

## AFGHANISTAN

### ISSUE:

The human rights situation in Afghanistan.

### BACKGROUND:

Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, there have been continuous allegations of massive violations of human rights by both the Afghan government and the Soviet troops. The Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations General Assembly have received well documented reports of specific cases proving a systematic violation of human rights. These reports have included the Amnesty International Report: "Afghanistan: Torture of Political Prisoners".

On January 1, 1987, the Government of Afghanistan announced a new policy of national reconciliation which provided for an amnesty for political prisoners and a ceasefire. The rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Felix Ermacora, was permitted to enter Afghanistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit prisons. The Afghan government has sent its officials around the world touting the program of national reconciliation as bringing peace to Afghanistan.

However, the evidence shows that there has been no change in the repressive nature of the Afghan government. A report prepared by the Independent Counsel on International Human Rights on the Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan issued on November 17, 1987, proved that the Afghan government has continued to violate the human rights of its citizens. There is evidence of the systematic torture and extra-judicial execution of prisoners. In the conduct of the war, there have been frequent indiscriminate attacks on civilians in order to depopulate areas of strategic importance. The military have indiscriminately distributed mines and booby traps across the country side. The Afghan forces have also carried out extensive attacks on villages in the border areas of Pakistan.

The massive and systematic violations of human rights have continued to be a policy of the government of Afghanistan. There has been no attempt by the Afghan government to alter this policy. The announcement of the policy of national reconciliation was a propaganda exercise. The nature of this policy was recognized by the majority of nations when the United Nations General Assembly passed its annual resolution on Afghanistan with 123 votes in favour. It is hoped that the Commission on Human Rights will adopt a resolution on the violations of human rights in Afghanistan.