

low, though increasing. The *Hadood* ordinances, ostensibly based on Islamic law, have been used to arrest, detain, and punish women for sexual offenses such as adultery. In tribal areas, women suffer high levels of domestic violence, and murders based on traditional concepts of "honour" often go unpunished. Women in both rural and urban areas have been subject to mistreatment and rape in police custody.

Child labour is part of the economic and social fabric. At least five million children work, many under exploitative conditions or as bonded labour; few receive formal education. Many others work in small family businesses or on 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, has committed itself to the elimination of child labour by 2010. Given economic imperatives and the attitudes of many Pakistanis (officials, politicians, landowners, business people) the problem is unlikely to be resolved for some time.

In **Karachi**, where the law and order situation is particularly bad as a result of an ongoing battle between two factions of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), the Prime Minister has instituted military trial courts to dispense speedy 'justice' in an attempt to eradicate terrorism. In response to a petition following two executions, the Supreme Court has ruled that no further such executions be carried out until it has determined the validity of these courts.

While the electronic media are government-controlled (except for foreign satellite TV), the print media have traditionally provided a forum for contrary views and a wide spectrum of opinion. Recently, however, there have been troubling signs that the government is moving to put limits on press freedoms through periodic talk of establishing a "press council", and through various forms of coercion directed against newspapers which decline to support the Shariat Bill and the PM's law and order agenda.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada has maintained a regular dialogue with Pakistan on human rights. Issues such as religious discrimination (reflecting the concerns of the Ahmadiya and Christian communities in Canada), women's rights, child labour, and blasphemy laws have been addressed multilaterally and bilaterally with Pakistani officials and politicians.

Canada has sought to engage human rights issues in a constructive manner by providing support to human rights NGOs working at strengthening civil society, advocating democratic development, human rights and good governance, as well as by supplying information related to blasphemy litigation, and Canada's Access to Information and Privacy legislation. Canada is giving high 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 and civil society with the aim of strengthening those community institutions which underpin progress in human rights and the development of civil society. CIDA projects integrate gender equality considerations in the design and implementation of its projects and maximize the participation of women in their own development. Since 1996, CIDA's Women in Development Project has supported organizations working with women in areas such as human rights activities, family planning, health, education, and economic development.