

The United Nations has established mechanisms to deal with specific types of human rights violations. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances is a sound mechanism for dealing with the tragedy of disappearances. The families of those who have disappeared are helped by this work and my government was pleased to endorse the renewal of the Working Group's mandate. But we look forward to the day when this Group is not needed.

My government also supports the work of the Rapporteur on Summary and Arbitrary Executions. We continue to believe, however, that a permanent and effective mechanism should be developed in order to combat the practice of summary executions.

Finally, the Commission on Human Rights recently began consideration of the problem of those who are imprisoned when their opinions differ from those of their government. This seems to us to be an area where the international community can develop effective mechanisms which will ameliorate violations of the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

These examples reflect a few of the recent efforts of the United Nations to deal with human rights violations through a thematic approach. A second approach to the problem of the implementation of human rights standards is the consideration of specific country situations. Situations of gross and systematic violations of human rights exist in many states. The United Nations, in co-operation with the states in question, has a role in working to improve respect for human rights.

My government wants peaceful change in situations where human rights are violated. The United Nations has a constructive role to play in encouraging governments to take the steps necessary to improve respect for human rights within their territories. Reports which expose the violations which have taken place can play a part in convincing governments of the need to change. However, we must also support, encourage and publicize any efforts which reveal an intention to respect human rights and which represent a beginning, however tentative, along the path to full implementation of the standards of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Change can only occur when the political will of the government in question is mobilized to effectively promote and protect human rights. Condemnation can lead to the isolation of a state and its retreat from co-operation with the United Nations. Canada does not believe that such isolation is conducive to eliciting the improvements we seek.

The situations of violations of human rights in Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala are once again before us in the reports of the special rapporteurs and the special representative of the Secretary-General. Last year, Canada expressed concern about the bias inherent in reviewing the situations in three countries from one geographical region. However, there now exists a better balance in the reports available to the United Nations on specific countries. At its forty-first session, the Commission on Human Rights will consider for the first time reports on the situations in Iran and Afghanistan and will also take action on the report on the situation in Poland which was reviewed at the last session. In connection with this, my delegation urges the governments of the countries concerned to co-operate fully with the representatives of the Secretary-General who have been appointed to prepare the reports.

My delegation would like to commend Professor Ridruejo for his report on the situation in El Salvador,

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