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U.S. Department of State

Burkina Faso Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 26, 1999.

BURKINA FASO

President Blaise Compaore continued to dominate the Government of the Fourth Republic, assisted by members of his party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP). In spite of the existence of dozens of political parties, there is little viable opposition to the President and his Government. The Government includes a strong presidency, a Prime Minister, a Council of Ministers presided over by the President, a two-chamber National Assembly, and the judiciary. The judiciary is subject to executive influence.

On November 15, President Compaore was reelected to a second 7-year term with 88 percent of the vote; 56 percent of the electorate voted. Both national and international observers described the presidential election as substantially free and fair and an improvement over the 1997 legislative elections, particularly regarding logistical organization of the balloting and the functioning of the polling stations. However, there were a limited number of voting irregularities. The national observers identified a number of systematic weaknesses in the Electoral Code that precluded the serious assurance of a perfectly regular and transparent vote, and a coalition representing a number of opposition parties boycotted the election. The CDP controls 101 of 111 seats in Parliament. International observers considered the 1997 legislative elections to be substantially free and fair, although a collective of 14 local nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) cited generalized and systematic corruption and voter list irregularities. In 1995 the constitutionally mandated (though purely consultative) second chamber of Parliament was installed, completing the government structure envisaged in the 1991 Constitution. The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, it is subject to executive influence.

The security apparatus consists of the armed forces, the gendarmerie, controlled by the Ministry of Defense, and the police, controlled by the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Some members of the security forces on occasion committed human rights abuses.

Over 80 percent of the population of almost 11 million persons engages in subsistence agriculture. Frequent drought, and limited communication and transportation infrastructures, in addition to a 77 percent illiteracy rate, are longstanding problems. The 50 percent devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 made imports more expensive for salaried workers and civil servants, but improved the competitiveness of livestock and cotton exports. Since 1991 the Government has adopted a series of structural programs designed to open the economy to market forces and to reduce government deficits, while shifting resources to the education and health sectors. In recent years, the country has registered strong gains in life expectancy, literacy, and school attendance rates, although it remains a very poor country with annual per capita income of about \$220 (CFA 132,000).

The Government's human rights record improved somewhat, but serious problems remained in several areas. The presidential election represented a further step toward democratic government; however, the continued dominance of President Compaore and his ruling party limited citizens' right to change their government. The death of internationally respected journalist Norbert Zongo, his brother, and two other men in a suspicious car fire on December 13 sparked major demonstrations in Ouagadougou and other cities. At year's end, neither a Government commission nor an independent group established to investigate Zongo's death had started their work. The security forces continued to mistreat detainees, and prison conditions remained harsh. Arbitrary detention was a problem, and authorities did not ensure detainees due process. A general climate of impunity for members of the security forces, along with the lack of progress in identifying or punishing those responsible for serious abuses committed in previous years, continued to tarnish the Government's record. Courts are subject to executive influence, and authorities do not ensure fair trials. The media practices self-censorship. In June the Superior Council of Information (CSI), the Government entity responsible for the supervision of all media, released new regulations for radio and television stations that reduced the number of rights that the stations previously enjoyed. In October 1997, the Government tightened regulations governing public demonstrations and increased penalties for violations. Societal discrimination against women persisted. Violence against women and children, particularly female genital mutilation (FGM), remained a problem. The Government took steps to educate citizens about the dangers of this practice. Killings of criminal suspects by vigilante mobs remained a problem.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

There were no reports of political killings. However, there was one report of an extrajudicial killing. In late January or early February, members of the presidential guard tortured to death the chauffeur of President Compaore's younger brother, Francois, in their barracks. The chauffeur and 2 other domestic employees of Francois Compaore were taken to the barracks after being accused of stealing money from the President's brother's home. The political opposition and the Burkinabe Movement for Human Rights (MBDHP) publicly criticized the killing. The status of the 2 surviving employees, who were awaiting trial in preventative detention (see Section 1.d.), was unclear at year's end.

