

Ministry of Defence had decided to dismiss the case; the Provincial Prosecutor's Office of Bucaramanga had ordered the dismissal of a National Police officer implicated in the events; and, a disciplinary inquiry had found three officers of the National Police responsible for the acts committed.

**Toxic wastes and products, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/19, paras. 45, 61)

The report refers to information received indicating that a small area in the south of Santander has been contaminated with glysofato and other radioactive chemicals. The report also cites information which states that British Petroleum (BP) had passed on information about local people protesting oil activities to the Colombian military who then arrested or kidnapped them on grounds of being subversives. The report also refers to information stating that, in the summer of 1996, BP signed an agreement with Colombia's Ministry of Defence to create a battalion of 150 officers and 500 soldiers to monitor construction of a 550-mile-long pipeline.

**Violence against women, Special Rapporteur on:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/47, Sections IV & V)

In the section dealing with trafficking in women and forced prostitution, the Special Rapporteur (SR) notes that, in Colombia there are trafficking networks for prostitution that traffic women within the country or regionally (to Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama) as well as traffickers who deal on a global scale, providing Colombian women for markets in Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and the United States. The report further notes that women from Colombia are sold to thriving marriage markets in Western Europe, North America, Australia and Japan. In the section dealing with violence against women migrant workers, the report states that *floristerias* (female workers in the flower export industry) are exposed to pesticides and experience abnormally high levels of physical illnesses, including cancer, birth defects and death.

***Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission***

**States of emergency, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/ Sub.2/1997/19, para. 14, 24)

The report refers to activities by the Special Rapporteur in providing technical advice to the government, at its request, on a legal framework and principles to be observed when declaring a state of emergency.

***Other Reports***

**Conscientious objection to military service, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/99, paras. 2, 6, 9, 16, 20, 25, 34, 38, 41, 47)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that there is conscription in Colombia and that under the Constitution all Colombians are obliged to render military service when required for the defence of the nation's independence and public institutions. Military duty begins when a person is 18 and ends at the age of 50. Compulsory military service is from 12 to 24 months and may be served in one of four ways: regular army soldiers perform from 18 to 24 months of service; holders of the baccalaureate 12 months; baccalaureate police assistants 12 months; and peasant-soldiers 12 to 18 months. Grounds for exemption from compulsory service during peacetime do not include conscientious objection. The

government noted that the Office of the Ombudsman had filed an application for protection of fundamental rights related to four cases of conscientious objection but the judges hearing the applications did not allow the objection. There is no alternative service in Colombia, since conscientious objection is not allowed; it is, however, possible for an "objector" to perform military service without the use of arms and without taking part in combat or hostilities through: auxiliary service in the National Police, auxiliary service for holders of the baccalaureate at the Instituto Nacional Penitenciario, and environmental service for the environmental authorities performed by holders of the baccalaureate. Refusal to perform compulsory military service may result in an individual being tried for disobedience and possibly sentenced to one to three years in prison. Individuals failing to define their military status at the age of 18 or ignoring the obligation to define the status may be fined when they do define it, even if not recruited. Individuals failing to appear before the recruitment authorities to define military status run the risk of being recruited by force if discovered and cannot submit documents proving that military status has been defined or that they are covered by one of the reasons for exemption. The government noted that there is one known case in which an "objector" deserted after joining the service and was sentenced for desertion. Given that conscientious objection is not allowed, the government does not disseminate information on the subject but, as noted above, the Office of the Ombudsman does plead cases of conscientious objection and, if necessary, provides information and advice to those who request it. The Office of the Ombudsman also encourages information meetings and debates on the subject.

**Cooperation with UN representatives, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/50, paras. 9, 17)

The report of the Secretary-General summarizes information from various thematic reports noting that: members of the Colombian Commission of Jurists were accused in a newspaper article of providing information to the High Commissioner on Human Rights with the aim of damaging the image of the armed forces. There were also reports of intimidation or harassment against: members of the Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos; relatives of two missing persons who, after the killing of one member of the family, had been making inquiries into the whereabouts of the disappeared; and witnesses to the arrest of a person who subsequently disappeared, who had given testimony before the judicial authorities.

**Migrant workers, Report of the S-G to the CHR:**  
(E/CN.4/1997/65, para. 4)

The report of the Secretary-General on the status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families notes that Colombia has acceded to the Convention.

**Restitution, compensation and rehabilitation, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/29, paras. 4)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that the government has provided a copy of Law No. 00288 of 8 July 1996 that sets out the procedures for compensating victims of human rights violations.