

from detention. The case involved a member of the now dissolved House of Representatives who was arrested in 1995 by the police and subsequently disappeared. Information indicated that the person had been held for nearly two years in various prisons, without being charged or tried.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 12, 14, 17, 27, 32; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 178–181)

An urgent appeal was sent to the government on behalf of four persons reportedly sentenced to death in July 1997 by the High Court of Gambia for trying to overthrow the government. The appeal was based on fears that the four might be executed before the last day for submission of appeals. A case involving death in custody as a result of torture was also transmitted. The arrest followed an attack by an armed group on the Farafenni military camp, in which six soldiers died. The government responded to the case, stating that the person named had died of natural causes — septicæmia complicating a membranous colitis and severe gastro intestinal hæmorrhage — and providing the Special Rapporteur (SR) with a copy of the autopsy report and the death certificate.

The SR noted with regret the imposition of the first death sentences following abolition of the death penalty in 1993, and its reinstatement in 1995.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/6, paras. 48, 50, 60)

The report refers to violations of freedom of religion and belief against the Ahmadis, and notes that appeals for the murder of Ahmadis were reportedly made by the Secretary of State for the Interior and Religious Affairs and an imam.

Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission

Traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/11, para. 95–96)

The report refers to information provided by the government noting that in 1997, 1,000 girls between the ages of three months and seven years had been mutilated in one region of the country. Reference is also made to the Gambian Committee on Traditional Practices which has had taken action to inform and develop awareness among all sectors of society. Experience in the field had shown the importance of the role played by traditional midwives who also practised excision. Their incorporation in the system of health care — and the provision to them of full and suitable information on the harm mutilation could cause — had led many of these practitioners of excision to decide to cease carrying out these mutilations. The Special Rapporteur noted that there had been pressure

exerted by certain powerful groups on governments and broadcasting authorities to oppose the awareness campaign that was being carried out related to the harm being caused by mutilation. The Gambian government was among those that had authorized the awareness campaigns and had given instructions to the radio authorities to allow NGOs to make use of radio programmes to broadcast their messages concerning female genital mutilation.



GHANA

Date of admission to UN: 8 March 1957.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

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

Racial Discrimination

Signed and ratified: 8 September 1966. Ghana's 12th through 15th periodic reports were submitted as one document (CERD/C/338/Add.5) which have not yet been scheduled for consideration; the 16th periodic report is due 4 January 2000.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 17 July 1980; ratified: 2 January 1986. Ghana's third periodic report was due 1 February 1995.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 29 January 1990; ratified: 5 February 1990. Ghana's second periodic report was due 1 September 1997.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 48)

In a commentary on deaths caused by a failure of authorities to act, the report refers to incidents in which persons, particularly foreigners, were reportedly killed by mobs after having been accused of "stealing a person's sexual organs" through simple physical contact, such as shaking hands.

