

government forces in October 1997 against the "Armed Forces for the Federal Republic" (FARF) at Moundou, southern Chad. Reports of isolated incidents, in which members of the security forces arrested, tortured, and executed numerous unarmed civilians were also noted.

An urgent appeal was sent to the government concerning a telegram sent by the Commander of the Specialized Units Group of the Chadian National Gendarmerie ordering the members of the nine gendarmerie services to proceed immediately to physically eliminate anyone caught in the act of stealing, subject to severe penalties, including demotion or dismissal from the army. According to the information received by the SR, several persons suspected of theft were killed within days of the telegram being sent, including one minor who was killed and thrown into the Chari river, and a pregnant woman who was charged with theft at the millet market, arrested by gendarmes and killed.

Other cases transmitted to the government related to, *inter alia*: the shooting of nine persons in public without trial, in the presence of administrative, political and military authorities, two days after they were arrested on several charges including multiple theft, rape, and physical abuse; death in hospital from injuries sustained as a result of torture; death after removal from a prison cell without authorization; the killing of a member of an opposition political party by three unidentified persons suspected of being members of the security forces; execution of a religious teacher by members of the military after being taken from the church where he had sought refuge; death in custody following torture; death following a severe beating by a gendarmerie patrol; death from suffocation as a result of being held in an overcrowded cell; killings by members of the military after administering severe beatings; death in hospital following a beating by members of the security forces; and, death following torture at a police station.

The government did not reply to the communications but the SR received information indicating that the order to kill thieves had been rescinded. Despite this action, the SR expressed continuing concern about summary executions being perpetrated with complete impunity by the gendarmerie, the police and the administrative authorities, and by deaths in custody under inhuman conditions. The SR urged the authorities to put an end to the persistent impunity by conducting thorough and exhaustive inquiries aimed at establishing responsibility for the summary executions of civilians, and for all other violations of the right to life.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/38, paras. 40–45; E/CN.4/1998/38/Add.1, "Chad")

Information received by the Special Rapporteur (SR) indicated that the torture of persons arrested for political reasons was a widespread practice. Methods used include, *inter alia*: the "arbatachar", tying the victims' arms and legs behind their backs, causing extreme pain, open wounds and, in some cases, gangrene; placing two metal rulers or two pieces of iron held together with two elastic bands onto the head of the victim, who is tied in

the "arbatachar" position against a tree or a pole, followed by rhythmic beatings on the metal rulers or pieces of iron several times for at least one hour; and, stuffing prisoners into burlap sacks and throwing them into a river.

The report notes that violence against women, including the rape of young girls, also seemed to be very widespread with the persons responsible not only being members of the security forces but also armed opposition groups. The SR stated that because of the social stigma attached to rape, the victims often do not seek medical attention, speak out, or file a complaint.

Information received indicated further that: persons suspected of belonging to the armed opposition were singled out for ill treatment; in the majority of these cases, the victims were tortured at the time of arrest or inside gendarmerie premises by soldiers and gendarmes trying to obtain information; some prisoners were also said to be tortured in National Security Agency premises; it was unusual for complaints to be filed because the victims were afraid of reprisals or that the persons who were guilty would never be brought to justice; the authorities did not take account of requests by judges in connection with investigations of human rights violations, for example, when orders were given by the public prosecutor for the interrogation of soldiers responsible for human rights violations, the gendarmes refused on the grounds that they could not interrogate their superiors; and, the authorities took steps to ensure that jails and places of detention were beyond the prosecutors' control and set up obstacles to the prosecutors' work in this regard.

Individual cases taken up by the SR related to, *inter alia*: arrest and torture of a person in whose home pamphlets of the Armed Forces for the Federal Republic opposition group were found; death of a chauffeur with the Méridien Biao Bank of Moundou as a result of injuries inflicted by a gendarmerie patrol which allegedly ordered him to stop when he was driving his car, noting that the family had lodged a complaint with the Government Procurator of Moundou but that no legal action was taken; beatings by soldiers and death of a person who refused to provide the two soldiers with water free of charge; torture in a secret place of detention and death the following day; death and torture following detention by gendarmes, noting the gendarmes were not sanctioned in any way; death of a woman accused of stealing bracelets after being removed from her cell during the night, taken home and tortured, noting that the woman's daughter was allegedly tied in the "arbatachar" and that the soldier primarily responsible was arrested but escaped from prison and resumed active service; arrest, torture and death of two persons accused of belonging to the Movement for Democracy and Development; arrest and torture of a student in connection with his father's political activities; arrest and subsequent death of a person suspected of being a member of the opposition, noting the government's assertion that the victim had suffocated because of the heat in a crowded cell and the failure of the authorities to initiate a judicial inquiry; arrest in connection with a civil