

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on:
(E/CN.4/1997/91, paras. 9, 17, 19)

The report refers to allegations received that violations of religious freedom have occurred in the U.K. with regard to adherents of Islam. In terms of discriminatory practices, the report cites information received related to the publication of articles in the press conveying a negative and discriminatory image of Muslims. On the question of the status of religious schools, the government informed the Special Rapporteur that state subsidies to private schools were granted irrespective of the religious denomination of the establishment and noted that of the three applications for public funding from Muslim schools, one had been withdrawn and the two others did not meet the criteria established by the Secretary of State. Concerning the negative image of the Muslim community in some of the media, the government recalled that freedom of the press could be monitored by the Press Council.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.4/1997/95, paras. 21, 38)

The report notes that the government has increased penalties and police powers with regard to child pornography and paedophilia, including through arrest without warrant and the extradition of paedophiles. Reference is also made to plans to introduce a national register of convicted paedophiles for employers whose staff works with children.

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly (A/52/482, paras. 39, 60, 62-64, 69-70, 77, 114) notes that the Home Office has estimated that 110,000 men have been convicted of offences against children and, further, that 1 in 60 were convicted of a sex crime by the time they were 40 years old and 1 in 90 were convicted for serious sex offences such as rape, incest or gross indecency with a child.

Referring to the media, the report recalls the effect of the press seeking to create sensationalism around cases of child abuse and cites the press's coverage of a trial, in 1996, of a woman and her husband who were accused of committing sexually motivated murders of several young women and girls. The report notes comments related to a drama documentary entitled *No Child of Mine* on the issue of child sexual abuse, which was aired in the U.K. and commended for bringing the subject into the public arena. The documentary raised concerns, however, for the psychological well being of the young actress who portrayed the victim and had to act out graphic scenes of rape. The report also notes a popular television series entitled *Bands of Gold*, about the lives of a group of teenage prostitutes and states that the series influenced a young teenage viewer to become a prostitute because of what she perceived to be a glamorous lifestyle. The report notes that the teenager was subsequently murdered by two male clients.

The report cites information indicating that a well-known television presenter launched Childline through her programme *That's Life*, which had previously appealed to viewers for their help in conducting a survey on child abuse. The telephone helpline set up has, over its 10 years of operation, provided counselling for an estimated 90,000 children and youth each year. The report notes that approximately 20

per cent of the callers receive counselling about sexual or physical abuse. Reference is also made in the report to a campaign leaflet put out by the Children's Society which highlighted child prostitution in the U.K. The leaflet was condemned as "irresponsible" by social services on the basis that it encouraged rather than condemned child prostitution. The leaflet read: "Why travel six thousand miles to have sex with children when you can do it ...?" and named cities in the U.K. The charity defended the leaflet on the ground that it was necessary to use shock tactics.

Referring to the Internet, the report notes that U.K. police were involved in an international investigation of a paedophile ring thought to be using the Internet to distribute graphic pictures of child pornography. The investigation resulted in the arrest of nine British men and the operation identified 37 men worldwide.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7, Section II; E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, paras. 534-538)

The government responded to four cases sent by the Special Rapporteur (SR), involving death in police or Prison Service custody. Each of the cases involved the use of force by police and, in two cases, an inquest jury found that the suspects had been unlawfully killed. In three cases, it was decided that the investigations carried out did not produce sufficient evidence to bring criminal proceedings. One case was still under investigation at the time the government replied to the SR.

Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on:
(E/CN.4/1997/19, paras. 32, 4, 60-64)

The report of the Special Rapporteur (SR) includes information on the export of battery scrap from the U.K. to the Philippines, reportedly in violation of a law in the Philippines banning such toxic waste imports. Processing of the scrap in lead smelters is reportedly polluting the environment and causing health problems for workers. The report also refers to a toxic waste incinerator in Pontypool, south Wales. The report notes that scientific investigations have reported raised levels of PCBs and dioxins around the plant and indicates that the government has reportedly refused calls for a public inquiry into the plant and ReChem, which runs the incinerator, has stifled public debate.

In terms of Colombia, the SR refers to reports that British Petroleum (BP) appeared to be collaborating with Colombian soldiers involved in serious violations of human rights by allegedly passing on to the Colombia military information about local people protesting oil activities who were then arrested or kidnapped. The report notes information alleging that in the summer of 1996, BP signed an agreement with Colombia's Ministry of Defence to create a battalion of 150 officers and 500 soldiers to monitor construction of a 550-mile-long pipeline and further states that information suggests that all oil companies operating in Colombia have to pay a "war tax" to help fund the war against those who want to nationalize Colombia's oil industry. BP has also been held responsible for environmental damage ranging from devastating a protected forest, polluting a river and damaging bridges and roads that local people use to transport their products to market. The report notes that, in November 1996, BP decided to urge the Colombian government to investigate allegations