Circumstances surrounding the December 13 death of journalist Norbert Zongo, his brother and two companions remained unclear at year's end. Zongo, the editor of the weekly newspaper L'Independent

and president of the Society of Editors of the Private Press, and the three other men died under mysterious circumstances when the vehicle they were riding in caught fire on an isolated road connecting Ouagadougou and the town of Leo. Holes that could have been caused by gunshots were reportedly found in the body of the vehicle. Zongo, an internationally respected journalist who had received death threats prior to the fire, was well known for his outspoken articles on government scandals, including the torture of Francois Compoare's chauffeur who died while in the custody of the presidential guard. Zongo's death sparked major demonstrations in Ouagadougou, where rioters sacked the headquarters of the ruling CDP party, in Zongo's hometown of Koudougou where they burned and looted homes and businesses of prominent CDP officials, and in other cities. On December 18, the Government issued a decree setting up an independent commission comprised mostly of civil society and international representatives to investigate the deaths. A collective of human rights groups, opposition political parties, journalistic organizations, student groups, and trade unions that formed in response to Zongo's death rejected the Government's commission claiming that it was not sufficiently independent. On December 24, the collective set up its own commission. As of year's end, neither commission had begun their investigations.

No progress was made in punishing those responsible for abuses reported in previous years. The major problem with law enforcement remains a general climate of impunity for human rights abusers fostered by the failure of the government's investigations to result in guilty findings and appropriate sanctions. Inquiries tend to continue until they are overshadowed by subsequent incidents or quietly shelved. Appeals by human rights organizations generally go unanswered. The failure to prosecute previous abuses remains the most important hindrance to further human rights progress.

The 1996 incident in which members of the police in the town of Reo shot and killed an unarmed villager during an operation to fine owners of unregistered vehicles remained unresolved. An official investigation into the 1995 shooting death of two unarmed high school demonstrators in Garango yielded no results. There were no further developments regarding the 1994 corruption scandal that led to the death in custody of two suspects under suspicious circumstances.

To date, the authorities have provided no explanation of the death of Doin Redan, who was found dead in 1994 a day after being detained by police. The Government continued to make no real effort to investigate the fate of a Ghanaian detainee reportedly killed in 1993 while in police custody. International and local human rights groups pressured the official commission investigating the 1991 killing of Clement Ouedraogo, a prominent opposition leader, to submit a report of preliminary findings to the Prime Minister. The report has not been made public and the case remains open, as do the cases of the 1989 disappearance of Professor Guillaume Sessouma, detained for allegedly participating in a coup plot, and of medical student Dabo Boukary in 1990, detained following student demonstrations. Credible reports indicated that security forces tortured and killed both men. The Government failed to respond to students' calls for information on Boukary's death, which was included in a list of demands issued during university strikes in 1997.

There were some killings of criminal suspects by vigilante mobs.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

While legally prohibited, the mistreatment of detainees, often to extract confessions, has been

documented for a number of years. There are credible reports that officials at Maco prison continued to employ degrading treatment. The Government is not known to have taken any disciplinary action against those responsible, and the climate of impunity created by the Government's failure to prosecute abusers remains the largest obstacle to ending abuses.

Prison conditions are harsh, overcrowded, and can be life threatening. The federal prison in Bobo-Dioulasso, built in 1947, houses about 1,000 prisoners, although it was designed to hold less than half that number. There are separate facilities for men, women, and children. The prison diet is poor, and inmates often must rely on supplemental food from relatives.

According to human rights monitors, prison visits are granted at the discretion of prison authorities. Permission is routinely granted, and advance permission is not required.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

Arbitrary detention was a problem, and authorities did not ensure due process. The Constitution for the right to expeditious arraignment and access to legal counsel. The law limits detention for investigative purposes without charge to a maximum of 72 hours, renewable for a single 48-hour period. However, in practice police rarely observe these provisions, arbitrary detention was a problem, and authorities did not ensure due process. The average time of detention without charge is 1 week, and the law allows judges to impose an unlimited number of 6-month "preventative detention" periods.

