

# SURINAME

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suriname is a constitutional democracy, with a president elected by the unicameral National Assembly or by the larger United People's Assembly. After generally free and fair legislative elections in May 2010, several political alliances formed a coalition government. The National Assembly elected former military leader Desire Bouterse president in July 2010. Security forces reported to civilian authorities.

The most serious human rights problems were overcrowded detention facilities, lengthy pretrial detention, and governmental corruption.

Other human rights problems included self-censorship by some media organizations and journalists; societal discrimination against women, Maroons, indigenous people, and other minorities; domestic violence against women; trafficking in persons; and child labor in the informal sector.

The government continued to take steps to prosecute abusers in the security forces, where there was a widespread perception of impunity.

### **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. Security force members shot and killed a wanted criminal early in the year, and in June a warning shot apparently fired by police killed a bystander after a riot erupted. At year's end authorities were investigating to determine if the bullet in this accidental killing was fired by police or by other bystanders. Criminal charges were filed against the officer. There was generally little information available about investigations into killings by police or other security force members.

The trial of former military dictator and current President Desire Bouterse and his codefendants for the 1982 extrajudicial killing of 15 political opponents continued at year's end without interference.

#### **b. Disappearance**

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

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

While the law prohibits such practices, human rights groups and the media continued to report mistreatment by police as well as isolated incidents of abuse of prisoners by prison officials.

#### **Prison and Detention Center Conditions**

Prison and detention center conditions remained poor. Poor ventilation, limited lighting, and extreme heat remained problems in prisons and detention centers. Most prisons and detention centers, particularly the older jails, remained unsanitary and overcrowded, but prisoners had access to potable water.

There were three prisons, which held female and male prisoners separately. There were also 19 smaller jails, or temporary detention centers, in police stations throughout the country.

There was one juvenile detention facility, Opa Doeli, with separate quarters for boys and girls under the age of 18. This facility, located in Paramaribo, was considered adequate, provided educational and recreational facilities, and was occupied at less than its maximum capacity. After conviction, minor girls are kept there, while convicted minor boys are transferred to a reformatory wing of Santo Boma state prison.

Growing numbers of convicted prisoners were held in pretrial detention cells due to prison overcrowding. Due to staff shortages, police officers rarely permitted detainees to leave their cells. Detainees and human rights groups also alleged that meals were inadequate.

Conditions in the women's jail and in the women's section of other prison facilities were generally better than those in the men's facilities.

Prisoners continued to have reasonable access to visitors and were permitted religious observance of their choice. Government officials continued regular monitoring of prison and detention center conditions. Authorities permitted prisoners and detainees to submit complaints to judicial authorities without

ensorship. During the year prisoners filed a complaint with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights after the government denied some requests for higher appeal and for early release.

Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) continued to express concern over declining conditions in the Santo Boma prison, where prisoners complained of inadequate food provisions, mistreatment by prison guards, limited ventilation, and a lack of rehabilitation programs.

The government permitted monitoring visits by independent human rights observers, and such visits occurred during the year. No ombudsman served on behalf of prisoners and detainees; prisoners notify their defense lawyers and government officials of any problems.

The Welzijns Institute Nickerie, an NGO operating in the western district of Nickerie, continued to visit and provide counseling for detainees in the youth detention center in that district. The institute continued a program to train prison officers to counsel detainees.

The government built a pretrial detention center to improve conditions and reduce overcrowding, and it accepted pretrial detainees who were previously imprisoned in smaller jails around the country.

#### **d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention**

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, and the government generally observed these prohibitions. However, due to a shortage of judges, prisoners who appealed their cases often served their full sentences before the lengthy appeals process could be completed.

#### **Role of the Police and Security Apparatus**

The armed forces are responsible for national security and border control, with the military police having direct responsibility for immigration control at the country's ports of entry. All elements of the military are under the control of the Ministry of Defense. Civilian police bear primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and report to the Ministry of Justice and Police. Police effectiveness was hampered by a lack of equipment and training, low salaries, and poor coordination with military forces.

The Personnel Investigation Department (OPZ), an office within the Police Department, investigates complaints against members of the police force. In 2010 (latest data available) the OPZ received 140 complaints against members of the police force during the year and launched 20 investigations into cases involving mistreatment of detainees and civilians. That year authorities relieved 16 police officers of duty; four remained in custody with their cases under investigation.

