

COSTA RICA

Date of admission to UN: 2 November 1945.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Costa Rica has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 19 December 1966; ratified: 29 November 1968. Costa Rica's second and third periodic reports were due 30 June 1993 and 1996 respectively.

Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 19 December 1966; ratified: 29 November 1968. Costa Rica's fourth periodic report has been submitted (CCPR/C/103/Add.6) and is scheduled for consideration at the Committee's March 1999 session; the fifth periodic report is due 2 August 1999.

Optional Protocol: Signed: 19 December 1966; ratified: 29 November 1968.

Second Optional Protocol: Signed: 14 February 1990; ratified: 5 June 1998.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 14 March 1966; ratified: 16 January 1967. Costa Rica's 12th through 14th periodic reports were submitted as one document (CERD/C/338/Add.4) which is scheduled for consideration at the Committee's March 1999 session; the 15th periodic report is due 4 January 2000.

Reservations and Declarations: Article 8.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 17 July 1980; ratified: 4 April 1986. Costa Rica's initial, second and third periodic reports were due 4 May 1987, 1991 and 1995 respectively.

Torture

Signed: 4 February 1985; ratified: 11 November 1993. Costa Rica's initial report was due 10 December 1994.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 21 August 1990. Costa Rica's second periodic report (CRC/C/65/Add.7) has been submitted and is pending consideration at the Committee's January 2000 session; the third periodic report is due 19 September 2002.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 12, 17, 29, 30, 57; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 129–132) The Special Rapporteur (SR) transmitted to the government an urgent appeal on behalf of a Honduran woman and her three daughters who had been granted asylum in Costa Rica and were reportedly still being subjected to harassment and threats by members of the Honduran security forces. The SR recalled that an urgent appeal had already been sent in September 1996 requesting measures to protect their physical integrity and right to life. Reports indicated that the threats were possibly related to the fact that the father of two of the daughters, a former member of Honduran Military Intelligence Battalion 3-16, had given evidence during investigations into human rights violations in Honduras. The report notes that the same urgent appeal was sent to the Honduran authorities.

The government replied that an investigation had been initiated and, despite various inquiries, it could not be proven that Honduran military agents were operating in Costa Rica. The government informed the SR that the woman was not entitled to approach an international human rights body, since domestic remedies had not been exhausted, and since those allegedly responsible for the harassment were not of Costa Rican origin.

The SR noted that the purpose of transmitting an urgent appeal is to prevent irreparable loss of the right to life and, further, that such appeals are sent irrespective of whether the remedies of domestic jurisdiction have been exhausted or not. The report notes that in February 1997 the woman and her daughters resettled in Sweden.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.4/1998/101, para. 14)

In commentary on sex tourism, the report notes that extreme poverty and an insufficient judicial system lead paedophiles to believe that they can go to Central America and abuse children without any risk of legal accountability for their actions. However, the Special Rapporteur then makes reference to legal proceedings in Costa Rica. In one case, in May 1997, a Swiss man and a German woman were jailed for four years for operating a brothel where minors were employed. In another instance, two Americans were arrested in September 1997 for running a "sex tourism" operation in which foreign visitors were collected at the airport and taken straight to a brothel in San José where they had sex with minors.