On November 15, eight armed policemen temporarily detained opposition Party for Democracy and Progress (PDP) deputy Gerard Karambiri and a PDP supporter. Police awakened both men in their respective homes in Bobo-Dioulasso in the early hours of the morning, apparently searching for opposition parties' materials calling for a boycott of the presidential election. The officers lacked the required warrants and entered their homes at times other than the 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. "legal hours." Police took them to headquarters, interrogated them for about 2 hours, then released them. Parliamentarians believe that the detention of Deputy Karambiri was a violation of the parliamentary immunity granted to all deputies under the Constitution. On November 18, after demanding that the detentions be investigated fully, PDP deputies walked out of a National Assembly plenary session in protest. In response the governing CDP parliamentary group sent three of its leading deputies to express support for the PDP, and National Assembly President Melegue Traore addressed a letter to the Prime Minister asking that the incident be investigated. At year's end, the Government had not responded.

The Government does not use forced exile.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, in practice the judiciary is subject to executive influence. The President has extensive appointment and other judicial powers. The Constitution stipulates that the Head of State is also the President of the Superior Council of the Magistrature, which can nominate and remove some high-ranked magistrates and can examine the performance of individual magistrates.

The Constitution provides that the Supreme Court is the highest court in the country. Beneath it are 2 Courts of Appeal and 10 provincial courts ("de grande instance"). There is also a High Court of Justice, with jurisdiction to try the president and senior government officials for treason and other serious crimes. In 1995 the National Assembly passed legislation reforming the military court system, making military courts less susceptible in principle to executive manipulation; however, their independence has

not yet been demonstrated.

In addition to the formal judiciary, customary or traditional courts, presided over by village chiefs, handle many neighborhood and village problems, such as divorce and inheritance disputes. The population generally respects these decisions but citizens also may take a case to a formal court.

The Constitution provides for the right to public trial, access to counsel, and has provisions for bail and appeal. While these rights generally are respected, the ability of citizens to obtain a fair trial remains circumscribed by an ignorance of the law because 77 percent of the population is illiterate and by a continuing shortage of magistrates. Amendments to the Penal Code to make it more relevant to modern requirements, such as the revision making FGM a crime, were adopted by Parliament during its last session in 1996 and entered into effect early in 1997.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

f. Arbitrary Interference With Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution provides for these rights, and in practice the authorities generally do not interfere in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. However, in national security cases a special law permits surveillance, searches, and monitoring of telephones and private correspondence without a warrant. By law and under normal circumstances, homes may be searched only with the authority of a warrant issued by the Minister of Justice.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The 1991 Constitution and the 1990 Information Code provide for freedom of speech and of the press. However, in practice these freedoms still remain circumscribed by a certain degree of self-censorship. The President and his Government remain sensitive to criticism. Provisions in the Code granting the Government strong legal powers to intimidate the press through a broad interpretation of defamation were removed in 1993. As a result, journalists charged with libel may defend themselves in court by presenting evidence in support of their allegations. The independent press, particularly the written press, continued to exercise greater freedom of expression. However, the suspicious death of internationally respected journalist and newspaper editor Norbert Zongo raised serious questions on the limits to the exercise of this freedom (see Section 1.a.). Zongo was well known for his investigative reports on government scandals.

All media are under the administrative and technical supervision of the Ministry of Communication and Culture. The audiovisual media are further regulated by the Superior Council of Information (CSI).

The official media, including the daily newspaper Sidwaya, and the national radio and television displayed progovernment bias. The independent press includes 6 daily and 12 weekly newspapers, and a monthly news magazine. There are 21 thriving independent radio stations, 1 private television station, with a very limited viewing area, and 1 religious television station. In October the Government divided a \$180,000 (CFA 10.8 million) grant among 21 different private and independent radio stations, publications, and the low-power private television station located in Ouagadougou. These media outlets include stations that are critical of the Government. However, no private radio station was permitted to report on the 1997 legislative campaign.

