

matter of course. The government denied these allegations. The report notes that the Algerian Bar Association has recommended that lawyers should be present at all stages in the judicial process, including the arrest stage and during interrogation by the police. The Association had also proposed that bail be provided to persons arrested on suspicion of having committed economic crimes. The report refers to information received indicating there were numerous cases of arbitrary detention, torture, extrajudicial executions and lack of protection by the judiciary. In the latter instance, information was provided related to judges ignoring credible evidence of torture of individuals in police custody.

The media and journalists with whom the Panel met indicated that the situation had improved significantly in comparison to conditions under the one-party state. Continuing problems were noted as including: a government monopoly on printing which was sometimes used to bring pressure to bear upon independent newspapers; selective placement of government advertising and the associated loss of revenue to media with which the government has political differences; difficulties for foreign journalists in obtaining visas and gaining access to various parts of, or places in, the country.

The Panel noted that Algeria is a country of linguistic and cultural diversity and referred to concerns related to the entry into force of a new law on Arabization in July 1998. The law requires that all declarations, statements, conferences or broadcasts must be in Arabic or translated into Arabic if originally in a foreign language. Fines may be imposed on anyone who, in the discharge of duties, signs a document drafted in any other language. All exchanges of correspondence between any offices and associations of any nature must be in Arabic. The Panel met with local officials and villagers who did not oppose Arabic being the official language of the country but who also expressed resentment that, in local assemblies where the Berber language had been used, the law required that proceedings be conducted in Arabic.

Commentary on the situation of women referred to, *inter alia*: women's legal status and the family code; efforts by women to oppose the vision of society that religious extremists were trying to impose; the need to differentiate between crimes committed by fanatical terrorists and excesses committed by government agents; information related to the abduction, killing and rape of women; the stigmatization associated with rape; the failure of the High Islamic Council to permit abortions for women who became pregnant as a result of rape, except in cases where the pregnancy placed the woman's health at risk; the fact that girls in isolated rural or mountainous areas were afraid to go to school for fear of being abducted by terrorists; the limited employment opportunities for women; and the difficulties faced by women who became heads of households as a result of husbands being killed or having disappeared. The Panel also received information about women who occupied posts at the highest level in the administration, education and health professions.

In its concluding observations, the Panel:

- ♦ categorically rejected terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stated that the government deserves the support of the international community in its efforts to combat this phenomenon;
- ♦ condemned any form of extremism or fanaticism that might be offered as a pretext for the acts of terrorists and stated that Algerian society is capable of expressing political views and discussing them within the framework of legality;
- ♦ stated that efforts to combat terrorism must take place within the framework of legality, proportionality, and respect for the fundamental human rights of the population;
- ♦ stated that law enforcement, security and self-defence forces should be held to the highest standards of accountability;
- ♦ stated that the international community should support Algeria to consolidate democratic institutions, address economic challenges, defeat terrorism, establish security and ensure scrupulous respect for the rule of law and human rights in daily practice;
- ♦ noted the need to entrench in society and all public institutions a state of legality and respect for the rule of law, to encourage more political openness, and to work towards a change in mentality in, *inter alia*, the judiciary, the police and the army;
- ♦ referred to the desirability of accelerating the pace of privatization of the economy while, at the same time, undertaking programmes of social reform;
- ♦ recommended a strengthening of national institutions responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and that complaints of arbitrary detention, extrajudicial execution and disappearances be handled expeditiously; and
- ♦ suggested that the government consider measures to improve the transparency of its decisions and decision-making processes as well as the dialogue with, and flow of information to, citizens.



ANGOLA

Date of admission to UN: 1 December 1976.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

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