

cation of the indigenous land had begun and that, when the conflict had broken out between the indigenous group and members of the Maracajú Rural Trade Union, the regional administration of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) in Amambaí, together with the government Attorney in Mato Grosso do Sul, had immediately called in the Campo Grande/MS federal police in order to protect the indigenous persons' physical integrity. The government stated that the indigenous persons were camped along the highway awaiting a judicial decision authorizing the immediate reoccupation of their land. In the case of the killing of the members of a death squad, the government informed the SR that an investigation had been opened and a district police chief assigned to conduct it; the district police chief and the five police officers involved in the case were dismissed. With regard to threats against witnesses, the government noted that a witness protection programme, known as "Pro Vita", was operating and assisted anyone under threat who explicitly requests protection. The witnesses named in the SR's communication had not requested protection.

The report notes that the government agreed with most of the observations concerning Brazil in the report to the 1997 session of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1) but did not agree with commentary on the new procedures for the demarcation of indigenous land introduced by Decree No. 1775/96. The SR had stated that the uncertainty created by this decree could lead to violent incursions onto indigenous lands and to human rights abuses. The government asserted that such fears were unjustified, since the purpose of the decree was precisely to strengthen the legal bases for the land demarcation process and thus reduce uncertainty and the risk of violence against indigenous people.

Independence of judges and lawyers, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.4/1998/39, paras. 16, 17, 42–44)

The report refers to an attack and threats against a state prosecutor and his assistant who were investigating a murder in which members of the police organization Scuderie Detective le Cocq (SDLC) were allegedly involved. Information indicated that: the state prosecutor had been investigating the activities of SDLC for some time; members of the police and of the judiciary may be involved in this organization; and the state prosecutor had requested police protection, which was denied because of lack of resources. Information was also sent to the government concerning two lawyers, the first a member of the Permanent Forum Against Violence of Alagoas (FPCV-A1) and member of Amnesty International Brazil Section, and the second President of the Grupo Gay de Alagoas and also a member of the FPCV-A1. Reports indicated that both had received anonymous telephone calls warning them that, unless they dropped their investigations into the June 1996 murders of two homosexuals and a transvestite, they would be killed.

Racism and racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/79, paras. 121–127)

The report recalls that the Special Rapporteur (SR) visited Brazil in 1995 and that as a result the government has taken measures to combat racial discrimination and inequality of opportunities, particularly with regard to the Black population. The information provided by the government referred to the Inter-ministerial Working Group for the Promotion of the Black Population which had been assigned the task of formulating public policies for the promotion of the rights of Afro-Brazilians and had, *inter alia*: created the National Programme to Combat Sickle-cell Anaemia; secured inclusion of the item race/colour in death and birth certificates as well as in the school census and in all statistical surveys in the field of education; submitted 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, like the titles already issued in favour of the communities of Pacoval and Agua Fria; proposed 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 Brazilian social formation; re-evaluated textbooks distributed to students of primary and secondary schools all over the country, resulting in the exclusion of publications containing prejudices and formal errors, as well as discrimination or stereotypes based on race, colour or gender; and, participated in the elaboration of the "National Curriculum Parameters" under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. The government also referred to the elaboration by the Ministry of Justice, through the National Archives and the National Secretariat for Human Rights, of a draft "Guide on the sources for the history of the Black in contemporary society" which will facilitate actions by Black entities in defence of their rights and the activities of the state in establishing public policies directed at the Black population.

Equally important is the effort made by the Ministry of Justice, together with the Centre for Studies on Labour Relations and Inequalities, in the elaboration of a project aimed at the promotion of a wide debate about the possibilities and limits of juridical norms in the struggle against racial discrimination and in ensuring equality of opportunities and treatment. The report notes that the federal government has been supporting the activities of the Working Group for the Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, set up in the Ministry of Labour by decree of 20 March 1996 and that the principal actions of the Working Group during its first year included: 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; giving support to the Ministry of Labour in the development of the programme for the implementation of ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimina-