

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2004

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The recent world events have been throwing up new challenges for Amnesty International. This has been largely due to the ever-increasing onslaughts on human rights in different parts of the globe. The war perpetrated in Iraq by a partisan coalition led by United States has been by far one of the largest instances of the violation of human rights since the Second World War. In the name of protecting its citizens from attacks by terrorists, these autocratic countries have been carrying out flagrant acts of exploitation and violence, while denying basic human rights as clearly stated in international conventions to which these countries are signatories. The world over there has been a serious increase in the case of illegal custody, use of inhuman methods of torture, and denial of basic medical facilities to the sick. The numbers of refugees and their problems have seen an unprecedented increase with the outbreak in parts of Africa and Asia. Like Amnesty, UN has been fighting a losing battle in getting countries to observe international conventions that were established to ensure that basic human rights were respected. The report makes an in-depth study of the human rights situation in more than 155 countries around the world. The report tries to bring home the truth about reality of the actions of the countries that pay lip service to observing human rights and respecting human dignity. Whether it be the case of Uighurs in China who are being increasingly suppressed in order to destroy their age-old culture or that of prisoners who have been illegally kept at the Guantanamo Bay without access to legal representation or medical aid or the instance of using racial profiling to target individuals whose only crime has been their race, place of origin and other factors over which they have no control.

In her message Irene Khan, Amnesty's general secretary, points to the instances of gross violation of international law and justice by certain hegemonic states for satisfying their ulterior motives. There have been instances of these countries making use of human rights in order to mask their nefarious actions that would ensure them greater power over the rest of the world. In the name of making a safe and secure world, there have been instances of pre-emptive military strikes and weapons transfer and sales—all of which have made the world an extremely dangerous place to live in. Around the world billions of dollars are spent on weapons whereas a fraction of it could have attained basic needs like primary education for all. Many of the developmental projects and programmes planned by the bodies like UNO would not see the light of the day due to the allocation of resources for acts of war. Today Amnesty International stands as the last citadel of hope for the global society that is constantly under attack by the autocratic and despotic orders of the world. It is the bulwark against numerous inhuman and unjust practices perpetuated around the world.

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