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2010 Human Rights Report: Sweden

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

April 8, 2011

The Kingdom of Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty parliamentary form of government. The population is approximately 9.4 million. Legislative authority rests in the unicameral parliament (Riksdag). In national elections in September, voters reelected the center-right coalition led by the Moderate Party as a minority government. The elections were free and fair. The king is the largely symbolic head of state. The prime minister is the head of government and exercises executive authority. Security forces reported to civilian authorities.

Reported human rights problems included incidents of use of excessive force by police, extended isolation and restricted exercise for persons in pretrial detention, government surveillance and interference, abuse of women and children, incidents of anti-Semitism, trafficking in persons, and anti-Islamic or xenophobic discrimination and crimes.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

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

The constitution and law prohibit such practices; however, there were reports that police used excessive force.

The national prosecutor's office for police cases received 4,824 reports of misconduct during the year. The reports covered all police employees, both officers and civilians, and involved incidents that occurred on active service and

outside of work. The majority of the incidents took place while the police employee was on duty, and 15 percent of the reported cases were accusations that on-duty officers had used more violence than the situation required.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions generally met international standards, and the government permitted visits by independent human rights observers. However, lengthy pretrial detention was a problem.

Three persons committed suicide while in prison or detention during the year. In April the Prison and Probation Service opened an internal investigation into the suicide of an Afghan man in the Gavle detention center in May 2009. The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited the detention center after the incident and questioned why the person had not been admitted to a psychiatric clinic.

According to the Prison and Probation Services, prison and detention centers were meant to hold a maximum of 6,990 prisoners and detainees. On November 1, the total number of prisoners and detainees was 6,567, including juvenile and female prisoners.

Restrictive conditions for prisoners held in pretrial custody remained a problem. According to the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, in July approximately 45 percent of pretrial detainees were subject to extended isolation or to restrictions on mail delivery or exercise. According to authorities they took this step when detainees' contact with persons outside the detention center could risk destroying evidence or changing statements, thereby imperiling the ongoing investigation.

In December the CPT published the report of its visit to the country in June 2009. During the visit the CPT delegation monitored conditions in the country's police establishments, prisons, the Swedish Migration Board, and psychiatric and juvenile establishments. The report expressed concern about the impact of prolonged periods of isolation and segregation on the mental health of inmates. For example, it noted that 62 of the 136 remand prisoners at the Gothenburg Remand Prison were liable to restrictions, some being subjected to periods of isolation ranging from six to 18 months. The report stated that the overwhelming majority of remand prisoners met by the delegation during its visit had been given no explanation of the reasons for the restrictions and that many considered the only reason they were prohibited from contact with their family members was to "break" them.

The CPT report also noted that immigration detainees were still sometimes held in remand prisons, on occasion for lengthy periods of time, after having been removed from centers operated by the Swedish Migration Board because of the heightened security risk they presented to themselves and others. The CPT believed that a prison is, by definition, not an appropriate place to hold persons who are neither suspected nor convicted of a crime.

In January the government's official response to the report stated that the imposition of restrictions on prisoners is an exceptional measure rather than the rule.

Prisoners and detainees had reasonable access to visitors and were permitted religious observance. Authorities permitted prisoners and detainees to submit complaints to several judicial authorities without censorship and to request investigation of credible allegations of inhumane conditions. Authorities investigated credible allegations of inhumane conditions and documented the results of such investigations in a publicly accessible manner. The government investigated and monitored prison and detention center conditions.

The justice ombudsman, who worked independently from the government, performed 11 prison inspections during the first nine months of the year. The national Red Cross and church associations may also visit prisoners, but may not monitor or inspect the prisons. The justice ombudsman can serve on behalf of prisoners and detainees to consider such matters as

alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders to alleviate overcrowding; addressing the status and circumstances of confinement of juvenile offenders; and improving pretrial detention, bail, and recordkeeping procedures to ensure that prisoners do not serve beyond the maximum sentence for the charged offense.

