of suspected Islamist activists, and the continuing restrictions on NGO activity. Several member states stressed that respect for human rights was an integral part of the Association

Agreement between Egypt and the E.U., and that “the democratic clause in article 2 is not a luxury, nor is it an option.” Commissioner Patten strongly condemned the government’s handling of the Ibn Khaldun case, which he said had caused “evident damage to Egypt’s international reputation.” He reiterated that the commission “has no evidence of financial or other wrongdoings by Dr. Ibrahim or his co-defendants with respect to the two NGO contracts managed by them,” detailed in an affidavit submitted during the defendants’ appeal. Following the debate, the European Parliament passed a resolution reiterating its condemnation of the conviction of Ibrahim and his co-defendants following a second trial in July, urging President Mubarak “to use his powers to obtain the release of Dr. Ibrahim and his colleagues pending a fair and final judgment.”

United States

The U.S. remained Egypt’s largest provider of foreign military and economic assistance, estimated at U.S.\$2.1 billion. However, with the noteworthy exception of a public decision in August not to consider additional aid following the conviction of Saadeddin Ibrahim, the Bush administration refrained from making U.S. assistance in any way conditional on improvements in Egypt’s poor human rights record.

In January, the U.S. announced an accelerated assistance plan of U.S.\$959 million, which it said was aimed at helping the Egyptian economy’s recovery in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S. An estimated U.S.\$202 million was released at the end of June, the bulk of which was aimed at supporting the Egyptian government’s measures in combating money laundering. In a statement on July 1, the U.S. ambassador to Egypt, David Welch, said that the U.S. government supported “the efforts of the Egyptian government in preventing the flow of money to terrorists and criminal groups.”

On August 15, the Bush administration announced that it would not consider further aid to Egypt in response to the July 29 conviction of Saadeddin Ibrahim, who held dual Egyptian-U.S. citizenship, and his co-defendants. Earlier, a State Department spokesperson said the administration was “deeply disappointed” at the verdict, and that it would “continue to follow Dr. Ibrahim’s case closely” and press its concerns with the Egyptian authorities. U.S. officials made clear, however, that Egypt’s annual \$2.1 billion of military and economic assistance was “not in danger.” The Bush administration also did not comment on the politically motivated arrests and unfair trials of scores of alleged Islamist opponents of President Mubarak’s government.

In its *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001*, released in March 2002, the State Department said that Egypt’s record “remained poor with respect to freedom of expression and its continued referral of citizens to trial in military or State Security Emergency courts, among other areas.” It criticized the use of emergency legislation to restrict basic rights, and said, “In combating terrorism, the security forces continued to mistreat and torture prisoners, arbitrarily arrest and detain persons, hold detainees in prolonged pre-trial detention, and occasionally engage in mass arrests. In actions unrelated to the anti-terrorist campaign, local

police killed, tortured and otherwise abused both criminal suspects and other persons.” It also said that prison conditions remained poor.

In its *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2002*, released in October, the State Department said that “there was a continued trend toward improvement in the Government’s respect for religious freedom,” but that certain abuses and restrictions remained. It said that the government “continued to prosecute for unorthodox religious beliefs and practices under the charge of ‘insulting heavenly religions.’”

Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Egypt in early April as part of a wider Middle East tour. Talks held with President Mubarak and government officials focused on the revival of the Middle East peace process in the context of the deteriorating security situation in Israel and the Palestinian Authority areas. The continued violence between Israelis and Palestinians also dominated talks between President Mubarak and President Bush when the former visited Washington, D.C., in early June.

RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORTS:

The State of Egypt vs. Free Expression: the Ibn Khaldun Trial, 01/02

IRAN

HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS

Human rights progress in Iran was caught in a continuing political power struggle between popularly elected reformers, who controlled both the presidency and Parliament, and clerical conservatives, who exercised authority through the office of the Leader (held by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), the Council of Guardians, the judiciary, and the armed forces. Despite landslide electoral victories in every major election from 1997 to 2002, the reformers were unable to dislodge repressive policies favored by the clerical leadership, including far-reaching restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and political participation.

The Council of Guardians repeatedly blocked bills passed by the Parliament in such areas as women’s rights, family law, the prevention of torture, and electoral reform. The judiciary, deployed as one of the conservative’s strongest weapons, further undermined the rule of law with arbitrary closures of newspapers and imprisonment of political activists.

Two notable political events illustrated the conflict between reformers and conservatives. On July 8, a leading cleric, Ayatollah Jalaluddin Taheri, announced his resignation as Friday Prayer Leader of Isfahan. Friday Prayer Leaders, appointed by the Leader of the Islamic Republic, were the senior religious authorities in their