

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### *Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights*

#### **Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary:** (E/CN.4/1997/34, paras. 387–390)

The 1997 report of the Working Group (WG) on enforced or involuntary disappearances indicates that the one outstanding case of disappearance was clarified on the basis of information submitted by the government and subsequently confirmed by the source. Under the unity accord of 1987 the government decided to compensate all families of missing relatives, regardless of the circumstances of their disappearance. In the absence of any conclusive evidence to establish who was responsible for the subject's disappearance, the case considered by the WG was settled out of court, and the government compensated the subject's family with an amount of Z\$ 35,000, (approximately US\$ 5,000).

#### **Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the:** (E/CN.4/1997/95, para. 44)

The report cites information indicating that social and cultural practices among the Ngozi, Kuzvorira and Chiramu condone the use of infants as young as two months old as sex objects. The practice mainly affects girls. The information further indicates that children themselves may initiate sex from as early an age as four years.

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly (A/52/482, para. 121) notes that education on the problems of child sex abuse and rape is started in school for children aged 8 or 9.

### *Other Reports*

#### **Conscientious objection to military service, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/99, para. 31)

There is no compulsory military service or conscription in Zimbabwe. However, the government has indicated that, should the need arise for such military service, steps will be taken to ensure that the National Service Act of 1979 and relevant measures are implemented according to section 24 of the National Service Act, which provides for exemption from military service on the grounds that a person is a conscientious objector to military service. Application for exemption from military service may be made to the Exception Board on the basis that bona fide religious beliefs inhibit participation in military service.

#### **Women's human rights, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/40, para. 64)

In the section of the Secretary-General's report dealing with the activities of the human rights treaty bodies, reference is made to consideration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of conditions in Zimbabwe. The Committee noted with concern the persistence of behavioural attitudes in society, as well as cultural and religious practices, which remain obstacles to the implementation of children's rights. Specific mention is made of the Committee's concern over the situation of female victims of practices such as *ngozi* (girl-child pledging), *lobola* (bride price) and early marriage. The Committee acknowledged that the government recognizes the problems that persistent negative attitudes towards women and girls and such practices create.