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The construction of 500 new detention and prison cells during the year helped mitigate overcrowding.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, and the government generally observed these prohibitions.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The national police and the national criminal police are responsible in practice for law enforcement and general order within the country. The Security Service is responsible for national security related to terrorism, extremism, and espionage. The armed forces are responsible for external security. The Ministry of Justice provides the funding and the letters of instruction for police activities, but it does not control how they perform their work. According to the constitution all branches of the police are independent authorities. The chancellor of justice, who is a nonpolitical civil servant appointed by the government, acts as the government's ombudsman in the supervision of the police, and takes action in cases where the chancellor suspects abuse. In addition, the Security and Integrity Commission can review the work of the Security Service upon an individual's request and initiate its own investigations if the commission suspects that the Security Service has collected and used personal data wrongfully.

The chancellor of justice decided that the National Police Board should pay 2,144 kronor and 26,343 kronor (approximately \$318 and \$3,899) respectively, based on verdicts regarding wrongful treatment of personal data and wrongful procedures when sequestering a person's apartment.

Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the national police and the Security Service, and government authorities had effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse and corruption. There were no reports of impunity involving the security forces during the year.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention

The law requires warrants issued by duly authorized officials for arrests, and the government generally respected this requirement in practice. Persons can be and are arrested without a warrant if they are caught committing a crime or if they are suspected of having committed a crime that is being investigated. A person who is believed to be drunk or under the influence of drugs and intends to drive any vehicle may be arrested without a warrant. Police must file charges within six hours against persons detained for disturbing the public order or considered dangerous and within 12 hours against those detained on other grounds. Police may hold a person for questioning for six hours or up to a maximum of 12 hours if necessary for the investigation. After questioning, the level of suspicion determines whether the individual will be arrested or released. A court order is not needed to hold a person for as long as 12 hours. If a suspect is arrested, the prosecutor has 24 hours (or three days in exceptional circumstances) to request continued detention. An arrested suspect must be arraigned within 48 hours, and initial prosecution must begin within two weeks, unless extenuating circumstances exist. Authorities generally respected these requirements.

There is no system of bail; however, courts routinely released defendants pending trial unless they were considered dangerous or there was a risk that the suspect would leave the country. Detainees may retain a lawyer of their choice; in criminal cases, the government is obligated to provide an attorney, regardless of the defendant's financial situation. Detainees are afforded prompt access to lawyers and to family members. A suspect has a right to legal representation when the prosecutor requests his detention beyond 24 hours (or three days in exceptional circumstances). Prompt access

to family members can be influenced by the type of crime that the suspect is accused of committing. Sometimes a suspect is not allowed any contact with family members if it could jeopardize the investigation.

Following its visit to the country in June 2009, the CPT delegation noted that the right of notification of custody was often delayed "in the interests of the investigation" until a person has been remanded to custody by a court. In its January response, the government stated that, under the law, police should notify the close relatives of persons whom police have apprehended as soon as possible without detriment to the investigation and with the wishes of the apprehended person. However, such notice may not be given against the wishes of the apprehended person without extraordinary reason.

The CPT's report also expressed concern about the situation of juveniles in police custody, "who apparently may be questioned without the presence of their parents or social welfare representatives." In its response, the government stated that the parent or guardian of a person less than 18 years of age suspected of an offense for which the minimum punishment is imprisonment for at least six months is to be immediately informed and invited to police questioning, unless this would be detrimental to the inquiry or there are otherwise special reasons not to do so. According to the National Police Board, there are few exceptions to this rule.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence in practice.

