

alleged to be responsible for all the arrests and subsequent disappearances. The victims were from a variety of professions and included medical doctors, journalists, university professors, students, civil servants and farmers. A number of the disappeared are reported to have been members or sympathizers of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). One case concerned a British resident, reportedly detained upon his arrival at the airport in Algiers; another concerned a person holding dual Algerian and French citizenship.

The government provided information on 30 individual cases. It reported that: in the majority of the cases, no arrest warrants had been issued against the persons concerned; in nine of the cases, the persons had been killed; and in four of the cases, the persons were suspected of involvement in terrorist activities and were wanted by the security forces. One hundred cases of disappearance in Algeria remain to be clarified. The government assured the WG that investigations would continue to determine their fate.

**Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/60, paras. 16, 22, 68; E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 8–13)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) reports that, as in previous years, the information received on the situation in Algeria indicates that human rights violations, and in particular extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, continue to occur on an alarming scale. He has also received disturbing reports that civilian militias, formed by the Algerian government and integrated into the security forces, are involved in violations of the right to life. As well, the SR is aware of the waves of violence caused by armed opposition groups resorting to terrorism, which have led to killings of many innocent civilians.

The report notes that, in July 1994, the government was informed that 15 bodies with bullet wounds were discovered in the commune of Taghrout, and that, allegedly, no action had been taken to clarify the circumstances of death or to identify the bodies. The government responded to the SR with the following information: that because of serious mutilation, only three of the 15 bodies could be identified; that a preliminary inquiry initiated by the Public Prosecutor's Office had yielded no further information; and that a judicial inquiry had been opened and the investigation was continuing.

In 1993 the government invited the Special Rapporteur to visit Algeria. However, the government had not responded to the SR's request that he be permitted to visit in early 1997.

**Independence of judges and lawyers, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/32, paras. 17, 20, 56–57)

The report of the Special Rapporteur (SR) refers to an urgent appeal transmitted to the government on behalf of a lawyer and human rights defender. Information indicated that, in July 1996, the lawyer was abducted by four unknown individuals — possibly members of the security forces — for reasons related to his active involvement as a lawyer in human rights issues. In its response, the government denied that the lawyer had been abducted, stating instead that he had been interrogated by security forces in the context of cases related to terrorism and subversion. On the basis of that preliminary investigation, he had been officially accused of involvement in terrorist activities and had been placed in preventive detention.

**Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/91, paras. 9, 17, 20, 25, 41, 66; A/52/477, paras. 21, 46)

The reports note that: Christians have been subjected to acts of religious intolerance; religious extremism in Algeria may threaten an entire society; and, the government had not responded to communications previously transmitted on cases and/or incidents.

**Torture, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/7, Section III)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) reports that he received substantial information concerning the use of torture in the context of detention and enforced disappearances, sometimes followed by death. While time did not permit him to transmit this information to the government prior to completion of his report, the SR felt the situation serious enough to draw attention to the concerns expressed by the Committee against Torture (CAT), when it considered Algeria's second periodic report in November 1996 (CAT/C/XVIII/CRP.1/ Add.3). In particular, the CAT expressed concern about the resurgence since 1991 of torture, the possibility of extending *garde à vue* detention up to 12 days, and the possibility of ordering administrative detention without any judicial authority. The SR acknowledges that, like the CAT, he is aware of the appalling level of violence in the country, including atrocities, sometimes involving torture, perpetrated by armed opposition groups. He nonetheless urged the government to give urgent and favourable consideration to the recommendations of CAT.

#### *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 notes that on 7 February 1993 the state of emergency in Algeria was extended indefinitely.

#### *Other Reports*

**National institutions, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/41, para. 22)

The report of the Secretary-General summarizes comments received from the National Observatory for Human Rights of Algeria in which it is stated that the Observatory: is based on the principle of institutional and cultural pluralism; has been in operation since 1992 in a socio-political context of rising armed terrorist violence; has focussed efforts on the human rights implications of security measures and on the basic issue of the right to life, but was trying also to pay attention to other human rights matters; and, investigated the security forces whenever there were complaints of human rights violations attributed to them, including complaints of arbitrary detention.

**Periodic and genuine elections, Report of the S-G to the GA:** (A/52/474, para. 28, Annex)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that a team of seven international observers was sent to Algeria to observe the final stages of the November 1995 electoral campaign and election day. In February 1997, the government invited the UN to send observers to follow the June 1997 Parliamentary elections. Based on an assessment of the situation, the UN