

Freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/31, Section III)

The report refers to a case transmitted to the government related to intimidation and the use of violence against a correspondent for the Rio de Janeiro-based newspaper *Jornal do Brazil*. The journalist alleged that there was an attempt on his life, when two men set his car on fire, motivated by the articles he had written denouncing police violence. The government's response indicated that a police inquiry had been opened but could not confirm the allegations or identify the perpetrators.

Independence of judges and lawyers, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/32, paras. 21, 88)

The Special Rapporteur transmitted a case to the government involving the murder of a lawyer and human rights activist. The information received indicated that his assassination might be linked to his work as a lawyer and his investigations concerning the participation of members of the civilian police of Rio Grande do Norte in death squads. The government's reply stated that the Federal Police were in charge of the investigation, the Governor of Rio Grande do Norte had dismissed the Deputy Secretary of State for Public Security on suspicion of being involved with the group known as "meninos de ouro" and, the Council for the Defence of the Rights of the Human Person of the Ministry of Justice had set up a special commission to investigate the allegations of human rights violations by the police of Rio Grande do Norte and, in particular, the activities of the "meninos de ouro".

Racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on: (A/52/471, para. 41)

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly refers to the mission to Brazil conducted in June 1995 and the dialogue that has been established with the government as a result of the visit. The report cites information received from the government stating that the first anniversary of the National Programme for Human Rights, 13 May 1997, included an evaluation of the results and progress achieved concerning the promotion and protection of human rights in general, and the promotion of the rights of the Black population in particular. Note was also made of the fact that the integrated work of government and civil society has contributed to a dynamic process related to the Interministerial Working Group for the Promotion of the Black Population which was created by Presidential decree in November 1995 and assigned the task of formulating public policies for the promotion of the rights of Afro-Brazilians. Progress was seen to have been made through: creation of the National Programme to Combat Sickle-Cell Anaemia; inclusion of the item race/colour in death and birth certificates; inclusion of the item race/colour in the school census and in all statistical surveys in the field of education; submission of studies and proposals for the implementation of article 68 of the Temporary Constitutional Provisions Act concerning the granting of ownership titles to the occupiers of the remaining Quilombo lands; a proposal for programmes on TV Escola (the educational television channel) aimed at the revision of Brazilian history from the point of view of the African contribution to social formation; a re-evaluation of textbooks distributed to students of primary and secondary schools all over the

country, resulting in the exclusion of publications containing prejudice and formal errors, as well as discrimination or stereotypes based on race, colour or gender; and the elaboration of the "National Curriculum Parameters" under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. The government also noted that the Ministry of Justice, through the National Archives and the National Secretariat for Human Rights, elaborated a draft "Guide on the sources for the history of the Black in contemporary society", on the reasoning that knowledge of these sources will facilitate actions by Black entities in defence of their rights and the activities of the state in the establishment of public policies directed at the Black population. The government referred to the effort made by the Ministry of Justice, together with the Centre for Studies on Labour Relations and Inequalities, with the support of the European Union, in the elaboration of a project aimed at the promotion of a wide debate-especially among law professionals-about the possibilities and limits of juridical norms in the struggle against racial discrimination and in ensuring equality of opportunities and treatment.

The information provided also indicated that the federal government has been supporting the activities of the Working Group for the Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, through such actions as: the convening of a tripartite meeting on the subject "Implementation of policies aimed at diversity", with the participation of representatives of various corporations; setting up of a subgroup in charge of extending the pilot experiment of the Ministry of Labour in the fight against discrimination to other organs and sectors of the public administration; support from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Labour in the development of the programme for the implementation of ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation; development of projects for the promotion of citizenship and professional training, financed by the Fund for the Support of the Worker; and support for the dissemination of ILO Convention No. 111 through interventions made on the occasion of events on discrimination, promotion of equality and human rights organized by different institutions (trade unions, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, federal and state governments).

The government also noted that its 10th periodic report under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was published jointly by the Ministries of External Relations and Justice, making possible the dissemination of knowledge about the rights guaranteed in the Convention and contributing to raising awareness about the international obligations of Brazil. Publication of the report and information on the Convention was supported through seminars held in different regions of the country with the participation of diplomats and officials of the Ministry of Justice.

In terms of legislation, the government referred to a decision of the National Congress to approve, and of the President to sanction, a law which provides a penalty of one to three years' imprisonment for those who commit a crime of racism by uttering insults of a racial nature or discriminating on grounds of race, ethnicity, colour, religion or nationality. Note is made of the principal innovation introduced by the law, namely to characterize as a crime of racism insults or