Trial Procedures

The constitution provides for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence. Trials are generally public. Juries are used only in cases involving freedom of the press or freedom of speech. In other cases, judges or court-appointed civilian representatives make determinations of guilt or innocence. Cases of a sensitive nature, including those involving children, child molestation, rape, and national security, may be closed to the public. The court system distinguishes between civil and criminal cases. Defendants have the right to be present at their trials and to consult an attorney in a timely manner. In criminal cases the government is obligated to provide a defense attorney. A "free evidence" system allows parties to present in court any evidence, regardless of how it was acquired. Defendants can confront or question witnesses against them and present witnesses and evidence on their behalf, and defendants and their attorneys have access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases. If convicted, defendants have the right of appeal.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Regional Human Rights Court Decisions

During the year the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found four violations by the government of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Of these, two involved the deportation of asylum seekers to their native countries, and one dealt with due process. In 2009 the ECHR found one violation, involving denial of the right to a fair trial, by the government. According to statistics from the Council of Europe for 2009, the latest year for which data is available, the government complied with one judgment of the ECHR within the six-month deadline, two after the deadline, and one was late by less than six months.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

There is an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters. There is no specific court for human rights violations, and human rights cases are tried in the general court system. Citizens can appeal to the ECHR in matters related to the state.

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

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, and the government generally respected these prohibitions in practice.

The National Defense Radio Establishment (FRA) may monitor international cable traffic with the prior approval of a special court. Under this law, only government ministries and the armed forces may commission surveillance from the FRA. During the year courts issued 2,216 permits for wiretapping and camera surveillance, an increase of 44 percent from 2009. The courts denied 11 permit applications.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to ensure freedom of speech and of the press.

The law criminalizes expression considered to be hate speech and prohibits threats or expressions of contempt for a group or member of a group based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation. Penalties for hate speech range from fines to a maximum of four years in prison.

The Sweden Democrats launched a television commercial as part of their election campaign that multiple persons reported to the chancellor of justice as violating hate speech laws. On October 1, the chancellor ruled the case did not involve racial agitation, and no further investigation was conducted. The television commercial was never aired in its original version, as the television station decided it violated its own hate speech rules. In a separate incident, charges were filed against the publisher of a Web site affiliated with a Swedish neo-Nazi magazine for allowing a reader comment with racial slurs to remain on the site. The chancellor of justice concluded that the comment amounts to agitation against ethnic groups and filed charges against the site's publisher for violating press freedom laws. The case was not concluded by the end of the reporting period.

Internet Freedom

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in peaceful expression of views via the Internet, including by e-mail. According to statistics from the Swedish Post and Telecom Agency, approximately 91 percent of the country's inhabitants had access to the Internet in their homes.

In the early part of the year, the European Commission filed a complaint against the government for not implementing a directive requiring communications providers to retain data specified in the directive for a period of between six months and two years. The center-right governing coalition has agreed to retain the data for six months, but a vote has not yet occurred.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights in practice.

c. Freedom of Religion

For a complete description of religious freedom, please see the *2010 International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/rpt/.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution and law provide for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

The constitution and law prohibit forced exile, and the government did not employ it.

Protection of Refugees

The country's laws provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees.

During the year the UNHCR continued to criticize the government's lengthy turnaround times for asylum applications and its deportation of Iraqi refugees.

The government denied asylum to persons who had transited other European Union (EU) countries or countries with which it maintained reciprocal return agreements before arriving in Sweden. It deported such persons to those countries. In most instances the persons who were deported had passed through, or had asylum determinations pending in, other EU countries and were returned in accordance with EU law. The government authorized financial repatriation support for asylum seekers who had been denied residence in the country in the amount of 30,000 kronor (\$4,440) per adult and 15,000 kronor (\$2,220) per child, with a maximum of 75,000 kronor (\$11,100) per family. During the year the government provided repatriation support to 1,422 persons, most of them of Iraqi origin.

In 2008 the country established a repatriation agreement with Iraq. During the first nine months of the year, the government forcibly repatriated 493 Iraqis. The UN (through the UNHCR) and nongovernmental organizations such as Amnesty International criticized the country and the migration minister in connection with the forced repatriations.

In practice, the government provided some protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where their lives or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Asylum seekers can appeal rulings of the Migration Board to two special migration appeals courts. Unsuccessful asylum seekers could and did appeal their cases to the ECHR.

During the year the ECHR issued two decisions against the government involving its treatment of asylum seekers.

The Migration Board provided temporary protection to 57 individuals who did not qualify as refugees.

