

resulting in famine and associated inhumane hardships among the civilian population; the aerial bombing, by Taliban forces, of Bamyán airport during the UN food airlift; and the fact that the production, processing and export of narcotics in and from Afghanistan, where the greatest proportion of poppy-producing areas is under Taliban control, pose serious obstacles to the control of narcotics worldwide.

The report states that in the absence of progress towards peace, representative government and respect for human rights all previous recommendations remain valid. The report recommends, *inter alia*, that:

- ♦ all parties to the conflict refrain from committing human rights violations, in particular those amounting to extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions and to torture and ill treatment;
- ♦ all armed hostilities cease immediately and a negotiated solution be sought;
- ♦ the international community consider how to conduct a campaign of awareness and education about the international obligations and duties under the laws of war and international humanitarian law; all participants to the armed conflict abide by those provisions with a view to halting or mitigating the suffering inflicted on the population of Afghanistan;
- ♦ the international community, including UN agencies as well as non-governmental organizations, continue efforts aimed at constructive and mutually beneficial dialogue;
- ♦ international aid agencies pay much greater attention and provide assistance on a priority basis to areas where policies of respect for and promotion of human rights for women are followed; and
- ♦ a thorough and full-scale investigation of all killings, including the mass graves in northern Afghanistan, be undertaken by the UN in order to seek out and punish the violators responsible for committing these atrocities.

Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights

At its 1998 session the Commission adopted by consensus a resolution on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan (1998/70). The Commission, *inter alia*: expressed concern at the continued armed confrontation and the increasingly ethnic nature of the conflict; recalled that the UN continues to play a central and impartial role in international efforts towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict; noted with deep concern the further deterioration of the situation of human rights and continuing and substantiated reports of violations of human rights vis-à-vis women and girls, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban, the intensification of armed hostilities, reports of mass killings and atrocities committed by combatants against civilians and prisoners of war, the sharp deterioration in the humanitarian situation in several

areas of the country, the continued displacement of millions of refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and reports of the destruction and looting of the country's cultural and historical heritage; condemned the widespread violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian law, the frequent practice of arbitrary arrest and detention and summary trials, the public executions of male convicts which were carried out by burying the victims alive, and actions by all parties that interfere with the delivery of humanitarian aid, including the looting on a massive scale of UN and other warehouses by elements in the Northern Alliance; urged all Afghan parties to cease hostilities immediately and work and cooperate fully with the UN Special Envoy and UN Special Mission to Afghanistan to achieve a cease fire; urged all Afghan parties to end without delay all violations of human rights against women and girls and take urgent measures to repeal legislation and measures that discriminate against women, ensure the effective participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life throughout the country, respect the rights of women to work and security of person and the right of women and girls to education, health and freedom of movement; urged all parties to respect fully international humanitarian law, provide sufficient and effective remedies to the victims of grave violations and abuses, ensure the safety of UN and diplomatic personnel, provide access to all prisoners for the ICRC, treat all suspects and convicted or detained persons in conformity with international standards, refrain from arbitrary detention — including of civilian foreign nationals — and protect and safeguard Afghanistan's cultural and historical heritage; encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to investigate fully reports of mass killings of prisoners of war and civilians and exert efforts to promote a gender perspective in the selection of staff of the UN Special Mission for Afghanistan; encouraged the SR to continue to pay attention to human rights for women and girls; welcomed the release of prisoners of war and called for the unconditional and simultaneous release of all remaining prisoners of war; appealed to the international community to provide humanitarian assistance on a non-discriminatory basis, intensify the landmine removal programme, ensure that all UN-assisted programmes are formulated and coordinated in such a way as to ensure the participation of women in them, and take urgent measures to prevent the looting of cultural artifacts and ensure that any illegally removed are returned to Afghanistan. The Commission renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a further year.

Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

At its 1998 session, the Sub-Commission adopted by consensus a resolution (1998/17) on the situation of women in Afghanistan. The Sub-Commission, *inter alia*: referred to various international instruments in which the right to complete freedom of movement of residents within a territory is guaranteed as well as the freedom to leave any country, including one's own; noted provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimi-