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Pakistan: Government breaks its own laws to participate in "war against terrorism"

In support of the "war against terrorism", the Pakistani government is undermining human rights protection by arresting and deporting hundreds of people, Amnesty International said today in a new report.

Pakistani and non-Pakistani nationals have been arbitrarily arrested on suspicion of membership of *al Qa'ida* and the *Taliban*. An unknown number have been deported to the US and other countries without human rights guarantees.

"The rule of law has been swept aside. Detainees are not treated in accordance with either Pakistani or international law. Human rights protection has been thrown out the window," Amnesty International said.

"Who is being held where is unknown. Detainees are cut off from family and lawyers and there are no official notices. Media coverage is scant and anecdotal."

Some foreigners have been handed over to their country of origin even though they are likely to face human rights violations there. At least two Uighurs have been handed to China in recent months and several others await deportation. Amnesty International believes that they are at risk of torture and possibly execution.

Amnesty International's report describes the context in which arrests and arbitrary transfers to US custody have taken place and sets out recommendations.

The organization is urging the Pakistani government to uphold its own law, to abide by internationally agreed standards of human rights protection, and not to deport people to countries where they may face the death penalty or other human rights violations.

"Pakistan is one of many countries which has been sacrificing human rights in the name of security since September 11. There should be no compromise between security and human rights because you cannot have one without the other," Amnesty International said.

For more information on the impact of the "war against terrorism" on human rights, including in the USA,

visit www.amnesty.org

For a copy of the report visit <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/330142002>

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