### **Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention**

Individuals were apprehended openly with warrants based on sufficient evidence and brought before an independent judiciary. The law provides detainees with the right to a prompt judicial determination of the legality of the detention, and authorities respected this right in practice. Detainees were promptly informed of the charges against them. Police may detain a person suspected of committing a crime for up to 14 days if the sentence for that crime is longer than four years, and an assistant district attorney or a police inspector may authorize incommunicado detention. The police must bring the accused before a prosecutor to be charged formally within that period; but if additional time is needed to investigate the charge, a prosecutor and, later, a judge of instruction may extend the detention period an additional 150 days. There is no bail system. Detainees were allowed prompt access to counsel of their choosing, but the prosecutor may prohibit access if the prosecutor thinks that this could harm the investigation. Detainees were allowed weekly visits from family members. The average length of pretrial detention was 30 to 45 days for lesser crimes.

Detainees were held in detention cells at 19 police stations throughout the country that were at or near capacity. In accordance with the law, the courts freed most detainees who were not tried within the 164-day period. According to human rights monitors, factors such as a shortage of judges, large caseloads, and large numbers of detainees caused trial delays.

#### **e. Denial of Fair Public Trial**

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence.

The judiciary lacked professional court managers and case management systems to oversee the courts' administrative functions and also lacked adequate physical space--factors that contributed to a significant case backlog. The courts required a minimum of six months to process criminal cases.

## **Trial Procedures**

The law provides for the right to a fair, public trial in which defendants have the right to counsel, and the judiciary generally enforced this right. All trials are public except for indecency offenses. There is no jury system. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence and have the right to appeal. Defendants have the right to be present and to consult an attorney in a timely manner. Defendants and their attorneys have access to government-held evidence. Defendants' attorneys can question witnesses and present witnesses and evidence on the defendant's behalf. The courts assign private sector lawyers to defend indigent detainees. There were court-assigned attorneys for both the civil and penal systems. The law extends the above rights to all citizens. Names of the accused are routinely protected by law and not released to the public or the media prior to conviction.

Military personnel generally are not subject to civilian criminal law, and there are parallel military and civilian court systems. Military police investigate crimes committed by members of the armed forces. An officer on the public prosecutor's staff directs military prosecutions before two military judges and one civilian judge. Due to a shortage of judges, military and civilian judges are selected from the same pool by the Court of Justice, which makes assignments to specific cases. A mechanism exists to prevent conflicts of interest. The military courts follow the same rules of procedure as the civil courts. There is no appeal from the military to the civil system.

## **Political Prisoners and Detainees**

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

## **Regional Human Rights Court Decisions**

The government has not fully complied with a number of decisions by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. No further progress was made on implementing that court's 2007 ruling that the government must recognize the collective land rights of 12 Saramaccan clans, draft legislation that complies with international treaties, establish a development fund of SRD1,680,000 (\$600,000), and provide them with their own land. By the end of 2010, the government had paid approximately SRD560,000 (\$200,000) toward this amount and had not completed the demarcation process.

## **Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies**

There are separate procedures for civil processes, and there is a court to consider lawsuits seeking damages for, or cessation of, a human rights violation. Despite the installation of new judges, the backlog of cases continued. Most civil cases were resolved approximately three to four years after being first heard by the courts.

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

The law prohibits such actions, and the government generally respected these prohibitions in practice. The law requires search warrants, which are issued by quasi-judicial officers who supervise criminal investigations.

## **Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:**

### **a. Freedom of Speech and Press**

#### **Status of Freedom of Speech and Press**

The law provides for freedom of speech and 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.

Freedom of Speech: Although the government announced in 2009 that it would compensate two broadcasting companies for the army's destruction of their radio stations in 1982 under the military dictatorship, the new government did not take any action in this regard.

Censorship or Content Restrictions: Some media members continued to practice self-censorship in response to pressure applied and intimidation by senior government officials or community leaders on journalists who published negative stories about the administration. In addition many news outlets were affiliated with particular political parties, which discouraged journalists from reporting on some subjects.

### **Internet Freedom**

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or credible reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in the expression of views via the Internet, including by e-mail.

### **Academic Freedom and Cultural Events**

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

### **b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association**

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

### **c. Freedom of Religion**

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/rpt](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/rpt).

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

The constitution provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. No occasion arose during the year for government cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to any persons of concern.

### **Protection of Refugees**

Access to Asylum: The law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has not established a system for providing protection to refugees.

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

The law 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**

Recent Elections: The constitution provides for direct election by secret ballot of the 51-member National Assembly no later than five years after the prior election date. The National Assembly in turn elects the president by a two-thirds majority vote. If the legislature is unable to do so, the constitution provides that the United People's Assembly, composed of members of parliament and elected regional and local officials, shall elect the president. After generally free and fair legislative elections in May 2010, the National Assembly elected Desire Bouterse as president in July of that year.

