

ious parts of the country; acclaimed the decision of the government to launch a comprehensive peace process with the main objective of initiating nationwide political negotiations open to all parties; considered that effective action to prevent further violations of human rights was indispensable to promoting stabilization and reconstruction and restoration of the rule of law; recognized the important role of women in the reconciliation process; and urged the government to ensure the equal participation of women in society and improve their living conditions. The Commission also: noted the efforts of the government to improve security and public order but expressed concern at actions sometimes leading to human rights violations; encouraged the countries that imposed sanctions to continue to evaluate their effects; noted the process of closing down the regroupement camps and called on the government to close down all remaining such camps; encouraged the dialogue initiated between the government and the National Assembly; urged all parties to the conflict to end the cycle of violence and killing, notably the indiscriminate use of violence against the civilian population; expressed concern at the forcible recruitment and kidnapping of children by non-governmental armed groups; called on the parties to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations and to comply with international humanitarian law; noted the failure of the government to publish the findings of the inquiries conducted into the murder of three ICRC staff members in June 1996 and called on the government to publish those findings. The Commission also: noted the government's efforts to ensure legal safeguards for human rights; noted with concern conditions of detention, in particular for those liable to the death penalty; invited the government to take more measures to combat impunity; expressed deep concern at reports of massacres, disappearances and arbitrary arrests and detentions; expressed concern at the use, by authorities, of civilians for military tasks; commended the human rights observer mission and welcomed the cooperation given by the government; called on all parties to work constructively with international mediators in the search for a lasting peace; expressed concern at the large number of persons killed or injured by the explosion of anti-personnel landmines and called on the government to set up a programme of mine clearance and a public awareness campaign; called on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and returnees; condemned the illegal sale and distribution of weapons and related materials; requested states not to allow their territories to be used as bases for incursions; and supported the implementation of the OHCHR programme of assistance, in the field of human rights, and legal assistance, aimed at the armed forces and police. The Commission extended the mandate of the SR for a further year.

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

#### Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1998/43, paras. 3, 114–117, 417)

Two newly reported cases of disappearance, which allegedly occurred in August 1997, were transmitted to the government. The majority of the 49 cases of disappearance reported to the Working Group (WG) are said to have 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, who were all of Hutu origin, were reportedly arrested by members of the security forces, mainly composed of the Tutsi minority. Many of them were held at Mura and at paratroopers' barracks in Bujumbura, while others allegedly disappeared while in custody at the headquarters of the gendarmerie's Special Investigations Brigade in Bujumbura. Other cases were said to have involved Hutus, most of whom had reportedly been assembled and held by members of the security forces on the playing field of the Ecole technique supérieure in Bujumbura. These persons, reportedly suspected of possessing arms, were said to have been arrested and taken away to an unknown destination by members of the armed forces. Two cases reportedly occurred in 1995 and concerned persons arrested by gendarmes; one at a checkpoint in Bujumbura, and the other during an identity check on the outskirts of the capital. One case concerned a colonel responsible for military schools and the training centre of the Burundian Army, who was reportedly abducted prior to his departure for a seminar abroad. The new cases were reported to have occurred in Makambo province, near the Tanzanian border, and concerned a parliamentarian and his driver who were apparently arrested on their way to Tanzania by members of the military.

The report notes that although a number of reminders have been sent, no information has been received from the government with regard to these cases. Consequently, the WG is unable to report on the whereabouts of the disappeared persons.

#### Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 12, 13, 14, 29, 30, 39, 80; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 57–61)

The report notes that urgent appeals were sent to the government on behalf of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. Other cases were transmitted related to death threats from state officials, and allegations involving 170 deaths due to attacks or killings by security forces, paramilitary groups or private forces cooperating with, or tolerated by, the state.