Stateless Persons

Citizenship is derived from one's parents. According to UNHCR data, there were 7,758 stateless persons in the country in 2009, the last year for which data was available. The large number related to the influx of immigrants and the birth of

children to stateless parents, who remained stateless until one parent acquired citizenship. The majority of the stateless population came from the Middle East (the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq) and Somalia.

Once stateless persons are granted permanent residence, they may obtain citizenship through the same naturalization process as other permanent residents. The timeframe for gaining citizenship is generally four to eight years, depending on the individual's grounds for residency, ability to establish identity, and lack of a criminal record.

There is no legal discrimination against stateless persons in employment, education, housing, health services, marriage or birth registration, access to courts and judicial procedures, or owning land or property.

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

The constitution provides citizens the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections based on universal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

In the national elections in September, citizens elected for a second term the center-right coalition led by the Moderate Party. The coalition did not gain a full parliamentary majority and is a minority government. The Sweden Democrats, a political party advocating strict immigration rules, entered into parliament for the first time, having received 5.7 percent of the votes and won 20 out of the 349 seats in parliament.

Political parties operated without restrictions or outside interference.

After the elections in September the number of women in parliament decreased for the first time since 1991, from 165 to 157. There were 11 women in the 24-member cabinet.

No official statistics on minority representation in government were available because the law prohibits the government from holding information about the racial or ethnic background of its citizens. However, media reports stated that the number of immigrant parliamentarians increased in the September elections.

Section 4 Official Corruption and Government Transparency

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, and the government generally implemented these laws effectively. A special unit in the prosecutor's office worked on cases involving corruption. In September an additional prosecutor was added to the unit, which initiated 30 investigations during the year, resulting in 28 persons being prosecuted. Public officials and political parties are subject to financial disclosure laws.

The constitution and law provide for public access to government information, and the government generally granted access in practice to citizens and noncitizens, including foreign media. The public has the right of access to government documents unless they are subject to secrecy laws, according to which information may be withheld if its release poses a threat to national security or to individual or corporate privacy.

Section 5 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. At the national level, the country has seven ombudsmen: four justice ombudsmen; the chancellor of justice; the children's ombudsman; and the discrimination ombudsman with responsibility for ethnicity, gender, transsexual identity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disabilities. There are normally ombudsmen down to the municipal level as well. The ombudsmen enjoyed the government's

cooperation and operated without government or party interference. They had adequate resources and were generally considered effective. The children's ombudsman published a report on the conditions at the country's special child and youth care institutions. The discrimination ombudsman published three reports, on indicators for human rights, discrimination in the housing market, and experiences from discriminations. Government officials often were cooperative and responsive to the views of the ombudsmen.

Section 6 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, language, social status, or sexual orientation.

On September 30, after the government amended the country's antidiscrimination laws, the European Commission ended legal proceedings against the country for incorrectly implementing EU rules on equal treatment in employment on the basis of religion, belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation. The new law against discrimination merges a scattered number of discrimination laws into one. It also establishes new grounds for financial compensation.

Women

Rape, including spousal rape, is illegal, and the government enforced the law effectively. The law stipulates more severe penalties for repeated crimes and for cases in which the perpetrator had a close relationship to the victim. Penalties range from two to 10 years in prison. The National Council for Crime Prevention (NCCP) reported 5,860 rapes during the year, compared with 6,084 in 2009.

The NCCP reported approximately 27,200 cases of assault against women during the year. During the same period, 333 lethal crimes were reported, but figures confirming how many of these were homicides, accidents, or natural deaths were not available at the end of the reporting period. Authorities apprehended and prosecuted abusers in most cases.

The law provides victims with protection from contact with their abusers. When necessary, authorities helped victims to protect their identities or obtain new identities and homes. According to official statistics, approximately 1,000 persons, mostly women, received such services. Both national and local governments helped fund volunteer groups that provided shelter and other assistance for abused women. Both private and public organizations ran shelters and operated hotlines.

