

allowed to go unpunished. We have pressed hard to ensure that the convention when it emerges will include a provision on universal jurisdiction. Such a provision would allow the prosecution of a torturer in any state regardless of his nationality, the nationality of his victim, or the place where the torture occurred.

On the second front I mentioned a few minutes ago, Canada recently sponsored an initiative focusing on the right and responsibility of individuals and groups to promote existing human rights and freedoms. This initiative was adopted at the last session of the Human Rights Commission. We hope that a declaration on this subject will help to deter countries from punishing their citizens for merely asserting rights embodied in universally accepted instruments. We hope too that the declaration will better enable organizations such as the International Commission of Jurists to carry out their mandates.

I should also mention here the important activities of the U.N. Working Group on the Disappeared -- a dreadful new concept that has entered our modern vocabulary. This working group embodies many of the aims of Canadian foreign policy in the field of human rights. It attempts to deal with the problem of disappearances on a generic basis by attacking it wherever it occurs, without singling out individual countries for special consideration. The working group has carried out its mandate in a manner that has been commended even by some of the countries under investigation. Most important of all, it has proven itself effective and has reported on more than 2,100 missing persons in 22 different countries. The working group has also established an emergency procedure -- the first of its kind within the U.N. -- which authorizes the chairman of the group to respond to urgent reports of disappearances by an immediate direct approach to the government concerned. This procedure has saved many lives and has acted as an important deterrent against arbitrary action.

Finally, on our third front, relating to the prevention of further abuses of human rights, Canada recently took the initiative in bringing about the preparation of a report that analyses the root causes of massive exoduses of people. The report explores a number of ways to prevent this sad phenomenon and the human rights violations that inevitably result. It was considered by the Human Rights Commission last winter and will now be taken up by the General Assembly this fall.