

Appendix III (E/CN.4/1997/59, Appendix III) of the report reproduces a document outlining the role and regulations governing Amr Bil Marof Wa Nai Az Munkir (the religious police). The functions and responsibilities of this body are described as: prevention of sedition and uncovered females (re hejab); prevention of music; prevention of the cutting and shaving of beards; prevention of failure to pray and ordering gatherings for prayer at the bazaar; prevention of keeping pigeons and playing with birds; eradication of addictions; prevention of kite flying; prevention of idolatry; prevention of gambling; prevention of British and American hairstyles; prevention of interest charges on loans, charges on changing small denomination notes and charges on money orders; prevention of washing of clothes by young women along the water streams in the city; prevention of music and dances in wedding parties; prevention of the playing of drums; prohibition on tailors sewing women's clothing and taking women's measurements; and prevention of sorcery.

Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights

At its 1997 session, under item 10, the Commission adopted a resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (1997/65) by consensus.

The Commission: recalled Afghanistan's obligations under relevant international human rights treaties; expressed particular concern at violations and abuses against women and children, especially in the areas of education, employment and training, and participation in political, economic, social and cultural life; expressed concern that a unified judicial system cannot be established throughout the country under prevailing conditions; noted the intensification of armed hostilities and the continuing deterioration in the human rights situation, including violations of the rights to life, liberty and security of person, cases of torture, violations of freedom of opinion, expression, religion and association, and cases of gender discrimination; expressed concern at the frequent practice of arbitrary arrest and detention and summary trials; called on all Afghan parties to respect all human rights, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion; urged all parties to restore respect for all the human rights of women, including participation, employment, education, security of person, freedom of movement and access to necessary health facilities; demanded that all parties fulfil obligations relating to the safety of diplomatic missions and UN personnel and other international staff; urged authorities to provide effective remedies to victims of grave violations; urged authorities to bring to trial perpetrators of violations in accordance with internationally accepted standards; urged all parties to work and cooperate with the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan regarding a negotiated settlement to the conflict and the eventual holding of free and fair elections throughout the country; encouraged UNESCO to study appropriate ways and means to restore the system of education and cultural heritage, including restoration of the Kabul museum and other historical sites; expressed concern about reports of foreigners being included among those held as prisoners of war; extended the mandate of Special Rapporteur for another year; and, requested the Special Rapporteur to submit an interim report to 1997 General Assembly and a final report to the 1998 Commission.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1997/34, paras. 36–39)

No new cases of disappearance were transmitted to the government by the Working Group (WG) because individual cases of disappearance have not been brought to the attention of the WG. Nonetheless, the WG believes that cases of disappearance have occurred in Afghanistan. The report notes two outstanding cases which concern a Jordanian journalist, who reportedly disappeared while on assignment in Afghanistan, and an American citizen of Afghan origin, who allegedly disappeared in 1993 while visiting Afghanistan. The government provided information on these cases, stating that a) the individual concerned had never been arrested and, b) the subject's name had not been found in the register of any prison.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 18, 19; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 5–7)

The report refers to the abduction and killing of a BBC World Service journalist in July 1994. The government responded to the Special Rapporteur (SR) by stating that the journalist had never been threatened by the government, the killing had occurred outside the territory over which it had control, and the ad hoc commission appointed to investigate the assassination had produced no results. The SR called on all warring factions in the country to respect international human rights and humanitarian law standards and at all times to protect the right to life of civilians and other non-combatants. The SR expressed regret over the killing of former Afghan President Najibullah by the Taliban after his abduction from the compound of the UN Mission in Kabul.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/91, paras. 9, 20, 25, 27)

The report notes that women are the principal victims of religious extremism in Afghanistan. The reply received by the Special Rapporteur (SR) from the Afghan government (which had by then lost Kabul to the Taliban) characterized the forms of religion practised by the Taliban as the most retrograde, obscurantist and backward ever known in Afghanistan and the region. The SR also reported that, after the fall of Kabul, the High Council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan issued a statement reaffirming its commitment to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights.

The SR's interim report to the General Assembly (A/52/477, paras. 25, 28, 31, 33, 36, 37, 87, 89) refers to violations of religious freedom against both Christians and followers of Islam. The report states that the extremism of the Taliban afflicts the whole of society, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and that women are among those who suffer the most. Reference is also made to violations of the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, citing information indicating that non-Muslims are unable to practise their religion freely and the requirement that Muslim are forced to attend Friday prayer at the mosque. The report also indicates that there have been incidents of mistreatment against clergy and believers. Note is made of the fact that urgent appeals were sent to the