Official figures showed that 27 percent of girls and women with a non-Swedish background faced restrictions at home that could be seen as honor related. In real numbers, this represented approximately 100,000 girls and women. The NCCP determined that the government's strategy to deal with men's violence against women overall improved the quality of the government's services. Honor-related violence exclusively involved immigrants from Muslim countries; police concentrated on educating police officers and prosecutors to increase awareness of the problem and improve its detection and prevention. During the year county administration boards used a grant of 36 million kronor (\$5.3 million) from the Ministry for Integration and Gender Equality to work against honor-related oppression. At year's end there were no reports of the results of these programs.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs continued to encourage citizens to report suspicions of sex tourism to the country's diplomatic missions abroad. A police criminal investigator was stationed in Bangkok to provide liaison between Nordic authorities, and police in Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

The law prohibits sexual harassment, and the government generally enforced this law in practice. Employers who do not investigate and intervene against harassment at work may be liable for damages to the victim. There are no criminal penalties for this crime.

Couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. There was easy access to contraception. According to data from the UN Population Fund for 2008, the latest year for which data is available, 75 percent of the country's women used some method of birth control, of which 65 percent used modern methods, including male and female sterilization, IUD, the pill, injectables, hormonal implants, condoms, and female barrier methods. The maternal mortality rate was estimated to be five per 100,000 live births. Access to prenatal care, maternal health services, including skilled attendance during childbirth, was widely available, as was access to essential obstetric and postpartum care and family planning practices. Women were diagnosed and treated for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, equally with men.

Women enjoy the same legal rights as men, including rights under family law, property law, and in the judicial system. Some sectors of the labor market, including the financial sector and high-ranking positions in both the public and private sectors, still showed significant gender disparities in terms of salaries, especially in male-dominated occupations. Women's salaries averaged approximately 85 percent of men's, adjusting for age, education, and occupational differences.

The discrimination ombudsman investigated complaints of gender discrimination in the labor market. Complaints could also be filed with the courts or with the employer. Labor unions generally mediated in cases filed with the employer. There were 39 discrimination complaints related to pregnancy during the year.

In 2009 the government appointed a committee to promote gender equality in higher education. With a budget of 60 million kronor (\$8.9 million) until the end of the year, the committee focused on combating gender-based subject choices and reversing the trend toward fewer male students in higher education. It also addressed gender differences in terms of study rates, dropout rates, propensity to complete a degree, career opportunities in research, and representation at executive levels in higher education. The committee funded 37 projects at educational institutions in the country. The committee found that providing educational institutions with qualitative goals for the most part increased gender equality. Suggestions included a yearly equality bonus to institutions that demonstrate gender equality and a more supportive role by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education in the field of equality.

Children

Citizenship is derived from one's parents. Children born in the country are registered in the tax authority's population register.

Child abuse was a problem. The NCCP reported 11,530 cases of abuse of children under the age of 15 during the year, an increase of 4 percent compared with 2009. The NCCP reported 2,530 cases of child rape of children under the age of 18 during the year, compared with 1,911 reported cases in 2009.

The law prohibits parents or other caretakers from abusing children mentally or physically. Parents, teachers, and other adults are subject to prosecution if they physically punish a child, including slapping or spanking. Children have the right to report such abuses to police. The usual sentence for such an offense is a fine combined with counseling and monitoring by social workers. Authorities may remove children from their homes and place them in foster care. On December 1, the parliament approved a strategy aimed at strengthening the rights of children.

The law criminalizes "contact with children for sexual purposes," including Internet contact intended to lead to sexual assault. It covers children under 15; penalties range from fines to one year in prison. The minimum age for consensual sex is 15. The law prohibits child pornography; penalties range from fines to six years in prison.

The law prohibits the repatriation of foreign children if they lack proper documents to prove their identity and national origin. The migration board turned children arriving in the country alone over to social services in their municipality of residence, where a legal guardian was appointed to assist them. In June the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern over the authorities' failure to sufficiently consider the best interests of children seeking asylum and the large number of unaccompanied children disappearing from reception centers. In November the government announced it would form a commission to review the system for dealing with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and their housing needs.

