

bers of the police in December 1996 when they stormed a workers' camp at Butha-Buthe in the context of a prolonged labour dispute at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. According to the information received, police employed excessive force, using tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the workers, and continued firing as workers fled the scene. The Special Rapporteur called on the government to ensure that the force used by security forces is, at all times, in accordance with the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Lesotho is a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and, therefore, a beneficiary of and participant in the Regional Human Rights Programme Office for Southern Africa, a joint project of OHCHR and UNDP, which is based in Pretoria (see profile under "South Africa").



LIBERIA

Date of admission to UN: 2 November 1945.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

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

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 18 April 1967.

Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 18 April 1967.

Racial Discrimination

Acceded: 5 November 1976.

Liberia has not submitted its initial and second through 11th periodic reports, due from 1977 through 5 December 1997.

Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 17 July 1984.

Liberia has not submitted its initial and second through fourth reports, due from 1985 through 16 August 1997.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 April 1990; 4 June 1993.

Liberia's initial report was due 3 July 1995.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, para. 254)

No new cases were transmitted to the government. The Special Rapporteur welcomed, however, the successful completion of the peace process in Liberia and expressed regret that those responsible for human rights violations had not yet been held accountable, noting the importance of truth and justice in the consolidation of peace.

Violence against women, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/54, Section I.A)

The report refers to a survey of 20 women and girls over the age of 15 years which was conducted in Monrovia and its environs in 1994, nearly five years after civil conflict broke out in Liberia. The surveys were conducted by Liberian health workers in four types of settings: high schools, markets, displaced persons camps, and urban communities in Monrovia. Interviewees were randomly selected at these sites. The survey was undertaken in order to find out how common it was for women who were living in Monrovia to have experienced violence, rape, and sexual coercion from soldiers or fighters since the war began in 1989. Sexual coercion was defined as being forced into a relationship with a combatant because of wartime conditions, e.g., in order to feed oneself or one's family, to get shelter or clothing, or for protection and safety. The report notes that nearly half (49 per cent) of the 205 women and girls surveyed experienced at least one type of physical or sexual violence; soldiers or fighters beat, tied up or detained (locked in a room and kept under armed guard) one in every six of the women and girls (17 per cent); strip searched nearly one-third of the women and girls (32 per cent) one or more times; and, raped, attempted to rape, or sexually coerced more than one in every seven (15 per cent). In addition, a large percentage of the women and girls (42 per cent) witnessed a soldier killing or raping someone else. Women who were forced to cook for soldiers or fighters were particularly at risk of sexual violence.

The report also notes that being accused of belonging to a particular ethnic group or fighting faction was a significant risk factor for physical violence and attempted rape and states that in the beginning of the civil conflict, the government army and fighting factions were divided primarily along ethnic lines. As a consequence, it was common for civilians, when confronted by a soldier or fighter, to be forced to identify their ethnic group by speaking their ethnic language.