

leaders had been arrested. The government referred to the problem of differences between Orthodox believers and Protestants and claimed that it was addressing these problems through human rights programmes.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7, Section III; E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, paras. 153–156)

The main report notes that four urgent appeals, on behalf of 18 people, were sent to the government. The cases involved supporters of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and members or former members of Parliament from Region 5 (Somalia). The information upon which the cases were based indicated that a number of detainees were held in 23 secret detention centres as well as the central prison at Harrar. The government responded to one case indicating that the person involved had not been detained and had been voluntarily away from home for one night.

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

In the section of the report dealing with women migrant workers, the Special Rapporteur observes that live-in domestic work in countries of the European Union is a rapidly growing area of employment that is currently developing outside of labour regulatory schemes. The report notes that the increasing demand for such workers is being met in part by undocumented migrant women from Ethiopia.

Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission

Traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/Sub 2/1997/10, para. 27)

The report refers to an item by the Ethiopian Press Agency (ENA) in May 1997 concerning six girls of the Woreda tribe in eastern Ethiopia who committed suicide to avoid "abusuma" or traditional marriage between cousins. The report notes that most of the victims of this tradition, who are about 15 years old, prefer death to being married off to 80-year-old men; others have refused this sort of marriage because they consider it to be a sort of "women's slavery". The concern expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, at its January 1997 session, about the early marriage of children in Ethiopia is noted.

Other Reports

Detention of international civil servants, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/25, para. 69, Annex)

The report of the Secretary-General refers to the cases of two staff members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN/ECA) based in Addis Ababa who were arrested by the Ethiopian authorities in February 1996. Both men were Sudanese nationals and were expelled to Djibouti in April 1996 on the grounds that they had no legal permit to stay in Ethiopia. The report notes that the Association for the Security and Independence of International Civil Servants (ASIFI) had not received any information concerning the fate of the two staff members following their expulsion. The report also notes that a staff member for the World Food Programme and a member of the staff of UN/ECA have been detained in Ethiopia since 4 September 1991 and 25 June 1993 respectively.

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GABON

Date of admission to UN: 20 September 1960.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Land and People: Gabon has submitted a core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.65) for use by the treaty bodies. The report prepared by the government contains demographic, geographical and statistical data, as well as a brief history, and information on the general political structure and the legal framework for the protection of human rights.

The report notes that the Ministry of Human Rights was established in 1987 with a mandate to implement the government's human rights policy and coordinate steps taken for the protection and promotion of human rights. Article 1 of the Constitution stipulates that Gabon recognizes and guarantees the human rights by which public authorities are bound. Other articles in the Constitution provide for the implementation and protection of rights set out in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter and the International Bill of Human Rights. Remedies for violations are provided through the courts and vary according to the nature of the right violated.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 21 January 1983.

Gabon's initial report was due 30 June 1990; the second periodic report was due 30 June 1995.

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 21 January 1983.

Gabon's second and third periodic reports were due 20 April 1989 and 1994 respectively.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 20 September 1966; ratified: 29 February 1980.

Gabon's second through ninth periodic reports (for the period 1983–1997) have not been submitted; the ninth periodic report was due 30 March 1997.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 17 July 1980; ratified: 21 January 1983.

Gabon's second through fourth periodic reports were due 20 February 1988, 1992 and 1996 respectively.

Torture

Signed: 21 January 1986.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 20 June 1991.

Gabon's initial report was due 10 March 1996.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (A/52/477, paras. 25, 28, 30, 38)

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly notes that communications were transmitted to the government related to violations of religious freedom against Jehovah's Witnesses, including legal bans.