The country is a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. For information on international parental child abduction, please see the Department of State's annual report on compliance at http://travel.state.gov/abduction/resources/congressreport/congressreport_4308.html, as well as country-specific information at http://travel.state.gov/abduction/country/country_3781.html.

Anti-Semitism

Leaders of the Jewish community estimated that there were 20,000 Jews in the country. Several anti-Semitic incidents were reported in Malmo and Stockholm, including rocks thrown at a Jewish community center and two bomb threats. In conjunction with the Gaza flotilla incident on May 31, leaders of the Jewish community reported that several of its members received threats via e-mail, text messages, and telephone calls. Anti-Semitic statements increased in blogs and Internet forums.

In January the regional newspaper, *Skanska Dagbladet*, ran a series of articles on the Jewish community in Malmo. In response, Mayor Ilmar Reepalu reportedly asserted that Malmo's Jews bore part of the responsibility for the attacks against the community since they failed to criticize Israel's action in Gaza in 2009 and added, "We accept neither anti-Semitism nor Zionism." Reepalu subsequently claimed he was deliberately misquoted. However, on February 21, the British *Sunday Telegraph* quoted Reepalu as saying, "There have been no attacks on Jews and, if Jews here [in Malmo] want to move to Israel, they are free to do so." Reepalu faced heavy criticism. After meeting with the Jewish community, Reepalu stated he realized the seriousness of the situation with hate crimes against Jews in Malmo.

During the year the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported that "furious" Swedish climbers were demanding changes to the names of rock-climbing routes in the Jarfalla area, some of which bore names related to Nazis and the Holocaust, such as "Himmler," "Kristallnacht," "Third Reich," "Crematorium," and "Swastika." Most of these nicknames were given between 1987 and 2001, but the press only picked up the story during the year. One of the climbers involved in the original naming told the press that he picked the name because he thought the route was "horrible" and had to be "defeated." Despite general agreement – including from the Swedish climbing community – that the names were offensive, the private publishers of the climbing guide have not yet changed them. By custom, climbers who blaze routes name them, sometimes leading to highly insensitive monikers across the world, including in North America.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency cooperated with religious communities on a national level to promote dialogue and to prevent conflicts leading to anti-Semitic incidents. In June the NCCP presented its annual study on hate crimes in 2009, including anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, and other religion-related hate crimes. In 2009 there were 591 reports of hate crimes involving religion, of which 250 were anti-Semitic crimes (42 percent of religion-related hate crimes), up from 159 in 2008. Of the hate crimes involving religion in 2009, 15 percent reportedly had a white-supremacist motive, an increase of 3 percent from 2008.

The NCCP's report stated that crimes against persons and damage of property/graffiti were the most common offenses related to religion. The most frequent anti-Semitic crimes were against persons with 130 reported incidents in 2009.

According to the report, 28 percent of anti-Semitic crimes were ideologically motivated. Religious hate crimes more frequently occurred in religious places or at home. The victim rarely knew the perpetrator, and the majority of both suspects and victims were men. By March police completed investigation of 50 percent of the hate crimes involving religion that were reported during 2008. Approximately 2 percent of these hate crimes were still under investigation, and police dropped 48 percent for lack of evidence or failure to meet the standards of a hate crime.

Representatives from the national unit to train police officers to detect hate crimes visited high schools to raise awareness of hate crimes and encourage more victims to report abuses. Information for victims of hate crimes was available in several languages, and interpreters were provided to facilitate reporting. In March the Skane police appointed a special investigator for hate crimes in each of the five subregions within the Skane police district.

Trafficking in Persons

For information on trafficking in persons, please see the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/g/tip.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits employers from discriminating against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in hiring decisions and prohibits universities from discriminating against students with disabilities in making admissions decisions. No other specific law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. The discrimination ombudsman is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The law on discrimination does not cover accessibility. Regulations for new buildings require full accessibility. Similar requirements exist for some, but not all, public facilities; many buildings and some means of public transportation remained inaccessible.

