

edly warned not to tell anyone what had happened. Information also indicated that the growing participation of the armed forces in security matters had had a negative impact on the human rights situation and the total impunity with which the perpetrators were able to act had created a situation of lawlessness where enforced disappearances can occur. There is no national legislation in Mexico that expressly prohibits the act of enforced disappearance.

Information from the government on 54 cases that had been referred to it by the WG stated that: in 8 cases, the persons concerned were found alive and living at liberty; in 2 cases, the persons concerned were found in detention; in 30 cases the investigations were continuing; with respect to 14 cases, investigators had experienced problems with a group of armed inhabitants in the municipality of Ocosingo, Chiapas, who had threatened them and forced them to leave the region, thus making it very difficult to continue the investigations *in situ*.

Noting the fact that new cases continue to be reported, the WG stressed the urgency of taking effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance. The WG also stressed the need for more effective measures to clarify the so-called "old cases" that occurred in the 1970s, and reminded the government of its continuous responsibility to conduct thorough and impartial investigations into cases of disappearances for as long as the fate of the victim remains unclarified.

**Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 29, 30, 32, 36, 39, 40, 48, 49, 57, 60, 61, 65, 68, 70, 72; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 260–282)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) continued to receive reports of harassment, death threats and intimidation against human rights activists, leaders of indigenous organizations, members of political parties — particularly the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), and members of religious communities. The SR stated that according to several sources, the authorities acquiesced in these acts and, further, that cases of threats or intimidation of peasants within the context of anti-guerrilla operations were also reported, particularly in the Sierra Madre region of Chiapas, in the municipalities of Angel Albino Corzo and La Concordia. There were also reports of deaths caused by mobs.

Individuals who received death threats from members of the police and/or security forces included, *inter alia*: members and leaders of the Southern Sierra Peasants' Organization (OCSS), the President of the Coordinating Office of Non-Governmental Organizations for Peace (CONPAZ) in Chiapas and other members of the organization, the children in a family which had witnessed the killings of members of the PRD by two individuals with alleged ties to the local authorities, and a woman and her family following a complaint she had lodged regarding the rape of her 16-year-old daughter. On the last case, the report notes that the daughter eventually committed suicide.

Additional allegations were received related to, *inter alia*: a victim of mob killings who was believed to have murdered the wife of one of the mob members; deaths in police custody; killings by members of the army; killings of PRD members by unidentified men with alleged ties to the local authorities; killings attributed to members of the PRI or persons acting on the orders of a member or members of PRI; and, a killing allegedly on the orders of the mayor of a municipality.

The report refers to information provided by the government in response to cases transmitted by the SR in 1996 and 1997. The government variously indicated that: the journalist who had been abducted had never asked for protection; the journalists who claimed to have been harassed during a press conference organized by the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) had not lodged any public complaints or charges with the Procurator's Office, as there were no grounds to do so; with regard to death threats against the leader of the National Union of Agricultural Producers, Tradesmen, Manufacturers and Service Providers, the results of the investigation were being prepared for submission; the person accused of the killing had been acquitted and the public prosecutor had appealed the verdict; the outcome of the investigation remains pending; the person named had died during a confrontation with the State Judicial Police and Public Security Police; no complaint had been received from the persons alleging that they had been threatened; at the request of the National Human Rights Commission the government of Chiapas had taken precautionary measures on behalf of CONPAZ; no evidence had been produced during investigations to support the claim that the deaths described had been politically motivated; an arrest warrant and guilty verdict were issued against three persons who participated in a mob killing; criminal proceedings for homicide and abuse of authority were instituted against two members of the Federal Highway Police in one case; an army captain was found criminally liable for homicide, and a sergeant for illegal deprivation of liberty and complicity, with the proceedings at the pre-trial stage; and the deaths were the result of civilian and not army involvement and criminal proceedings against those responsible had begun.

The SR expressed continuing concern over allegations related to threats to, and intimidation of, human rights activists.

**Freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1998/40, paras. 83–84)

The report refers to information transmitted to the government related to, *inter alia*: the abduction, detention and torture of three journalists for TV Azteca, possibly linked to their reporting on police involvement in corruption and human rights violations; the kidnapping, detention and interrogation of a journalist with the daily Reforma who had been reporting on alleged involvement of employees of the Office of the Public Prosecutor in drug trafficking; the abduction of and assault and threats against a second journalist working for Reforma who was investigating the disappearance of a member of the judi-