Participation by Women and Minorities: While women made limited gains in attaining political power, men continued to dominate political life. There were six women among the 51 members of the National Assembly and two women among the 17 ministers in the cabinet. There were five women among the 20 sitting judges. The head clerk of the Court of Justice, that body's highest administrative position, was a woman, as was the speaker of the National Assembly.

Several factors traditionally limited the participation of Maroons (descendants of escaped slaves who fled to the interior of the country to avoid recapture) and indigenous Amerindians in the political process, including a population concentrated in remote areas in the interior and removed from the country's centers of political activity. There were 10 Maroons and two Amerindians represented in the National Assembly, and all were part of the governing coalition.

## **Section 4. Official Corruption and Government Transparency**

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Long delays often occurred before corruption cases came to trial.

The World Bank's worldwide governance statistics continued to indicate corruption was a serious problem. The media frequently reported alleged corrupt practices with regard to land rights and land titles, misuse of government funds, and other practices.



Public officials were not subject to financial disclosure laws. Various sections of the Ministry of Justice and Police, including the Fraud Police and the Attorney General's Office, were responsible for combating government corruption.

Although the law provides for public access to government information, such access was limited in practice for citizens and noncitizens, including foreign media. During the year the government established a centralized office for media and information requests under the Office of the President. Gaps in official government statistics and bureaucratic hurdles made obtaining information difficult.

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

A number of independent domestic human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. NGOs reported generally positive relationships with government officials, although occasionally officials were not responsive to their views. No international human rights groups operated in the country during the year.

UN and Other International Bodies: In September the government responded to recommendations from the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, including one for increased protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. The government response emphasized its constitutional protection for all citizens while requesting additional time to consider this problem.

Government Human Rights Bodies: A legislative commission on human rights continued operating throughout the year, but resource constraints hampered its effectiveness. The National Assembly also has a commission dealing with women's and children's rights.

### **Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons**

The law prohibits discrimination based on race and ethnicity but does not address discrimination based on disability, language, or social status. In practice various sectors of the population--such as women, Maroons, Amerindians, persons with HIV/AIDS, and LGBT persons--suffered forms of discrimination.

## Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape, including spousal rape, and prescribes penalties for rape or forcible sexual assault of between 12 and 15 years' imprisonment. The government enforced the law effectively. In 2010 (latest data available) the Ministry of Justice and Police received 189 reports of attempted rape and investigated 106 cases of rape.

Violence against women remained a serious and pervasive problem. In 2010 (latest data available) the Ministry of Justice and Police registered 1,213 cases of domestic violence during the year, a drop from 1,769 in 2009. The law imposes sentences of four to eight years' imprisonment for domestic violence crimes. The Ministry of Justice and Police's Victim Assistance Bureau provided resources for victims of domestic violence and continued to provide information on domestic violence through public television programs. There were four victims' rooms in police stations in Paramaribo and Nickerie, and police units were trained to deal with victims and perpetrators of sexual crimes and domestic violence. There was only one shelter for victims of domestic violence, operated by an NGO, and it provided care for 18 women and their children during the year. Length of stay depended upon the circumstances but averaged three months.

Sexual Harassment: There was no specific legislation on sexual harassment; however, prosecutors cited various penal code articles in filing sexual harassment cases. There were no reported court cases involving sexual harassment in the workplace during the year.

Reproductive Rights: Couples and individuals had 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. Access to information on contraception was widely available and, according to 2009 UN estimates, contraceptive use among married women was 45 percent. The UN Population Fund estimated the maternal mortality ratio in 2008 at 100 deaths per 100,000 live births and reported that skilled health personnel attended 90 percent of births in 2009. Women and men were given equal access to diagnostic services and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

Discrimination: Although the law does not specifically prohibit gender discrimination, it provides for protection of women's rights to equal access to education, employment, and property. Nevertheless, societal pressures and customs, especially in rural areas, inhibited their full exercise of these rights,

particularly with respect to marriage and inheritance. Where local customs remain a strong influence on the family unit, girls traditionally marry at or near the legal age of consent, and inheritance rights pass to their husbands.

Men and women generally enjoyed the same legal rights under property law and under the judicial system. In practice, however, where local customs were observed, these rights were somewhat infringed. The Bureau for Women and Children under the Ministry of Justice and Police worked to ensure the legal rights of women and children. Women experienced discrimination in access to employment and in rates of pay for the same or substantially similar work. The government did not undertake specific efforts to combat economic discrimination.

