

characterized the incidents as an abuse of authority based on discriminatory attitudes. Mexico emphasized the need for US immigration policies to be applied with strict respect for migrants' dignity and human rights.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on:
(E/CN.4/1997/91, paras. 9, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26, 36, 41, 66)

The report notes that cases have been transmitted to the government and replies have been received on some of them. The areas of concern for the Special Rapporteur are discrimination against Christianity, religious minorities, ill-treatment by communities against peoples who have converted to different faiths and murders of and threats against the clergy and believers. The report notes that the government has provided information on initiatives the state has taken to promote reconciliation and respect for the religious freedom of the Chamula and Catholic evangelical religious minorities.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the:
(E/CN.4/1997/95, paras. 62, 63; E/CN.4/1997/95/Add.2, Sections III & V and Annex 1.)

The main report of the Special Rapporteur (SR) notes information received related to children performing sexual acts with animals in some nightclubs in Mexico. These clubs are open to the public provided the client pays a fee and consumes alcoholic drinks.

The SR's report on a visit to the United States takes into account the implications of cross-border traffic between the U.S. and Mexico for the purposes of child prostitution and pornography. The report notes the arrest of three US citizens living in Mexico who were involved in the production and distribution of child pornography primarily involving boys between seven and 21 years old. Commentary is also provided on "tunnel kids", Mexican children who enter the US illegally through drainage tunnels, are homeless, and are immediately taken into criminal bands that exploit them sexually. However, the SR points out that existing data on the subject of cross-border trafficking only addresses the criminality of Mexican youth in the United States and not their victimization. The report further notes that, with the exception of a few cases, commercial sexual exploitation of children is concentrated in certain areas of the Texan-Mexican (El Paso, Ciudad Juarez) and Californian-Mexican border (San Diego, Tijuana). Of equal concern is the transportation of children from Mexico to the United States for prostitution by wealthy US citizens. The SR states that, in some instances, paedophiles fund orphanages and take children to the United States for "education purposes". These children are then sexually abused and discarded. The report notes admitted difficulties in increasing cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico, including language barriers and differences in legislation and in law enforcement practices.

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly (A/52/482, para. 12) notes that the SR intended to carry out a mission to Mexico in November 1997 and present her report to the 1998 Commission.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/7, Sections II & III; E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.1, paras. 309-333)

Mexico extended an invitation to the Special Rapporteur (SR) to make a visit. The visit was not possible in 1996 and

was therefore anticipated for early in 1997. The SR's observations on the situation in Mexico included comments on the fact that courts continue to use confessions, in many cases extracted under torture, as primary evidence in pronouncing convictions. The report notes that this practice does not conform with the Federal Act for the Prevention and Punishment of Torture. It is also noted that the remedy of *amparo* is apparently ineffective in situations of this kind since, according to existing case law, the first confession can still be used to convict a person even if it can be proved that it was obtained through the use of force. Information also indicated that there is reportedly a tendency on the part of judges to disregard medical certificates provided by defendants as proof of having been tortured.

The SR transmitted a total of 21 cases to the government, 4 of them on an urgent appeal basis. The government replied to many of those cases, as well as to a number which had been sent in 1995. The new cases involved the arrest or detention and ill-treatment of, for example, members of indigenous communities, a person accused of planting a bomb, a representative of the Zapatistia National Liberation Army, individuals accused of abduction and the leader of the Organization of Villages and Settlements of Chilpancingo, Guerrero. Forms of torture included beatings, use of electric shock, cigarette burns, rape, asphyxiation and sleep deprivation.

Information provided by the government indicated that in several cases the victims had chosen not to lodge a formal complaint or continue with charges. In other cases, according to the government, inquiries were proceeding, criminal charges had been laid against the perpetrators and were proceeding, no public officials had taken part in the alleged arrest and torture, the paramilitary group named in the information transmitted does not exist, no external evidence of torture was found or the injuries and lesions found were not serious or life-threatening.

Other Reports

Conscientious objection to military service, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/99, paras. 6, 22)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that conscription is still used in Mexico. Under the Military Service Act of Mexico, various ways of performing military service are set out, including enlistment in: National Military Service companies, which are made up exclusively of volunteers, for three months; training centres-with the army, marine or navy units-where activities involve social work, civic questions and military ceremonial aspects; and "on call", whereby individuals remain in contact with a Mexican consulate abroad or their local military regions or zones. The report notes that voluntary military service performed in Mexico focuses mainly on services and activities under the heading of social work for the benefit of the neediest communities.

Mass exoduses, Report of the HCHR to the CHR:
(E/CN.4/1997/42, Sections II.A, III.A)

The report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights summarized information provided by the government in which Mexico referred to measures taken to assist Guatemalans who entered Mexico in the early 1980s. Through the Mexican Commission for Assistance to Refugees (COMAR), programmes were established in areas such as health,