In June the CSI released new regulations for private and independent radio stations, and in August it released new regulations for television. The CSI gave radio and television stations 6 months to put the new regulations into effect. Radio stations implemented the new rules in late November while television stations have until February 1999. The new regulations allowed reinstatement of call-in shows, which had previously been suspended in 1997. However, radio stations are held responsible if their call-in programs threaten the public order or the rights of any third party. At year's end, no station had resumed call-in shows. Under the regulations, no political party can directly or indirectly own or hold shares in an FM radio station. Any assistance from political parties is forbidden, as is coverage of political events. Stations must submit their programming schedules to the CSI 2 months in advance for approval. Any subsequent changes to the programming must be submitted 2 months in advance of the proposed FM stations are prohibited from airing live broadcasts from foreign stations. Community radio stations can no longer broadcast paid advertisements, and commercial radio stations must clear all advertisements with the CSI prior to broadcast. Private and independent radio stations may no longer volunteer employees, upon whom many stations are heavily dependent. All employees must be paid and registered with the National Social Security Office.

National and international observers reported that the CSI effectively fulfilled its responsibilities under the Electoral Code to assure equal media treatment of the candidates during the period prior to the November presidential election. The collective of independent election observers stated after the election that the press generally had been open to the different candidates and that press reporting on candidates' campaigns, with the exception of the national television and state-owned newspaper, which initially gave the President more attention than the other two candidates, became more balanced after a complaint presented to the CSI early in the campaign by Green Party candidate Ram Ouedraogo.

Academic freedom is respected.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. Political parties and labor unions usually have been allowed to hold meetings and rallies without requesting Government permission since early 1990. In October 1997, the National Assembly passed a law to replace an existing 1992 law regulating public demonstrations. The new law requires that authorities be notified in advance of planned demonstrations and gives the executive the right to use reasons of public order to forbid demonstrations. In addition penalties for violations were increased from 6 months to 5 years to 2 to 5 years. Permits must be obtained from municipal authorities for political marches. Applicants must indicate the date, time, duration, and itinerary of the march or rally, and authorities may alter or deny requests on grounds of public safety. Denials or modifications may be appealed before the courts. Several trade union organizations organized marches under this new law that were held without incident.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association, and the Government generally respects this in practice. Since early 1990, political parties and labor unions usually have been permitted to organize without seeking government permission.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this right in practice. The country is a secular state. Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions operate freely without government interference.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for freedom of movement, and authorities respect this right in practice. Gendarmes routinely stop travelers for identity and customs checks and the levying of road taxes at police and military checkpoints. There is no restriction on foreign travel.

Refugees are accepted freely. The Government provides first asylum. The Government cooperated with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. The approximately 25,000 refugees and displaced persons remaining in the country in 1997, mostly Tuaregs from Mali and Niger, were repatriated by the beginning of the year. A few hundred refugees from the Great Lakes region remain. There were no reports of forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. There were no reports of forced expulsion of those having a valid claim to refugee status.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Citizens have the constitutional right to change their government through multiparty elections. However, although the November 15 presidential election represented a further step toward democratic government, in practice citizens are unable to exercise this right fully due to the continued dominance of the President and his ruling party. President Compaore won 88 percent of the vote; 56 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls. The irregularities cited by observers in the actual voting process were limited in number and scope and did not appear to have an impact on the ultimate outcome of the election. However, the national observers identified a number of systematic weaknesses in the electoral code that precluded a perfectly regular and transparent vote, and a coalition representing a number of opposition parties boycotted the election. On November 24, the Supreme Court confirmed the final vote count released by the independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) on November 18. Neither of the two candidates opposing President Compaore contested the results.

The 1997 legislative elections gave the ruling CDP 101 out of 111 parliamentary seats. The victory reflected both general support for policies of the governing party and a lack of viable opposition alternatives. While international observers described the elections as substantially free and fair, a collective of 14 local NGO's cited generalized and systematic corruption and voter list irregularities. The Supreme Court annulled the results in four constituencies because of these irregularities.

On May 7, the National Assembly approved the establishment of an Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to replace the National Committee for the Organization of Elections (CNOE) that supervised the 1997 legislative elections. The law creating the CENI gave it responsibility for creating a census bureau, installing voting stations and training poll workers, organizing election observation, ensuring election security, and distributing election material. However, developing electoral lists is still the responsibility of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Security. The law also called for the CENI to be headed by an elected president and vice president who could not come from the hierarchy of any political party. The president and vice president are elected by CENI members. On July 16, the CENI was installed with 26 members, of which 6 came from the opposition, 6 from the ruling party, 3 from the religious community, 3 from the traditional tribal community, 6 from the labor movement, and 3 from a human rights organization. A committee of six persons from various government ministries is available to advise the CENI. However, there were concerns regarding CENI's independence since its funding was channeled through the Government, and it was scheduled to cease operations 60 days after the election. During the November 15 election, CENI was not able to carry out its functions in some of the country's 45 provinces due to inadequate staffing.

