

preventing completion of the investigations; in the cases of 17 military persons accused of torture, the officers denied the accusations, the victims were unable to identify the persons responsible, and the Department of Public Prosecutions had therefore closed the investigation; a complaint concerning torture had not been lodged either by the lawyer or his client; an investigation into allegations had led to nine police officers being found responsible for abuses and the case was continuing, pending testimony by witnesses; the case had been closed due to inadequate evidence; one of the officers and others involved in the incident had been indicted and charged with excessive use of force causing injury, but a judgement had not yet been handed down; the person had dropped the complaint after being questioned and the case had been closed; the three officers implicated had been found to have ill-treated the victim and had been subjected to disciplinary action and docked three days' salary each; the accused officer had been found guilty, subjected to disciplinary action and transferred to another police station; the officer concerned had been subjected to disciplinary action by being docked 10 days' salary.

The SR noted the government's replies, as well as the fact that in no case had a police or security official been convicted and sentenced for torture. The SR stated that the few cases of disciplinary action, involving reduction of salary or transfer to another police station, did not adequately suggest a serious commitment to redress grave abuses of prisoners.

Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission

Traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/11, paras. 108–110)

The report refers to the pressure exerted by certain Islamist extremists who had campaigned against the 1996 decree of the Egyptian Minister of Health prohibiting the practice of excision by members of the medical profession, and the June 1997 decision of the Administrative Court to repeal this decree. In December 1997 the Council of State decided that it was "henceforth prohibited to practise excision even in cases where the girl and her parents give their consent". The Court of Appeal concurred with this decision and subsequently stated that circumcision of girls is not a right of the individual under the Sharia and nothing in the Koran authorizes it. The Special Rapporteur (SR) noted: the Council's decision is of broader impact than the decree issued by the Minister of Health which was addressed only to members of the medical profession; and the condemnation of female genital mutilation by the Court of Appeal was pronounced in a country that has always been at the centre of Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic studies. The SR stated that the court's decision puts an end to the manipulation of Islam and efforts to justify circumcision on religious grounds.



EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Date of admission to UN: 12 November 1968.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Equatorial Guinea has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 25 September 1987.

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

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 25 September 1987.

Equatorial Guinea's initial report was due 24 December 1988; the second periodic report was due 24 December 1993.

Optional Protocol: Acceded: 25 September 1987.

Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 23 October 1984.

Equatorial Guinea's second and third periodic reports were submitted as one document (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3) which has not yet been scheduled for consideration; the fourth periodic report was due 22 November 1997.

Rights of the Child

Acceded: 15 June 1992.

Equatorial Guinea's initial report was due 14 July 1994.

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Special Rapporteur

(E/CN.4/1998/73)

The Commission appointed a Special Rapporteur (SR) in 1993 with a mandate to conduct a thorough study of violations of human rights by government on the basis of information received from such sources as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and private individuals. As well, the SR was to review documentation provided by the government. The SR for 1998 was Alejandro Artucio.

The SR conducted the seventh official mission to Equatorial Guinea from 30 November to 7 December 1997. The report to the 1998 session of the Commission (E/CN.4/1998/73), based in part on the mission, contains commentary on, *inter alia*: the economic and social situation; political rights; the state's legal structure; and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary; arbitrary arrests, intimidation and harassment; deprivation of freedom; torture and ill-treatment; incidents occurring beyond the territorial borders; the rights and situation of women; ethnic diversity; and non-governmental organizations. The SR states that, as on previous occasions, the government and authorities cooperated fully and did not impede access to places or people.