

reported rape victims. According to one study of 6,000 university students, one in six female students reported that they had been a victim of rape or attempted rape during the previous year, while one in 15 male students stated that they had committed or attempted to commit rape in that year. The report notes that issues of race, ethnicity, class and disability often exacerbate the institutional failures with regard to the state's response to rape and sexual violence. The SR recalled that, in the U.S., rape had been a common method of torture used by slave owners to subdue recalcitrant black women; and the impunity with which white men raped black women in the slave era had contributed to the systematic devaluation of black womanhood.

On sexual harassment, the report notes that it has been legally conceptualized in terms of workplace harassment but that incidents of sexual harassment are often concealed within the private sphere as well. Recent high profile cases have motivated the media to focus on issues of sexual harassment, stimulating increased reporting by breaking down the victim's sense of isolation. The report notes, for example, that as a consequence of the widespread media coverage of the Anita Hill case, complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have more than doubled.

In terms of state strategies to combat rape and sexual violence, including sexual harassment, the report notes that training seminars have been carried out in an effort to sensitize police to the realities of violence against women and to educate them about victims' needs. The report further notes that non-profit rape treatment centres provide services to victim-survivors which may include: 24-hour emergency medical care; evidence collection; crisis intervention; advocacy; court accompaniment; legal assistance; and psychotherapy services. Reference is also made to the fact that rape shield laws have been designed as a mechanism of protection for victims of rape from traditionally discriminatory and abusive cross-examination, and limit the admissibility of evidence relating to the victim's past sexual conduct with anyone but the defendant.

On the subjects of trafficking in women and forced prostitution the report notes that, in Colombia, traffickers provide Colombian women for markets in a number of countries in the West, including the United States, and that in the U.S. there exist hundreds of companies feeding the marriage market through which an estimated 2,000 to 5,000 American men have purchased wives.

Referring to religious extremism, the report notes that the growth of Christian fundamentalist sects has created a climate in which violence against certain categories of women is justified and, in this context, notes that the right to have an abortion under certain conditions is interpreted by the Supreme Court as being constitutionally protected. The report states that certain Christian groups are involved in activism which results in justifying violence against those who are exercising a fundamental right under the Constitution and that this activism may include death threats, stalking and arson.

**Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission Administration of justice:** (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/21, para. 39)

In the section dealing with the privatization of prisons, the report cites information referring to a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in which the Court ruled that managers of private detention facilities had greater civil responsibility than managers of public detention facilities. It was suggested that this decision could have financial implications that would discourage private companies from managing penitentiary institutions.

**International peace and security, Report of the S-G:** (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/27, paras. 30, 44, 48-49)

The report by the Secretary-General cites information provided by International Educational Development, Inc. related to implications for economic and social rights when millions of dollars are spent on the development, production and stockpiling of illegal weapons. The NGO referred to a study prepared by the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology which indicated that it cost \$248,000 to ship 498 fifty-gallon drums of surface soil contaminated with depleted uranium from New Mexico to nearby Nevada; a separate study indicated that it costs the U.S. nearly \$70 million per day to maintain nuclear warfare capability.

Information provided by the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) related to the NGO's assessment of the problem of nuclear contamination and the human rights of indigenous peoples. This information showed that indigenous peoples have been poisoned by nuclear contamination and that the problem of nuclear contaminants produced as a result of nuclear weapons production, development and testing, is pervasive and serious throughout many indigenous communities in North America and the Pacific. IITC also cited the governments use of indigenous peoples in Alaska as "guinea pigs" in human radiation testing and noted that it was only in 1992, after increasing rates of rare cancers were detected among villagers of Point Hope, that the government admitted that radioactive waste was still buried there. In September 1996, the Indigenous Anti-Nuclear Summit Declaration was adopted at a gathering of indigenous peoples, their representatives and organizations. In the Declaration, indigenous peoples declared their unanimous and total opposition to the nuclear power and weapons chain, citing the devastating impact and deadly effects on their communities.

**Traditional practices affecting women and children, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/10, para. 16)

The report notes that female genital mutilation is a federal crime in the U.S. and refers to questions arising from the arrival of refugees and immigrants from countries where the practice is still accepted. The U.S. Health authorities and social workers agreed that ending genital mutilation practised by a small but growing African population would take more than the simple enactment of a law and that a change of mentalities was also necessary.

#### *Other Reports*

**Detention of international civil servants, Report of the S-G:** (E/CN.4/1997/25, Annex II)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that an American was shot and killed while on posting with the UN Population Fund in Tuzla.