The Compaore Government includes a strong presidency, a Prime Minister, a Council of Ministers presided over by the President, a two-chamber National Assembly, and the judiciary. The legislature is independent, but it remains susceptible to external influence from the executive branch.

In January 1997, the CDP-dominated National Assembly amended the Constitution to allow a president to run for an unlimited number of terms. Previously, the Constitution had restricted the mandate to two 7-year terms.

There are no restrictions in law or practice on the participation of women or minority group members in politics. However, women are underrepresented in positions of responsibility; only 3 of the 29 ministers and 8 of the 111 National Assembly deputies are women. The President of the Social and Economic Council is a woman.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

The Government's attitude toward local human rights organizations was mixed. According to monitors, the Government did not interfere with the activities of any such group during the year, including the Burkinabe Movement for Human Rights (MBDHP), an independent group with representation in all 45 provinces. However, the Government has failed to answer inquiries from international human rights organizations concerning past abuses. Amnesty International (AI) is still awaiting the results of the Government inquiry into the 1995 killings in Garango, but the Government has not responded to AI's request for information.

In 1994 the Government announced the creation of the Office of Ombudsman, called "Mediateur du Faso." Retired General Marc Garango has appointed to the position, which is responsible for mediating disputes between the state and its citizens. In June the Ombudsman's Office issued its first activity report, which indicated that half the cases brought before it dealt with career problems of civil servants and the other half with a variety of issues, including land questions and bureaucratic inaction.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic origin. Minority ethnic groups are, like the majority Mossi, represented in the inner circles of the Government, and government decisions do not favor one group over another.

Women

Violence against women, especially wife beating, occurs occasionally. Cases of wife beating are usually handled through customary law and practice. There are no statistics on rape, although it is recognized as a crime. Spousal rape is not discussed. There are organizations that counsel rape victims, including Catholic and Protestant missions, the Association of Women Jurists in Burkina, the Burkinabe Movement for Human Rights, the Association of Women, and Promofemmes, a regional network that works to combat violence against women. The Government is attempting to change attitudes toward women, using education through the media. The Penal Code explicitly prohibits sexual harassment but has no special laws protecting women against violence other than general laws dealing with violence.

There are no specific constitutional provisions or laws protecting women, who face extensive discrimination. In general women continue to occupy a subordinate position and experience discrimination in such areas as education, jobs, property, and family rights. Overall, women represent 45

percent of the work force. However, in the modern sector women make up one-fourth of the government work force, although they are usually found in lower paying positions. Women still do much of the subsistence farming work. After the May 1997 parliamentary elections, the Government created a Ministry of Women's Affairs and appointed a woman as minister.

Children

The Constitution nominally protects children's rights. The Government has demonstrated its commitment to improving the condition of children by adopting a national policy to revitalize primary health care through the privatization of hospitals, which provided greater autonomy in hospital management. The Government has stated its commitment to improve access to primary education and as of 1996 had raised the literacy rate to 22 percent. The Government provides free primary school education to all children. If a child qualifies on the basis of grades and social condition (that is, his/her family is "poor"), free education can continue through junior high and high school. In practice, the family condition requirement is often ignored giving many children a free education through high school.

Females constitute approximately one-third of the total student population in the primary school system and are represented in the secondary and higher educational systems, although the percentage decreases significantly beyond the primary level. Schools in rural areas have disproportionately fewer female students than schools in urban areas. The Government has set up a scholarship program for female secondary students to encourage them to stay in school.

