

conscripted, indiscriminate killings, forced displacement and the arrest of foreign relief workers; called on all parties to the conflict to respect the provisions of common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocols Additional thereto; urged the government to release all political detainees, cease all acts of torture, close down all clandestine or unacknowledged detention centres, ensure access to detainees for lawyers and families and full due process of law; called on the government to bring national laws into conformity with standards in those international human rights treaties to which it is a party; called for the training for police, security, army and other forces, including paramilitary and civil defence groups; welcomed the establishment in 1996 of the Special Investigation Committee on Allegations of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and Reported Cases of Slavery and urged the government to give full effect to the work of this body; encouraged the government to review recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance (1996) and to act on them; extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Sudan for another year; encouraged the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery to accept the invitations of the government to visit Sudan; recommended that priority be given to the placement of human rights field monitors as outlined by the Special Rapporteur; and, requested the Special Rapporteur to prepare an interim report for the 1997 session of the General Assembly and a final report for the 1998 session of the Commission.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Arbitrary detention, Working Group on: (E/CN.4/1997/4, paras. 17, 18; E/CN.4/1997/4/Add.1, Decision 13)

The main report notes that four urgent appeals were sent to the government on behalf of 42 persons. No details of the cases were provided.

The cases considered by the Working Group (WG) involved 26 persons who were detained and held without charge or trial. Among the 26 were former members of parliament, a former State Minister for Defence, a former Attorney-General, the Secretary of Women's Affairs in the Umma Party, several former state governors, a former member of the State's Supreme Council, a prominent member of the Ansar Sect and the Secretary of the Umma Party Headquarters. Others detained in the new wave of detentions that took place at the end of May 1995 were trade unionists, engineers, several company directors, a teacher, employees of the Sudan Ports Corporation, several businessmen, a journalist and a merchant. The information received by the WG indicated that the detentions were based solely on the political opinions of the detainees, and that none of them had been charged or tried.

The government informed the WG that seven of those detained had been amnestied and released but did not provide information on the remaining cases. Given that the government did not refute the information provided by the WG including that those arrested had been detained without charge or trial and solely on the bases of their opinions and exercise of the right to freedom of expression the Working Group declared the detentions to be arbitrary.

Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1997/34, paras. 8, 329-338)

The report of the Working Group (WG) notes one newly reported case of disappearance that was transmitted to the government and subsequently clarified: the case occurred in 1996 and involved a political activist in western Sudan. The majority of the 257 outstanding cases concern 249 villagers who were allegedly abducted from the village of Toror in the Nuba Mountains in 1995 by the armed forces. The report states that the villagers are believed to have been taken to one of the government-controlled "peace camps". With respect to these 249 villagers, the government informed the WG that the Minister of Justice had issued a ministerial decree forming a special committee to carry out investigations in order to clarify those cases. The government observed that only two of each person's three names had been provided and that this had made it difficult to locate the individuals concerned.

The report also refers to information received from non-governmental sources on the use of incommunicado detention in clandestine holding centres which violates article 10 (places of detention) of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. There are also references to reports received related to the abduction of women and children in southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, and their transfer to other regions of the country where they are enslaved. As well, there are reports indicating that, in the north, there have been sweeps by the security forces in which displaced southern children who are living with their families and/or orphaned street children are abducted and placed in camps where they are given Islamic names and an Islamic education based on the Koran. The Working Group also noted reports that the rebel forces in the south have abducted children who are then militarily trained and conscripted into their forces.

The report recalls that the government has failed to provide information to the Special Rapporteur on the Sudan concerning events that occurred in Juba in 1992, noting allegations that over 290 soldiers, police officers, prison guards, paramilitary forces attached to the Department of Wildlife, and prominent civilians were arrested after the government regained control of the town. The report recalls that most of those arrested have disappeared and the majority are believed to have been summarily killed. The report notes that the government set up a special committee in 1993 to investigate the allegations, but that no reports on the investigations or other steps taken have been provided by the government.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 15, 16, 18, 28, 32, 101; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 453-460)

The report notes that in most parts of the war zone human rights violations were being committed by Sudanese security officials, members of the armed forces, and the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), and that unarmed civilians were the targets of deliberate attacks by government troops in which hundreds of villagers, many of them women and children, were killed. The report also notes information received indicating that excessive use of force by security forces against demonstrators has led to the death of at least several people. Reference is made to the fact that soldiers, officials and members of militia groups responsible for human rights violations,