

torture and other violations of human rights. The report of the Special Rapporteur contains a number of observations which should be reflected in the resolution before this Committee. Resolutions which fail to do so can only undermine the efforts of this organization to promote human rights objectively.

By contrast, prospects for a peaceful solution of the Arab/Israeli dispute continue to elude us. Quite apart from the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, the situation in the Israeli Occupied Territories presents serious human rights concerns. As we have stated previously, the Fourth Geneva Convention must be applied in the Occupied Territories. We believe that respect for human rights is an essential component of the peace process. Progress in this area is indispensable to building a climate of confidence for peace negotiations.

We stress the concept of reconciliation in these situations because so many conflicts originate, directly or indirectly, in human rights problems, or because divisive political conflicts have potentially disastrous consequences for respect for human rights. Some three months ago, for example, ethnic and tribal rivalries erupted in Burundi, resulting in at least some 5000 deaths and many more persons seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. We have been appreciative of the responses of international humanitarian organizations and neighbouring countries to this tragic conflict, which triggered another instance of the phenomenon called "mass exoduses". We would hope that the Burundian authorities would be responsive to U.N. initiatives designed to alleviate these concerns.

More than a decade ago, the United Nations began to recognize the significance of the theme of mass exoduses and to identify it as an issue of major importance. Recently, an early warning unit was established under the Secretary General to come to grips with the political and humanitarian problems created by mass exoduses before they evolve into crisis proportions. The next phase is enhancing these good office functions, now that the essential priorities and information-gathering capacities have been established.

If the United Nations is to play an effective role in these and other situations, however, much work remains to be done to solidify its procedures. Earlier this year we drew attention to the problem of inconsistent fact-finding techniques and to the uneven reports on country situations. Some progress has been made in past years in gaining increased cooperation from governments. Iran alone is refusing to cooperate with special procedures.