

application of pain-inducing acts of corporal punishment in practice; it is axiomatic that a state may not invoke the provisions of its national law to justify non-compliance with international law; on at least two occasions the Human Rights Committee has affirmed that the prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment extends to corporal punishment; and, decisions of the General Assembly in 1950 and 1952 recommended that immediate measures be taken to abolish corporal punishment in the Trust Territories.

**Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/19, para. 56)

The report refers to information stating that Saudi Arabia has emerged as one of the major exporters of scrap batteries to the Philippines. Figures from 1994 to April 1996 indicated exports totalling 9,440 tons.

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

In the section on violence against women migrant workers, the report states that the situation of women migrants within most social structures is one of heightened marginalization, often exacerbated and implicitly condoned by the state. The report refers to the Saudi state policy under which all domestic workers must surrender their passports upon arrival, and comments that the policy increases the vulnerability of migrant women to exploitation and abuse by institutionalizing employer control over the freedom of movement of domestic workers. The report characterizes the conditions of these workers as often violent and inhumane.

**Other Reports**

**Mass exoduses, Report of the HCHR to the CHR:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/42, Section I.A)

The report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights takes note of information provided by the Saudi government related to the departure of Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia. It states that the departure of the Yemenis occurred without any compulsion, but that it was encouraged by the Yemeni government, motivated by their wish to avoid repercussions following the Gulf war.

**Minimum humanitarian standards, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/77, Section I)

The report of the Secretary-General cites information provided by the government pointing out that its legal system does not involve any of the types of discrimination on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin. The government stated, in that context, that article 8 of the Basic Law stipulates that the government is based on justice, consultation and equality in accordance with the Islamic Shari'a, and that articles 26 and 27 further stipulate that the state shall protect human rights in accordance with the Islamic Shari'a and shall safeguard the rights of citizens and their families in situations of emergency and in the event of illness, disability or old age.

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## SINGAPORE

**Date of admission to UN:** 21 September 1965.

### TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

**Land and People:** Singapore has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

**Discrimination against Women**

Acceded: 5 October 1995.

Singapore's initial report was due 4 November 1996.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Articles 2, 16 and 29; paragraph 1 of article 11.

**Rights of the Child**

Acceded: 5 October 1995.

Singapore's initial report was due 3 November 1997.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; articles 19, 32 and 37; paragraph 1 (a) of article 28.

### THEMATIC REPORTS

*Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights*

**Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 15, 19, 28, 81, 91; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 435-438)

An urgent appeal was sent to the government on behalf of a British national sentenced to death in Singapore for murder. The man did not file an appeal against the sentence or submit a petition for clemency to the President although his sister requested clemency on his behalf and the appeal was denied. The report states that he was executed as scheduled on 19 April 1996. The government informed the Special Rapporteur (SR) that the procedure for lodging appeals is carefully explained to every prisoner, and that every person sentenced to death is asked by the prison authorities to file a notice of appeal. The government also indicated that those sentenced to death are forced to file an appeal or to continue with an appeal against their will.

The government responded to the SR's concern related to an apparent weakness in respect of the presumption of innocence. The reply stated that, in a case involving the possession of drugs, the burden of proof lies with the prosecution; but if it is established that the defendant did possess drugs, then the onus shifted to the defendant to disprove the presumption of trafficking. The SR nonetheless expressed the view that the Misuse of Drug Act does not provide sufficient guarantees for the presumption of innocence and may lead to violations of the right to life when the crime of drug trafficking carries a mandatory death sentence.

**Racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/71, para. 10)

The report states that during the 1996 session of the General Assembly the government bitterly attacked the Special Rapporteur (SR) for the way he described the discrimination that migrant workers in some Asiatic countries suffer, and corrected what it considered an elementary factual error in the SR's comments on the execution of Flor Contemplación, a Filipina domestic servant.