

as a habeas corpus petition, on behalf of his relatives who were believed to have been arrested and detained incommunicado. The information received by the Special Rapporteur (SR) on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution indicated that the man had been warned by a police officer that bringing the situation to the attention of human rights organizations could have serious consequences for him.

The report summarizes information from the SR on torture in which there is a reference to the case of a former judge of the Sindh High Court who had met the SR during his visit to Pakistan. The judge was questioned by security officials concerning the nature of his discussions with the SR.

SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

At its 1997 session the Sub-Commission considered a resolution on the situation in Pakistan (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/L.22). The text, *inter alia*: recognized the legacy of colonialism in Pakistan; recalled that freedom from torture is a non-derogable right; noted various commentaries in the reports of CHR Special Rapporteur on torture, indicating, among other things, that torture of persons in the custody of the police and the paramilitary and the armed forces is endemic, widespread and systematic in Pakistan, and that the majority of women held in police custody are subjected to some form of sexual abuse, including rape; noted that such conditions are perpetuated by the virtual impunity from criminal sanction of the perpetrators; referred to the concern expressed by other CHR thematic mechanisms over the failure in Pakistan to hold detainees only in officially recognized places of detention, deaths in custody, arbitrary detention, imposition of the death penalty for apostasy, and the failure to prohibit in the Constitution discrimination based on race, colour, language, or national or ethnic origin; noted reports that the government had failed to prevent 1,500 schoolchildren from joining the Taliban forces in Afghanistan; welcomed government statements related to the independence of the judiciary, the creation of the Ministry of Human Rights and the invitation to the Special Rapporteur on torture to visit Pakistan; welcomed the Pakistan Law Commission's decision to review laws related to, for example, prison reforms, blasphemy, laws related to children, including child labour, and the Hudood Ordinances; welcomed the fact that a number of senior police officers are facing charges of abuse of authority and involvement in criminal violence and the appointment of a judicial commission of inquiry into extrajudicial killings in Karachi and other urban areas of Sindh; welcomed the government's announced intention to eliminate bonded labour and achieve universal primary education within five years; welcomed the renewed talks between Pakistan and India related to Jammu and Kashmir; urged the government to prosecute all those who have perpetrated human rights violations and ratify the ICCPR, its Optional Protocol, and the Convention against Torture; urged the government to take measures promptly to ensure equality before the law for women and an end to discrimination against them in judicial proceedings and in all other respects; urged the government to consider amending the Penal Code and Ordinance XX in such a manner that members of the Ahmadi community may fully

exercise their right to practise their religion, and remove the possibility of exploitation of the law by other citizens to intimidate members of religious minorities; urged the government to recognize as minorities communities or groups of persons based on race, colour, language or national or ethnic origins; called on the government to ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for apostasy, and take effective action to ensure that its territory is not used as a base and that persons under its jurisdiction, particularly children, are not recruited to engage in terrorism and violence in other states.

By secret ballot the Sub-Commission decided to take no action on the resolution, with 20 votes in favour of no action, 3 opposed and 2 abstentions.

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PALAU

Date of admission to UN: 15 December 1994.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

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

Rights of the Child

Acceded: 4 August 1995.

Palau's initial report was due 2 September 1997.

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PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Arbitrary detention, Working Group on: (E/CN.4/1997/4, paras. 17, 21)

The report notes that three urgent appeals were sent to the Palestinian Authority, which replied that three persons concerned had been released. No details of the cases were provided.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Special Rapporteur: (E/CN.4/1997/60/Add.1, paras. 573-574)

The report refers to information received indicating that since the proclamation of Palestinian self-rule in May 1994, 10 death sentences have been passed by the Palestinian Authority, two of which have been commuted. Reportedly none has ever been carried out. Information received also indicated that trials before the State Security Court, reportedly set up in 1995, do not offer the right to appeal to a higher court, and the right to a proper defence is limited. Death sentences have to be ratified by the President before they can be carried out. The Special Rapporteur notes that one case was sent to the Palestinian Authority, in October 1995, related to a death in custody in the Gaza Strip.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, paras. 581-586)

The report refers to urgent appeals sent to the Palestinian Authority related to: reports of the incommunicado detention and beatings during interrogation of at least 700 suspected