

supporters of Hamas or Islamic Jihad following several suicide bombings in Israel; arrests by members of the security forces (mukhabarat) followed by beatings and prolonged sleep deprivation; arrests followed by beatings by police; arrests of persons participating in a demonstration, followed by torture and ill-treatment at the hands of members of the naval police, including beatings, suspension from the ceiling, and burns with electric implements and cigarettes; and, incommunicado detention in the custody of the Palestinian Preventive Security.

FIELD OPERATIONS

The UN Human Rights Field Office in Gaza was established in November 1996; address 475/55 Halabi Street, Rimal Gaza, P.O. Box 51359-95912, Jerusalem; Officer-in-Charge: Amin Mekki Medani, Chief, Technical Advisor; fax: 00972-7-827 321; telephone: 00972-7-827 021; e-mail: fmarotta@papp.undp.org.

The terms of reference for the Field Office focus on support for the rule of law, with assistance to and cooperation with the Palestinian Authority in such key areas as law reform, improvements in the administration of justice, development of a national plan of action for human rights, training and advisory services to police, prison officials, lawyers, judges and prosecutors as well as technical and financial assistance to the Ministry of Justice and local human rights NGOs and the Palestinian Independent Commission for citizens' rights.

* * * * *

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Date of admission to UN: 10 October 1975.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

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

Racial Discrimination

Acceded: 27 January 1982.

Papua New Guinea's second through eighth reports have not been submitted (covering the period 1987-1997); the eighth periodic report was due 26 February 1997.

Reservations and Declarations: Article 4.

At its August 1997 session, the Committee considered the situation in Papua New Guinea in the absence of a report from the government. The Committee's concluding observations (CERD/C/51/Misc.45) note that, despite requests, the government has not submitted an up-to-date report or any of the information requested on the issue of Bougainville. The Committee condemned the killing of the premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government in October 1996, noting that the murder resulted in a serious set-back to efforts to find a solution to the Bougainville problem. The Committee requested the government to submit the reports that are due as well as information on the situation in Bougainville, and suggested that the government avail itself of the technical assistance programme offered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in drawing up and submitting its report.

Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 12 January 1995.

Papua New Guinea's initial report was due 11 February 1996.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 30 September 1990; ratified: 2 March 1993.

Papua New Guinea's initial report was due 31 March 1995.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 16, 18, 38, 51, 57, 58; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 376-380)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) transmitted to the government allegations of violations of the right to life of a number of unarmed civilians who were reportedly killed in January 1996 by members of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the "resistance forces" in the village of Simbo, Buin, Bougainville. The information received indicated that the victims included eight minors, among them an eight-month-old baby. The SR also reminded the government of the cases sent during 1995 and 1996 to which no reply had been received and requested the government to react to the recommendations made in the report of the mission to Bougainville (October 1995). The SR expressed concern over the government's March 1996 decision to lift the ceasefire on Bougainville because of an upsurge of killings of civilians and members of the government security forces by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the negative implications of the assassination of the Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government (October 1996) on the peace process and the human rights situation in Bougainville. The SR called on all parties to the conflict to respect the right to life of all non-combatants at all times.

Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/19, para. 42, 44)

The report refers to information dating from 1963 concerning copper mining exploration licenses granted by Australia, and the decision of landowners in 1987 to establish the Paguna Landowners Association which was later formalized as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). The report briefly summarizes events, including the conflict in Bougainville since that time. The report also notes information related to a gold mine operated by Placer Nuigini, a subsidiary of Placer Dome Inc. of Canada, which dumps 40,000 tonnes of tailings per day into a river and has no tailings retention facilities. Information has indicated that people in the area have expressed concern about these levels of contamination and asked the government to improve pollution monitoring and regulation below the mine. The report states that reportedly the government responded to this request by extending the exemption the joint venture enjoys in dumping tails. Referring to the operations of a mining company based in the US, the report cites information stating that the mine has been responsible for dumping 120,000 tonnes of toxic waste per day into local rivers, thus contaminating local fish and vegetation and causing severe health problems for the people that live near the river. The report further notes that, in the area of the mine's operations, highland people have been