

Disappearance since it has not produced any of the expected results. The NGOs informed the Working Group of efforts to have the provisions of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance incorporated in Filipino law and carry on with the exhumation of the bodies of persons believed to have disappeared. The report notes that these exhumations have led to the successful identification of several disappeared persons. The report also notes that NGOs are seriously considering filing cases before the courts and are in the process of investigating the establishment of witness protection programmes and sharing experience in forensic medicine.

The government did not provide any new information related to the Working Group's 496 outstanding cases.

The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1997/103) on measures taken by governments on the questions of detention and disappearance includes information provided by the government, stating: under Republic Act No. 7659 kidnapping and serious illegal detention were listed among the heinous crimes to which the penalty of death was to be applied when the victims were killed or raped or died as a consequence of their detention; under resolution No. A83-046 of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, the Commission was authorized to grant financial assistance to qualified victims of human rights violations, in the form of temporary relief, not compensation; coordination was being strengthened between the Department of Justice and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights on the documentation and identification of cases of disappearance under preliminary investigation, including cases of harassment, ill-treatment and the intimidation of witnesses or relatives of disappeared persons; coordination was also being strengthened between the Department of Justice and law-enforcement agencies in the prosecution of perpetrators of enforced disappearances; representatives of the Department of Justice were contributing to congressional hearings on the drafting of bills for the prevention and elimination of enforced disappearance; the National Police Commission had established the Office for Missing Persons to handle public assistance activities regarding enforced disappearances; and, efforts had begun to promote human rights at the village level through the implementation of the national human rights advocacy programme and the creation of human rights action centres in the villages.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 16, 18, 19, 32, 36, 37, 51, 57, 66; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 393-398)

The report refers to information received indicating that violations of civil and political rights continue to occur in the Philippines, including extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, sometimes taking the form of massacres. In this context, the Special Rapporteur (SR) transmitted allegations of violations of the right to life concerning 22 people: a family reportedly killed in February 1996 by members of the Civilian Volunteers Organization, a group of citizens operating as a paramilitary group which is sanctioned by the government and has the task of checking rebel activities in the area; alleged members of a criminal gang killed in May 1995 by members of the Anti-Bank Robbery Intelligence Task Group when, following their arrest, members of the Task Group opened fire on the van in which they were tied up or

handcuffed; another alleged member of a gang who was arrested in May 1995 by members of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission and was last seen in the custody of the law enforcement officials who arrested her; another alleged member of a gang who was reportedly killed by members of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission while in their custody; a 16-year-old street child, who was reportedly killed in July 1993 by three members of the Philippines National Police while in their custody; and a human rights lawyer and journalist, allegedly shot dead in February 1996 by an unidentified assailant, possibly in order to silence his criticism of government policy.

The government variously responded to these cases, stating: the person under arrest had suddenly jumped from a moving police patrol car when it was slowing down and died as a result of injuries sustained; the allegation against the paramilitary Citizen's Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) were incorrect; the case alleging involvement by members of the armed security forces was under investigation but that the main suspect had not yet been charged because he was still at large; the death of the lawyer and journalist was not likely linked to his work as a human rights defender, but instead was of private nature and linked to his defence of a case as a lawyer; the main elements in the allegations related to the murder of the family were accurate and the case was *sub judice* as was another case and those related to the killing of gang members.

Independence of judges and lawyers, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/32, para. 156)

The report refers to the killing of a lawyer in February 1996, reportedly for his criticism of government policy.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.5/1997/95, paras. 28, 41)

The report notes the establishment of the Special Committee for the Protection of Children Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. The Committee reports to the President on action taken to address issues related to child abuse and exploitation. The report also notes the launch, in October 1996, of the Network Against Sexual Abuse of Children, set up to combat child prostitution.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7, Section III; E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, paras. 388-391)

The report notes that the government replied to seven cases that had been transmitted by the Special Rapporteur in 1995. The cases related to reports of beatings by soldiers, torture in safe houses by the National Police Corillera Regional Command and metropolitan police in Manila. The government response indicated that the persons involved had chosen not to file a formal complaint and/or medical examinations had turned up no evidence of torture or ill-treatment.

Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/19, paras. 30, 41, 44, 56)

The report notes the adoption of a law in the Philippines which regulates the import, processing, distribution, use and disposal of toxic substances through a notification process for new chemicals and the issuance of Chemical Control Orders for chemicals that pose unreasonable risks to human health