Female genital mutilation, which is widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health, still is practiced widely, especially in many rural areas, and usually is performed at an early age. The percentage of females who have undergone this procedure may be as high as 70 percent. The Government has made a strong commitment to eradicate FGM through educational efforts, and a national committee campaigns against the practice. The Penal Code was revised in 1996 to make FGM a crime, with stricter punishments for those involved in its practice. Perpetrators are subject to 6 months to 3 years imprisonment and a significant fine. The Government continued its sensitization campaign regarding the deleterious effects of this practice. Another form of mutilation, scarification of the faces of both boys and girls of certain ethnic groups, is gradually disappearing.

People With Disabilities

While there are modest government subsidies for workshops for the disabled, there is no government mandate or legislation concerning accessibility for the disabled. There is no legislation to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination. Programs to aid the disabled are limited, but human rights groups are not aware of any discrimination against the disabled.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The 1962 Labor Code has been amended several times during the past decade, most recently in 1996. Under this legislation, workers, including civil servants, traditionally have enjoyed a legal right of association, which is recognized under the Constitution. There are 4 major labor confederations and 12 autonomous trade unions linked together by a national confederal committee. They represent a wide ideological spectrum; the largest and most vocal member espouses socialist doctrine. Essential workers,

such as police, may not join unions.

The Constitution provides for the right to strike, and workers use strike actions to achieve labor goals. For example, the National Union for Tax and Housing Agents (SNAID) held a 72-hour protest strike from November 24 to 26. The strike was called primarily to demand implementation of incentive and performance bonuses for the agents, which they believed they were entitled to as state employees. The strike ended after the third day even though the Government did not indicate how it would respond to the union's demands.

Labor unions may affiliate freely with international trade unions. The National Confederation of Burkinabe Workers (CNTB) is affiliated with the Brussels-based World Confederation of Labor (WCL).

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

Unions have the right to bargain for wages and other benefits, both directly with employers and with industry associations. These negotiations are governed by minimums on wages and other benefits contained in the Interprofessional Collective Convention and the Commercial Sector Collective Convention, which are established with government participation. If no agreement is reached, employees may exercise their right to strike. Either labor or management may refer an impasse in negotiations to labor tribunals. Appeals may be pursued through the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court, whose decision is binding on both parties. Collective bargaining is extensive in the modern wage sector, but it encompasses only a small percentage of workers.

The Labor Code prohibits antiunion discrimination. The Labor Ministry handles complaints about such discrimination, which the plaintiff may appeal to a labor tribunal. If the tribunal sustains the appeal, the employer must reinstate the worker. Union officials believe that this system functions adequately.

There are no export processing zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, and it is not practiced.

The Government prohibits forced and bonded child labor but does not enforce this prohibition effectively. Children commonly work with their parents in rural areas or in family-owned small businesses in villages and cities.

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The Government prohibits forced and bonded child labor but does not enforce this prohibition effectively (see Section 6.c.). The labor code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years, the average age for completion of basic primary school. However, the Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Social Security, which oversees labor standards, lacks the means to enforce this provision adequately, even in the small wage sector. Most children actually begin work at an earlier age on small, family subsistence farms, in the traditional apprenticeship system, and in the informal sector. There are no reports of children under the age of 14 employed in either state or large private companies.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Labor Code mandates a minimum monthly wage, a standard workweek of 40 hours with at least one

24-hour rest period for nondomestic workers and a 60 hour workweek for household workers, and establishes safety and health provisions. The minimum monthly wage in the formal sector, about \$45 (CFA 27,089), does not apply to subsistence agriculture, which employs about 85 percent of the population. The government last set a minimum wage in 1996. It is not adequate for an urban worker to support a family. Wage earners usually supplement their income through reliance on the extended family, subsistence agriculture, or trading in the informal sector.

A system of government inspections under the Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Social Security and the labor tribunals is responsible for overseeing health and safety standards in the small industrial and commercial sectors, but these standards do not apply in the subsistence agricultural sector. However, the Government's Labor Inspector Corps does not have sufficient resources to fulfill its duties adequately. Every company is required to have a work safety committee. If a workplace has been declared unsafe by the government Labor Inspection Office for any reason, workers have the right to remove themselves from dangerous work without jeopardy to continued employment. In practice there are indications that this right is respected, but such declarations are relatively rare.

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