Volume 3: Asia Thailand

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 14, 17, 39, 57, 63, 72; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 372—376)

Allegations were transmitted to the government related to killings by members of the armed forces of Burma in attacks on refugee camps in Thailand, as well as killings by members of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) in similar attacks on refugee camps in Thailand. The government stated that it was doing its utmost to try and resolve the situation, including taking measures aimed at preventing the violation of Thai sovereignty and further attacks on those seeking refuge in Thailand. The government noted its strengthening of forces protecting vulnerable areas near the border, the relocation of campsites for displaced persons deeper inside Thai territory, and the deployment of reconnaissance units to patrol the areas surrounding the sites.

The government also provided a reply to two cases transmitted during 1996 indicating that, one case had been forwarded to the Public Prosecutor's Office for criminal prosecution and, in the other, the police officer responsible was placed in custody and charged with wrongful killing.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/6, paras. 48, 50, 59, 69, 90)

The report refers to violations of freedom of religion or belief, and notes that textbooks in state schools reportedly contain information on Buddhism only.

The government refuted this allegation and emphasized that the Thai general school curriculum enabled all pupils, from the first to the final grade, to receive instruction in the main religions. The government stated that it attached great importance to the implementation of universal religious principles aimed, in particular, at promoting harmonious coexistence and peace, and referred to the fact that students could choose to learn about one or more religions other than Buddhism. The authorities stated that a wide variety of textbooks on religions, including specific textbooks on Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, were available to schools and that teachers were free to choose the textbooks they considered most suitable for their curriculum.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the:

(E/CN.4/1998/101, paras. 122, 128)

The report notes that the government has increased its efforts to manage the serious problem of child prostitution and child trafficking, and formulated a National Policy and Plan of Action for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Reference is made to the Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Centre (DEP)

which was carrying out a preventive programme for girls at risk of being sent or recruited into prostitution. The DEP provides skills training, non-formal education and leadership training. Issues such as social values and the development of self-esteem are also discussed. Another programme noted is one initiated by a local academic institution, the Rachapat Institute, which is trying to strengthen cooperation between local NGOs and local government institutions. The Institute provides training to NGOs and local teachers to enable them to take action against child prostitution.

In commentary on informal education, the report notes that the Thai Women of Tomorrow (TWT) has been active in conducting campaigns against prostitution through the development of a video series and campaign modules comprising local documentaries illustrating the dangers and risks of prostitution. A video series on career opportunities was also produced to be used by teachers when conducting campaigns among schoolgirls in the northern provinces of the country. The main aim of the programme was to change attitudes among girls towards their future careers so that they will not turn to prostitution as a means of earning income. TWT also plans to establish a research and information centre on child prostitution to provide information, networking and coordination, training in attitude change, education, and occupational and academic support.

Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/10, paras. 12, 52)

The report refers to information provided by the government related to a massive fire, in March 1991, which engulfed some warehouses at Klong Toey port in Bangkok, Various chemicals were stored in the warehouses and the fire caused serious damage to life and property in the surrounding areas. The government outlined the steps taken to dispose of the residues in a secure landfill sight, and noted that the Pollution Control Department has maintained a close watch over environmental conditions in the surrounding areas on a continuous basis. The government informed the Special Rapporteur that: disposal of all chemical residues left by the fire had been completed; for the chemicals and wastes in the care of the Port Authority of Thailand for which no country has accepted their return, the Authority will coordinate with the Department of Industrial Works of the Ministry of Industry to ensure proper disposal; Thailand is not a state from which illicit traffic of toxic and dangerous products and wastes originates; the remedial actions undertaken in the aftermath of the March 1991 fire were in accordance with the Environmental Quality Promotion and Protection Act of 1992; and throughout the period of construction of the secure landfill site, the Pollution Control Department had disseminated accurate and timely information to the public through the mass media on a regular basis, while resource persons from non-governmental groups also participated in the operation.