The number of reports of discrimination against persons with disabilities increased during the year. There were 965 reports of governmental discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of other state services; most of the cases involved lack of access to public buildings. Difficulty in accessing apartments, restaurants, and bars generated the most frequent reports of societal discrimination against persons with disabilities. Many cases were handled by mediation procedures rather than through formal court hearings.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Approximately 1.3 million persons in the country were foreign-born, with the largest groups originating from Finland, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Iran. According to figures from Statistics Sweden, 98,801 persons immigrated to the country during the year.

In October 2009 the chancellor of justice decided to prosecute a man for incitement to racial hatred for distributing stickers that stated, "Swedish women are being raped. What are you doing about it?" and portrayed a rapist of foreign origin with a rope around his neck. On April 13, the chancellor decided not to initiate a pre-investigation.

Police registered reports of xenophobic crimes, some of which were related to neo-Nazi or white-power ideology. Police investigated and the district attorney prosecuted race-related crimes. Official estimates placed the number of active neo-Nazis and white supremacists at approximately 1,500. Neo-Nazi groups operated legally, but courts have held that it is illegal to wear xenophobic symbols or racist paraphernalia or to display signs and banners with inflammatory symbols at rallies, since the law prohibits incitement of hatred against ethnic groups.

Anti-Islamic behavior is a growing problem that affects both Arab and Somali immigrants. Although nationwide statistics for 2010 were not yet available, police from Skane, the region in southern Sweden where many of the anti-Islamic incidents occurred, reported anti-Islamic hate crimes increased more than 500 percent, from seven in 2009 to 45 in 2010. In 2009, 194 of the hate crimes committed were anti-Islamic crimes (33 percent of religion-related hate crimes), down from 272 in 2008.

The most frequent anti-Islamic crimes were crimes against persons, with 129 reported incidents in 2009, and 31 reported cases of agitation against an ethnic group. According to the report, 1 percent of anti-Islamic crimes were ideologically motivated.

During the year there were reported shootings of mosques throughout the country. The Muslim community has reported several of its members have been verbally harassed, and derogatory graffiti has been found on mosque walls.

The discrimination ombudsman received 760 complaints regarding discrimination due to ethnicity during the year.

The government estimated the Romani population at approximately 50,000. There is a special delegation for Romani problems consisting of representatives of Romani origin, experts on Romani problems, and representatives from Romani associations. The delegation worked to improve the situation of Roma in society and addressed such problems as social, political, and economic discrimination. In July the delegation reported that a majority of Roma lived as outcasts, unemployment reached 80 percent, elementary education was rare, and average life expectancy was significantly lower than the country's average.

The discrimination ombudsman handled 12 mediation and court cases involving Roma during the year. On June 14, the discrimination ombudsman reached a conciliated settlement in a case in which a Romani woman accused a property owner for "not wanting Roma to buy apartments among his properties." The woman received 25,000 kronor (\$3,700) in compensation. As of September, authorities had deported at least 38 Roma from the Stockholm region. Civil rights defenders and Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg, referring to the poor conditions to which they were forced to return, criticized the government and the Migration Board for deporting Roma to Romania and, in particular, to Kosovo.

The law recognizes Sami (formerly known as Lapps), Swedish Finns, Tornedal-Finns, Roma, and Jews as national minorities. The government supported and protected minority languages by law.

Indigenous People

The approximately 20,000 Sami in the country were represented by a 31-member Sami-elected administrative authority called the Sami parliament. Sami are not represented as a group in the country's parliament, but as full citizens, they have the right to vote in the country's elections and to participate in the government, including the country's parliament if elected or appointed. The Sami parliament acts as an advisory body to the government and has limited decision-making powers in matters related to preserving the Sami culture, language, and schooling. The national parliament and government regulations govern the Sami body's operations.

Longstanding tensions between Sami and the government over land and natural resources persisted, as did tensions between Sami and private landowners over reindeer grazing rights. Certain Sami have grazing and fishing rights, depending on their tribal history. Sami continued to press the government for exclusive access to grazing and fishing, although the Sami parliament focused more on the preservation of the Sami culture than on exploitation of natural resources.

Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

During the year there were isolated incidents of societal violence and discrimination against homosexual conduct. For 2009 the NCCP reported 1,090 hate crimes based on sexual orientation, 1,060 with a homophobic, biphobic, or heterophobic motive, and 30 with a transphobic motive.

In July the annual weeklong Gay Pride Festival took place in Stockholm. A government working group promotes equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

There were no reports of discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS.

Section 7 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The law entitles all workers, including armed forces and police, to form and join independent unions of their choice without previous authorization or excessive requirements, and workers exercised this right in practice. An estimated 75 percent of the five million-person workforce belonged to trade unions. The law allows unions to conduct their activities without interference, and the government protected this right in practice.

The law also provides for the right to strike as well as for employers to organize and conduct lockouts; workers and employers exercised these rights in practice. Public sector employees enjoy the right to strike, subject to limitations in the collective agreements protecting the public's immediate health and security.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law provides for collective bargaining, and workers exercised this right in practice. Approximately 80 percent of the workforce was covered by collective bargaining agreements. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination, and there were few reports that it occurred during the year.

There are no special laws or exemptions from regular labor laws in the country's foreign trade zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, there were reports that such practices occurred. Children were in some cases forced to beg or commit petty theft. Also see the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/g/tip.

d. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

There are laws and policies (including those on acceptable working conditions) to protect children from exploitation in the workplace, and the government effectively implemented these laws and policies in practice. The law permits full-time employment from the age of 16 under the supervision of local authorities. Employees under the age of 18 may work only during the daytime and under supervision. Children as young as 13 may work part time or perform light work with parental permission. Union representatives, police, and public prosecutors effectively enforced these restrictions.

Children continued to be trafficked for forced begging and petty theft. Also see the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/g/tip.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

There is no national minimum wage law. Wages were set by annual collective bargaining agreements. Nonunion establishments generally observed these contracts as well. Substantial benefits (for example, childcare) provided by social welfare entitlement programs assured even the lowest-paid workers and their families a decent standard of living.

In 2009, following a poor berry season, approximately 200 Thai seasonal berry pickers returned home with work-related debts incurred in Thailand. As a result, in January berry pickers were given the same visa status as other temporary workers, and the regulations surrounding their employment in Sweden improved. Under the new regulations, the employer – whether foreign or domestic – must offer conditions of employment that are on par with the country's collective agreements and the work must be on such a scale that the workers earn a minimum wage of 16,372 kronor (\$2,423) a month. However, even with the new regulations, several problems occurred during the year, mostly due to the failure of foreign companies that provided foreign workers to Swedish companies on contract to respect the conditions of employment. In one case involving a domestic employer, a group of Vietnamese workers locked up five managers in protest of not receiving pay according to the contract, partly due to a lower supply of berries than promised by the employer. The Vietnamese workers were not arrested and were allowed to leave Sweden. In September, due to another poor berry harvest, many foreign workers allegedly did not earn the money promised by foreign companies and faced difficulties returning home. The Swedish Red Cross and other local charities helped some pay for their return airfare.

The legal standard workweek is 40 hours or less. Both the law and collective bargaining agreements regulate overtime and rest periods. The maximum allowable overtime per year is 200 hours. The amount of overtime compensation was normally regulated by the collective agreement; it varied by workplace and could also depend on whether the overtime occurred during the regular workweek, during a weekend, or on a bank holiday. Payment for overtime could take the form of money or time. The law requires a minimum period of 36 consecutive hours of rest, preferably on weekends, during a period of seven days. The law also provides employees with a minimum of five weeks' paid annual leave. The government effectively enforced these standards.

The Work Environment Authority, a government-appointed board, issued occupational health and safety regulations, and trained union stewards and safety ombudsmen. Government inspectors monitored them. Safety ombudsmen have the authority to stop unsafe activity immediately and call in an inspector. These rules were effectively enforced. In law and practice, workers can remove themselves from situations that endangered their health or safety without jeopardizing their employment.

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