

PUBLICATIONS

During 1989, the publishing program of Human Rights Watch evolved in a way that represents a substantial departure from our previous practice.

Previously, we concentrated on publishing lengthy reports (and a few briefer reports) that attempted to document in depth our findings on the human rights situation in various countries. In 1989, we continued to issue such reports in approximately the same quantity as previously but we relied as heavily (and in the case of Africa Watch and Asia Watch, more heavily) on the publication of more condensed and topical reports in the form of frequent News From ... bulletins. We found these particularly useful in trying to get the news out quickly about on-going developments so as to have an immediate impact.

Our increasing reliance on these quicker and briefer reports is in part attributable to the difficulty we have encountered in coping with the vast volume of information on human rights worldwide that we are now collecting. The effort to defend human rights worldwide continues to rest principally on gathering, processing and disseminating information reliably and quickly. Since governments everywhere now claim to respect human rights, timely information about the discrepancies between their claims and their acts can be used to embarrass them. Thereby it is often possible to deter further abuses and sometimes to secure relief for the victims of ongoing abuses. Speedy production and distribution of News From ... bulletins has enhanced this effort.

In the past several years, a number of Human Rights Watch reports have been published as books either by commercial publishers or by university presses. In 1989, there were two notable developments in this aspect of our publications program, both made possible by grants we obtained from the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the earliest and longest continuing supporter of our work.

In conjunction with the J.M. Kaplan Fund and four leading publishing houses -- William Morrow, W.W. Norton, Random House and Viking/Penguin -- we published Forced Out, a book of photographs and text by Carole Kismaric with an Introduction by William Shawcross. An oversized book of photos and text, the book recorded the plight of those forced by governments and guerrilla forces to flee their homelands and to become refugees. Forced Out received wide attention and, subsequently, with the assistance of Amnesty International, the photographs gathered for the book were assembled by Carole Kismaric as an exhibit that was shown in museums across the United States.

Later in the year we entered into an arrangement with Yale University Press to publish and distribute worldwide a number of the reports that Human Rights Watch publishes annually. We anticipate that this will substantially increase the distribution of our reports, especially to libraries and scholars who are accustomed to dealing with Yale University Press. The J.M. Kaplan Fund made it possible for us to hire an editor who will act as the liaison between Human Rights Watch and Yale University Press.

Among those who have been particularly responsible for our publishing program are Joan Davidson, President of the J.M. Kaplan Fund; Roland Algrant, a member of the Executive Committee of Human

Rights Watch; and Susan Osnos, Press Director of Human Rights Watch.