

Middle East: Occupied Territories

In contrast with the South Africa resolutions, there was little movement in the resolutions on Item 4, dealing with the Occupied Territories. As a result of controversial language, some of which had not appeared in previous resolutions, Canada and most other WEOG members were forced to abstain on five of the six resolutions on this subject.

We did, however, make a statement on the situation in the Occupied Territories, in which we expressed our deep concern about human rights violations in that area and "the futility and short-sightedness of military occupation and the inability of such occupation to quench the natural human desire for self-determination."

Iran

After considerable discussion, the Commission agreed that the mandate of the Special Representative studying human rights abuses in Iran be extended. The Iran resolution, which was adopted by consensus, specifically mentions the situation of the Baha'is and calls on Iran to comply with international human rights instruments to ensure that all individuals within its territory - including religious groups - enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments.

Cuba

After a very active debate, the Commission decided to name a Special Rapporteur to investigate the human rights situation in Cuba. Cuba and a number of Latin American countries had put forward a resolution that would have taken that country off the Commission's agenda; however, a series of amendments were introduced supporting the appointment of a Special Rapporteur and the amended resolution was carried by a 22(yes)-6(no)-15(abstain) vote. The WEOG group voted unanimously in favour of the resolution, which was also supported by two Latin American countries - Argentina and Panama - and a broad spectrum of other regional groups. Cuba, the USSR, Iraq and China were among the countries voting against the resolution, while the absentions were largely from Latin America.

Other country situations

In addition to those countries already mentioned, the Commission extended the mandates of Special Rapporteurs or Special Representatives investigating the human rights situation in Romania, Afghanistan and El Salvador, and authorized the appointment of a new expert to monitor the situation in Haiti. Attempts to move Guatemala from Item 21 (Advisory Services) to Item 12 (Violations of Human Rights in All Parts of the World) were