

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1997/34, paras. 79–85)

The Working Group (WG) transmitted two newly reported cases of disappearance to the government under the urgent action procedure. The 45 previously-reported cases of disappearance in Burundi occurred in Bujumbura between November and December 1991, following attacks against the government in the capital and the north-western provinces of Cibitoke and Bubanza, as well as in September 1994, in Kamenge and Cibitoke, suburbs of Bujumbura. Thirty-one of the disappeared persons were reportedly arrested by members of the security forces. The report notes that the more recent cases allegedly concern Hutus, most of whom had been assembled and held by members of the security forces on suspicion of possessing weapons. Another case of disappearance concerned a colonel, responsible for military schools and the Training Centre of the Burundese Army; he was reportedly abducted as he was coming out of the house of one of his colleagues where he had gone to collect documents before leaving for a seminar abroad. The two new cases of disappearance concern one person who was allegedly arrested by gendarmes at a military check-point in Bujumbura, and another, also arrested by gendarmes at a road check on the outskirts of the capital, who was then detained at the Special Investigations Brigade. The report notes the WG has received no information from the government in response to the cases transmitted. Forty-seven cases of disappearance remain to be clarified.

Following observations on the overall climate of fear and insecurity in Burundi, the WG reports that information of a general nature that it has received indicated a growing number of disappearances and arbitrary arrests, as well as targeted assassinations of intellectuals, provincial governors, merchants and local administrators among the Hutu community.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 15, 31, 41, 43, 54, 56, 60, 61, 96, 101, E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 81–89)

The report noted that, as in previous years, the Special Rapporteur (SR) had received numerous allegations of attacks on the right to life, in particular massacres or serial killings. The majority of the violations were attributable to elements of the Burundian army, while a fairly large number of incidents and massacres were attributed to Hutu rebel groups and Tutsi militias. The report referred to information received concerning the forcible expulsion of 392 Burundian refugees in Rwanda to the province of Cibitoke on 30 September 1996 by soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army, at a time when numerous human rights violations had been reported in that region. An urgent appeal was sent by the Special Rapporteur related to the cases of 89 persons who had been sentenced to death by criminal courts.

Following the murder of the three ICRC workers in June 1996, the President and Prime Minister of Burundi, in response to a joint urgent appeal by the SR on extrajudicial executions and the SR on the situation in Burundi, deplored

the incident and informed the Special Rapporteurs that they had recommended a neutral inquiry to identify the perpetrators. This reply is noted as being the only one received from government. The SR expressed regret that the government had not commented, to date, on the report of the visit made to Burundi in 1995. Concern was expressed at the deterioration in the human rights situation throughout in the country and, in particular, at the massacres of civilians, including women, children and elderly people. The SR acknowledged the implications of the situation in Burundi for the Great Lakes region and recommended that the three Special Rapporteurs on the situations in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) energetically pursue their efforts to devise an integrated approach to the common problems facing those three countries.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on:

(E/CN.4/1997/91, paras. 9, 17, 24, 25; A/52/477, paras. 51, 52)

The reports briefly note information indicating incidents of religious intolerance against Christians in Burundi and the murder of members of the clergy and believers. The government's responded by stating that many of the murders of clergy and believers in Burundi had nothing to do with religious intolerance.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7, Section III; E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, para 42)

The report notes that the Special Rapporteur transmitted an urgent appeal, jointly with the Special Rapporteur on the situation in Burundi, on behalf of 15 people allegedly arrested in February 1996, following an exchange of gunfire between government forces and an armed group. The information upon which the appeal was based indicated that the 15 had been detained at the headquarters of the Special Investigations Brigade.

Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission

States of emergency, Special Rapporteur on:

(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/19/Add.1, Section I)

The report simply notes that there is a state of civil war with violence and unrest prevailing throughout the country and that a curfew has been imposed.

Other Reports

Detention of international civil servants, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/25, para. 21)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that three delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were killed in Burundi. As well, it reports that there were difficulties with the authorities in Burundi failing to respect a UN certificate as a valid identity document for a consultant. A summary of information provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) related to threats by members of the group, *Sans échec*, that attacks against WFP staff and property, and possibly killing, would continue until all WFP international staff left Ngozi.

Women's human rights, Report of the S-G to the CHR:

(E/CN.4/1997/40, para. 101)

The report of the Secretary-General on the integration of women's human rights throughout the UN system