

Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and earlier participated positively in the Beijing Women's Conference. The Bhutto government set up a number of advisory bodies related to women's issues and female judges were inducted for the first time as provincial high court judges. A major breakthrough was a Lahore High Court decision by a newly appointed female judge ensuring a Muslim woman's unconditional right to *Khula* (divorce).

Child labour is part of the economic and social fabric. At least five million children work, many under exploitative conditions or in bondage; few receive formal education. Many others work in small family businesses or family farms. Pakistan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with a number of reservations, including the caveat that provisions would not apply where Islamic values and law prevail. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), of which Pakistan is a member, agreed to eliminate child labour by 2010. Given the attitudes of many Pakistanis (officials, politicians, landowners, businesspeople) and economic imperatives, the problem is likely to change only slowly.

The Ahmadis, a religious minority, are the targets of religious vilification and systematic persecution. The Ahmadis do not believe Muhammad was the last prophet but believe they are Muslims; this claim, and Ahmadi proselytising efforts, offend many orthodox Muslims. Blasphemy laws, which can include the death penalty for defiling the name of the Prophet, have been extensively used to abridge their religious freedom, and violence against Ahmadis often goes unpunished. Christians have at times also been caught up in this discriminatory atmosphere. Higher court justices routinely overturn death sentences, and the Bhutto government moved to prevent the trivial filing of blasphemy charges. Far fewer blasphemy cases are now being filed.

Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, is today relatively peaceful. In recent years, however, it has been violent and lawless due to sharp conflict between the authorities and the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM). The mohajirs, Urdu-speaking immigrants from India who are hostile to the local Sindhi ethnic group, complain of government persecution and extrajudicial killings. The MQM has been responsible for numerous killings of opponents. The Bhutto government broke their capacity for sustained violence but only at serious costs in human rights.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada has maintained a dialogue with Pakistan on human rights. Issues such as women's rights and child labour have been addressed multilaterally and in meetings with Pakistani officials. The bilateral dialogue has also reflected the concerns of the Ahmadiya and Christian communities in Canada over religious discrimination in Pakistan.

Canada has sought to engage human rights issues in a constructive manner, providing support to human rights NGOs, supplying information related to blasphemy litigation, establishment of a ministry of human rights and Canada's Access to Information and Privacy legislation. Canada is giving higher priority in its assistance programming in Pakistan to social development, a reflection of our view that economic and social underdevelopment contributes to human rights abuses, particularly for women and children. Canada's development cooperation in Pakistan also emphasizes governance, with the aim of strengthening those community and governmental institutions which underpin