

pervasive brutality, but which has yet to fulfill the high hopes of its liberation some seven years ago. Disappearances, summary executions, extra-judicial punishments and torture are common practices by governments of the left and right alike, and in virtually all areas of the world. Not even the servants of this Organization are free from arbitrary persecution, as we have seen in Romania's treatment of Liviu Bota.

One of the most persistent forms of repression has been directed against minority groups. In Iran, adherents of the Baha'i faith have been the object of a concerted campaign of intimidation, persecution and imprisonment that has left many of its followers dead and rendered others exiles beyond the borders of their homeland. Bulgaria authorities, seeking to create an orthodox socialist nation, have engaged in an unrelenting campaign of forced assimilation of ethnic Albanians, Gypsies and Armenians. Recently, these efforts have assumed incredible dimensions with the government denying even the existence of a group of Turkish origin comprising almost 10 per cent of the Bulgarian population. Forced name changes and abandonment of Moslem religion, customs and language, not to mention arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of resisters, are among the methods employed to ensure rightful place of ethnic Turks in socialist Bulgaria.

Many of these situations defy easy analysis. At their roots are complex histories of irrational colonial boundaries, legacies of conquest, or long periods of foreign rule. In a few cases, like that of Cambodia, the immediate and appalling violations of human rights have been further assaulted by the occupation by neighbouring Vietnam. In many situations, human rights deprivations are but one element in a terribly complicated scenario, be it demands for devolution by Tamil minorities in Sri Lanka, the spectre of civil strife in El Salvador, or controversial displacements by the Government of Ethiopia. Understanding the complexities of these cases is useful and necessary. But no political rationalization can substitute for a vigilant insistence on respect for human rights.

The regional variations are equally complex. In Central America, several states have only recently begun to escape the twin nemeses of authoritarian governments and chronic social under-development. In El Salvador, the government has extended cooperation with the special representative of the Commission on Human Rights and confirmed its commitment to full respect for human rights. But much remains to be done. Effective police and judicial services have yet to prove their ability to eliminate political assassination, to control the activities of security forces and to ensure the effective protection of individuals and respect for human rights. The process of national reconciliation is wounded by the continuing civil strife, and by a failure of both sides to honour the provisions