The National Women's Movement, the most active women's rights NGO, continued assisting women in launching small home-based businesses, such as sewing and vegetable growing, and provided general legal help. The Women's Business Group advocated for business opportunities for women, while the Women's Parliament Forum advocated for opportunities in the public sector. Another NGO, Stop Violence against Women, provided assistance to victims of domestic violence, including legal help with dissolving an abusive marriage.

## **Children**

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived by birth within the country's territory and from one's parents.

Child Abuse: Physical and sexual abuse of children continued to be problems. In 2010 police received reports of 269 cases of sexual abuse of children, compared with 265 reported in 2009. The police Youth Affairs Office conducted three visits per week to different schools in the capital and the surrounding areas on a rotating schedule to provide outreach, raise awareness about child abuse, and solicit and investigate complaints. The Youth Affairs Office continued to raise awareness about sexual abuse, drugs, and alcohol through a weekly television program. The UN Children's Fund continued cooperating with the government in providing training to officials from various ministries dealing with children and children's rights. The government operated a "1-2-3" telephone hotline for children and provided confidential advice and aid to children in need.

Authorities applied various laws to prosecute perpetrators of sexual abuse, and several cases of sexual abuse of minors came to trial. Sentences averaged two to

three years in prison. In the capital there were several orphanages that could accept sexually abused children and one privately funded shelter.

The marriage law sets the age of marital consent at 15 years for girls and 17 years for boys, provided parents of the parties agree to the marriage. Parental permission to marry is required until the age of 21. The law also mandates the presence of a civil registry official to register all marriages.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of minors remained problems. Although the legal age of sexual consent is 14, it remained difficult to enforce in practice. The criminal law penalizes child prostitution and provides sanctions of up to six years' imprisonment and a fine of SRD100,000 (\$30,800) for pimping. The law also prohibits child pornography, which has a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment and maximum fine of SRD50,000 (\$15,380).

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction.

### **Anti-Semitism**

There was a declared Jewish community of approximately 150 persons. There were no reports of anti-Semitic acts or discrimination.

### **Trafficking in Persons**

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at [www.state.gov/j/tip](http://www.state.gov/j/tip).

### **Persons with Disabilities**

There are no laws prohibiting discrimination against persons with physical or mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of state services. In practice persons with disabilities suffered from discrimination when applying for jobs and services. Some training programs were provided for persons with visual or other disabilities. There are no laws or programs to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to buildings. A judge may rule that a person with a cognitive disability be denied the right to vote, take part in business transactions, or sign legal agreements. Persons with disabilities had equal access to information and communications. There were no reports of

abuse in educational facilities for persons with disabilities. A Ministry of Social Affairs working group remained responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, but it made limited progress during the year.

### **National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities**

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity, and no such discrimination complaints were filed during the year. However, Maroons, who represent an estimated 15 percent of the population, generally continued to be disadvantaged in the areas of education, employment, and government services. Most Maroons lived in the interior, where limited infrastructure reduced their access to educational and professional opportunities and health and social services. Some forms of discrimination that affected indigenous Amerindians also extended to Maroons.

### **Indigenous People**

The law affords no special protection for, or recognition of, indigenous people. Most Amerindians (approximately 2 percent of the population) live in the remote and undeveloped interior of the country, where government services are largely unavailable. Geographic isolation limited opportunity to participate in national and regional policymaking, including decisions affecting interior lands, cultures, traditions, and natural resources.

Because Amerindian and Maroon lands were not effectively demarcated or policed, populations continued to face problems with illegal and uncontrolled logging and mining. There are no laws granting indigenous people rights to share in the revenues from the exploitation of resources on their traditional lands. Organizations representing Maroon and Amerindian communities complained that small-scale mining operations, mainly by illegal gold miners, some of whom were themselves indigenous or supported by indigenous groups, dug trenches that cut residents off from their agricultural land and threatened to drive them away from their traditional settlements. Mercury runoff from these operations also contaminated and threatened traditional food source areas.

Many Maroon and Amerindian groups also complained about the government granting land within their traditional territories to third parties, who sometimes prevented the villages from engaging in their traditional activities on those lands. Indigenous groups, with the assistance of the Amazon Conservation Team, mapped their lands and presented proposed demarcation charts to the government in 2000

and to the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land, and Forestry Management in both 2006 and 2009. Maroon and Amerindian groups continued to cooperate with each other to exercise their rights more effectively. The Moiwana Human Rights Association, the Association of Indigenous Village Leaders (an umbrella group that represents the many smaller associations of indigenous persons), and other NGOs continued to promote the rights of indigenous people.

