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document A/39/636. He presents us with a balanced, factual and analytical report. My government is pleased to note that the special representative believes the government of El Salvador to be sincerely concerned about improving the human rights situation in that country. In particular, we would encourage the government to fulfil its stated commitments to investigate past human rights abuses, to reform the judicial system and to continue to pursue social and economic reform. The effective implementation of these policies is, in our view, crucial to improving the enjoyment of human rights in El Salvador.

However, we remain concerned that, as the special representative notes, a gap persists between these intentions and the government's ability to achieve results, although this gap has narrowed in recent months. Indeed, the number of violent deaths associated with human rights abuses has decreased. Nonetheless, the total still remains alarmingly high. Many of the violations are directly related to the violence perpetrated by both the armed forces and the guerillas in the civil strife. For this reason, my government welcomes the open and high-level dialogue which has been initiated between the government of El Salvador and the guerillas. We therefore strongly urge the government and the guerillas to take further positive steps, not only to decrease the intensity of the conflict, but to resolve it completely so that the people of El Salvador can live in peace and contribute productively to the development of their country.

The report on human rights in Guatemala, document A/39/635, does not paint an encouraging picture. The report is largely a series of observations on particular topics, as the special rapporteur himself notes. Nevertheless, the reader cannot avoid drawing the conclusion that violations of rights to freedom of movement and personal liberty continue to be serious, particularly for the indigenous populations.

We are pleased that the government of Guatemala has granted an absolute pardon to all persons convicted by the abolished special tribunals. We are further pleased that the government has now provided the special rapporteur with a list clarifying the fate of many who were tried by the tribunals. We encourage the government to publish this list.

There are others, however, whose fate must yet be clarified — those who disappeared or who have been improperly held by the police. My government, therefore, welcomes the consultations between the government of Guatemala and the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo which represents the families of disappeared persons. We encourage the government of Guatemala in its commitment to provide support to this group dedicated to locating disappeared persons.

Continuing disappearances remain a great concern to my government. The special rapporteur notes that four groups are responsible for these disappearances — the security forces, the guerillas, common criminals and other organizations consisting of off-duty police and military and right-wing political groups. We encourage the government in its efforts to prevent lawless elements from perpetrating such acts, and we are pleased that the government has helped to bring to light, through co-operation with the special rapporteur, the abuses which have been committed. However, the participation of government forces in the disappearance of their own nationals is both profoundly disturbing and a most serious violation of the responsibility of member states of the UN to protect human rights. The government must begin by restraining its own forces from such acts.

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