

policies; and, the fact that the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria has given a good account of itself and made welcome suggestions about human rights education as well as the establishment of committees for inspection of prisons.

In light of these conclusions, the report recommends, *inter alia*, that the government:

- ♦ release immediately all political prisoners, trade union leaders, human rights advocates and journalists currently being detained without charge or trial;
- ♦ repeal all decrees which suspend the human rights provisions in the Constitution and/or oust the jurisdiction of courts in matters involving life and liberty of the people;
- ♦ entrust to the Court of Appeal, rather than the President of the PRC, confirmation or reversal of conviction and sentence and provide for a process of appeal to the Supreme Court;
- ♦ abolish the death penalty or, in the alternative, ensure that imposition of the death penalty occurs only in strict compliance with article 6 of the ICCPR, and in no circumstances, on persons under the age of 18 years;
- ♦ provide prompt compensation to persons whose human rights have admittedly been violated;
- ♦ redress as a matter of urgency conditions in prisons and discontinue the practice of keeping persons in solitary confinement except in rare cases of security risk in which specific reasons for solitary confinement are recorded in writing; provide for frequent visits to prisons by a committee comprised of judicial officers, lawyers, doctors and representatives of NGOs; permit detainees periodic visits by members of their family and access to lawyers and doctors of their choice; and, cease the practice of denying detainees reading material and other basic amenities;
- ♦ repeal or amend existing decrees to remove restrictions on the freedom of expression and freedom of the press and repeal immediately Decree No. 1 of 1996 criminalizing criticism of the transition programme;
- ♦ cease immediately the practice of impounding passports without notice and without grounds; enact a statutory provision establishing the grounds on which passports can be impounded and providing a right of appeal against the impoundment to a judicial body;
- ♦ remove all restrictions on trade unions and other professional associations which erode their autonomy and independent functioning;
- ♦ take steps to ensure full and equal enjoyment by women of rights and freedoms; encourage women's equal participation at all levels of political, social and economic life of the country; repeal laws contrary to the equal rights of women; and adopt urgent measures to curtail the practices of female genital mutilation and forced marriage;
- ♦ take urgent steps to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and initiate immediate measures to strengthen safeguards for children in detention in respect of their recovery and rehabilitation;
- ♦ promptly initiate measures to alleviate the plight of the Ogoni people through, *inter alia*, the appointment of a committee comprised of representatives of the Ogoni community and other minority groups in the region, to be chaired by a retired judge of the High Court, for the purpose of introducing improvements in the socio-economic conditions of these communities;
- ♦ establish an independent agency, in consultation with MOSOP and SPDC, to determine all aspects of environmental damage arising from oil exploration and other operations and make public the findings and conclusions of such a study;
- ♦ ratify the Convention against Torture;
- ♦ extend its cooperation to special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights in the exercise of their mandates; and
- ♦ grant to an international team observer status and permission to attend criminal trials for alleged crimes of treason and other crimes involving the death penalty or long-term imprisonment.

Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights

At the 1998 session, the Commission adopted a resolution (1998/64) by roll call vote. In the text, the Commission, *inter alia*: noted the continuing concern of the Commonwealth and its decision that Nigeria should remain suspended from the organization; noted the decision of the Governing Body of the ILO (March 1998) to initiate a Commission of Inquiry into abuses of labour rights in Nigeria; welcomed the declared commitment of the government to civilian rule, multi-party democracy and freedom of assembly, press and political activity by 1 October 1998; expressed concern at continuing grave violations — including arbitrary detention and the failure to respect due process of law, trials of military and civilian persons in camera and without access to counsel of their own choosing in connection with an alleged coup attempt, life-threatening conditions in prisons and deaths in detention, the refusal of the government to accept a visit by the SR and the fact that the absence of representative government has led to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms; called on the government to ensure, on an urgent basis, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including by releasing all political prisoners, trade union leaders,