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

Although the law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, there were reports of employment discrimination against LGBT persons. There were no reports of official discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, access to education, or health care.

### **Other Societal Violence or Discrimination**

Mob violence in gold mining areas, primarily directed towards Brazilian and Chinese migrants, continued to be a problem. After private security guards shot and killed a person and wounded four others on October 23 in Maripaston, there was widespread looting of local shops (owned by Chinese immigrants), some of which were set on fire, and the destruction of a large amount of valuable heavy equipment. Authorities ordered additional police and military personnel to the area to restore order, and by October 27, the violence appeared to have subsided.

Persons with HIV/AIDS continued to experience societal discrimination in employment and medical services. The police and military began mandatory HIV testing for new recruits during the year. Medical treatment is free for HIV/AIDS patients who are covered under government insurance, but private insurers do not cover such treatment.

## **Section 7. Worker Rights**

### **a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining**

The law allows workers to form and join unions of their choice without previous authorization or excessive requirements. The law provides for the right to strike, and prohibits antiunion discrimination. Workers fired for union activity are reinstated after negotiation. The law protects collective bargaining and prohibits

employer interference in union activities. Labor law covers all types of workers, as long as they are legally in the country.

The government generally enforced the right to collective bargaining. Workers formed and joined unions freely and exercised their right to strike. Worker organizations were independent of the government and political parties.

There was occasional government interference in labor relations, especially in parastatal companies, but no use of excessive force by the police. However, the principle of “no-work-no-pay” has been used to force strikers to cancel their strike. Strikers who face this punishment may request the Department of Labor Inspection to investigate their case.

There were isolated cases where employers refused to bargain or recognize collective bargaining rights, but the unions usually pressured the employers to renegotiate. In one case pending at year’s end, a parastatal company, the Energy Company, fired a group of employees who were conducting an “unauthorized” strike.

### **b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

The law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor. The government failed to effectively enforce the law in all cases, and there were reports that such practices occurred.

Also see the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at [www.state.gov/j/tip](http://www.state.gov/j/tip).

### **c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment**

The law sets the minimum age for most types of employment at 14 and restricts working hours for minors to day shifts but does not limit the number of hours minors can work. Children younger than 14 are allowed to work only in a family-owned business, small-scale agriculture, and special vocational work. The law does not define the worst forms of child labor. Children younger than 18 are prohibited from doing hazardous work, which is defined as work dangerous to their life, health, and decency. Children under the age of 15 are not permitted to work on boats. Employing a child under 14 is punishable by fines and up to 12 months’ imprisonment. Parents who permit their children to work in violation of labor laws

may be prosecuted. Employers are required to maintain a Register of Young Persons that includes each employee's information.

The Ministry of Labor and the police enforced the law sporadically. The ministry's Department of Labor Inspection was responsible for enforcing child labor laws, but enforcement and resources remained inadequate. The government investigated some exploitive child labor cases in the informal sectors in the cities and in the interior. The government's commission on eliminating child labor, comprised of 11 organizations (10 government institutions and one NGO), formulated terms of reference to research specific issues related to eliminating child labor and propose legislation for parliamentary review.

Child labor remained a problem in the informal sector, especially in the western districts of Nickerie, Saramacca, and Marowijne. Historically these cases involved agriculture, logging, fisheries, and the construction sector, although there were no specific documented cases during the year. Isolated cases of child labor also occurred in the informal gold mining sector in the interior, in prostitution, and in the urban informal sector.

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at [www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/tda.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/tda.htm).

#### **d. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

There is no legislation providing for a minimum wage. The lowest wage for civil servants was approximately SRD600 (\$185) per month, including a cost of living allowance. Government employees constituted approximately 50 percent of the estimated 100,000-member formal sector workforce and frequently supplemented their salaries with second or third jobs, often in the informal sector.

Work in excess of 45 hours per week on a regular basis requires special government permission, which was granted routinely. Such overtime work earned premium pay. The law prohibits excessive overtime, requires a 24-hour rest period per week, and stipulates paid annual holidays. The government sets occupational health and safety standards. There is no law authorizing workers to refuse to work in circumstances they deem unsafe; they must appeal to the Department of Labor inspectorate to declare the workplace situation unsafe.

A 10-to-12-member inspectorate in the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing occupational safety and health



regulations, but it did not make regular inspections. The ministry's Department of Labor Inspection, with 63 inspectors, has responsibility to implement and enforce labor laws, but enforcement was inadequate. Inspectors visited private sector companies throughout the country, but no data were available regarding the number of inspections performed during the year.