

government and that the SR plans to pay particular attention in future to the question of "women and religion", especially women victims of intolerance and discrimination based on religion and belief.

**Violence against women, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/47, Sec. VI)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) reports that in Taliban-controlled areas, women are not allowed to work outside their homes, leave their houses without having a reason acceptable to the Taliban, and risk being caned or beaten if seen on the road, even if they are wearing a burqa. The SR reports on a case where a mother, wearing a burqa, and taking her sick child to the doctor, was challenged by a Taliban guard, who shot and wounded her when she ran. The woman's family complained to the Taliban leaders, but were told it had been the woman's fault: she should not have been in public in the first place and she should have stopped when told to, rather than running away. In another case reported by the SR, nurses who reported to work not wearing burqas were beaten by a 17-year-old Taliban militiaman.

The SR also received information indicating that in areas controlled by the Taliban, women and girls are denied access to education. In Kandahar, there are no female doctors and therefore no medical assistance for women.

The addendum to the main report (E/CN.4/1997/47/Add.4, para. 11) notes that, in response to persisting reports of violence against Afghan women and girls perpetrated by the Taliban, the SR issued a press release on 7 November 1996 (HR/96/65) expressing concern over violations of the rights of women and girls to liberty and security of person, to equal status and freedom from all forms of discrimination, to equal access to education, and to work. The SR urgently appealed to the leader of the Supreme Council of the Taliban movement to reinstate respect for women's human rights by lifting its ban on women's participation in civil society and called on all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan to respect the basic principles of international human rights and humanitarian law and safeguard the human rights of all Afghan people.

***Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission***

**States of emergency, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/19/Add.1, Sec. I)

The report notes that a *de facto* situation of emergency exists throughout the country, which is in a state of civil war.

***Other Reports***

**Detention of international civil servants, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/25, paras. 39-41)

The World Food Programme (WFP) reported that, in September 1995, when Taliban forces invaded the city of Herat, it became necessary to evacuate a WFP international emergency officer for security reasons. The following month, during a major Taliban offensive against Kabul which saw ground fighting and incoming rocket fire, WFP staff were forced to take refuge in the bunker at a UN guesthouse. WFP also reported that two of its vehicles were stopped and robbed by gunmen on the highway between Tolequan and Kunduz; both the WFP emergency officer and driver were beaten and suffered slight injuries.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**Women's human rights, Report of the S-G:** (E/1997/64, para. 47)

The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women refers to resolutions adopted by the CHR addressing gender as a factor in the enjoyment of human rights. The report notes that the Commission expressed concern at reports of violations and abuses against women and children, especially regarding access to basic education for girls and access by women to employment and training and their effective participation in political, economic, social and cultural life.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Report of the CHR Special Rapporteur**

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly (A/52/493) is based on a visit to Afghanistan from 27 July to 3 August, and on visits to Pakistan on 27 and 31 July and 1 and 2 August 1997. The report contains information on: political and military developments; rule of law and administration of justice; the right to life; torture; capital punishment; arbitrary arrest and detention and the situation of prisoners; amnesty decrees; the right to education; gender-based discrimination; the preservation of cultural heritage; internally displaced persons and refugees; the economic and social situation; land mines; and opium production.

The report notes that key elements in the human rights situation are the lack of central power, governmental institutions, a unified legal system and a clear social, political and economic system. The report states that numerous human rights violations stemmed from: the absence of a functioning state system; the absence of a national treasury to pay the salaries of civil servants; the absence of a clear line of command; a lack of respect for hierarchy; the fact that parts of Afghanistan appeared as separate states; lack of respect for law and order; the fact that the people have no voice or say in the administration of the country; and an insufficient willingness to bring peace to Afghanistan. The report notes a disquieting feature of the ongoing conflict that has emerged, namely an ethnic element that has become quite severe and resulted in the oppression of members of certain communities. Information is cited indicating that the front line between the Taliban and the United Islamic Salvation Front of Afghanistan almost coincides with the ethnic divide in the country.

Referring to specific areas of concern the report addresses, *inter alia*: rule of law and administration of justice-related to a rise in the crime rate in Kabul and other major cities, waves of arrests, the theoretical protections of the courts, the actual application of punishments on the street for violations of Islamic codes and principles, detentions for "political crimes"; restrictions on freedom of movement and the banning of certain types of public activities; summary or arbitrary executions, torture, capital punishment, corporal punishment, arbitrary arrest and detention; private prisons maintained by local commanders, the use of prisoners as bargaining chips for exchange with adversaries, lack of food and general conditions of detention; and, amnesty decrees-related to the safe return of refugees, recovery of and restitution or reparations for property.