

- ♦ develop adequate family-planning programmes, with the help of the UN Population Fund, so as to avoid the use of abortion as a means of family planning and diminish the risks of maternal mortality resulting from unsafe abortions;
- ♦ review the legislation relating to the exploitation and trafficking of women so as to eliminate the discriminatory content of such legislation;
- ♦ provide refugee and migrant women with adequate information to protect them from traffickers and others who seek to exploit women for the purposes of prostitution;
- ♦ make efforts, and support those initiated by NGOs, to assess the extent and prevalence of all forms of violence against women and introduce programmes and measures to combat this problem; and
- ♦ take steps to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are publicized among the general public and, in particular, among teachers, social workers, law enforcement officials, prison staff, medical personnel, judges, lawyers and members of other professions; introduce human rights education, including the Convention, into schools and universities.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/6, paras. 48, 50, 59, 60, 63, 64, 66)

The report notes that communications were sent to the government related to violations of freedom of religion and belief against Christianity and Islam. Violations in some cases related to refusal by the authorities to grant official recognition to certain religious groups and communities, and a climate of intolerance with regard to Christian communities, including efforts by the authorities to impose controls on, or interfere with, religious activities. Information also indicated that: there is a law forbidding any proselytizing activity by non-nationals; Christians were reportedly expelled from the premises where they were engaging in their religious activities; Armenian Orthodox churches were said to have been closed; religious minorities encounter difficulty renting rooms for use as places of worship; and threats and harassment have occurred.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/38, para. 23; E/CN.4/1998/38/Add.1, paras. 18–20)

Two newly reported cases were transmitted to the government, one individual case and one collective on behalf of two individuals and a group of unnamed persons.

The individual case related to a journalist with the news agency Turan, who was reportedly beaten severely in November 1996 by a group of men in civilian clothes, shortly after he had interviewed an opposition politician. Information indicated that when the incident was

reported to the district police department, one of the attackers turned out to be the head of the district's 39th police department.

The "collective" case involved two individuals who were reported to have been among 37 defendants in a case against the special police unit OPON, who were being tried on charges in connection with a coup attempt in March 1995. The two men and some 22 other defendants had allegedly been subjected to physical or mental ill treatment during their detention in the first half of 1996, including through the use of electric shocks and being hung upside down and beaten.



BELARUS

Date of admission to UN: 24 October 1945 .

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Belarus has submitted a core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add. 70) for use by the treaty bodies. The report prepared by the government is entirely based on demographic data which include population figures and information on education, characteristics of urban and rural populations, birth and mortality rates, health statistics, personal finances, housing and employment. The report does not provide information on the structure of government and the legal framework for the protection of human rights.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 19 March 1968; ratified: 12 November 1973.
Belarus's fourth periodic report is due 30 June 1999.

Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 19 March 1968; ratified: 12 November 1973.
Belarus's fifth periodic report is due 7 November 2001.
Reservations and Declarations: Declaration under article 41.

Optional Protocol: Acceded: 30 September 1992.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 7 March 1966; ratified: 8 April 1969.
Belarus's 15th periodic report was due 5 May 1998.
Reservations and Declarations: Paragraph 1 of article 17.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 17 July 1980; ratified: 4 February 1981.
Belarus's fourth and fifth periodic reports were due 3 September 1994 and 1998 respectively.

Torture

Signed: 19 December 1985; ratified: 13 March 1987.
Belarus's third periodic report was due 25 June 1996.
Reservations and Declarations: Article 20.