

notes that, during military conscription, anyone who objects to military service on grounds of "profound religious, philosophical or moral convictions" is required to perform alternative social service in such areas as public health and the environment. The law further states that, in time of war, alternative social service will consist of activities related to civil protection and defence.

**Cooperation with representatives of UN human rights bodies, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/50, para. 15)

The report of the Secretary-General refers to a communication sent to the government by the Working Group on disappearances regarding the need to provide protection for six members of the group Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio. Members of this group are children of victims of disappearances and other human rights violations. The six were reportedly subjected to intimidation by members of the security forces.

**Minimum humanitarian standards, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/77, para. 4, Section I)

The report of the Secretary-General summarizes information provided by the government, noting that: Argentina has ratified the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and acceded to the two Additional Protocols (1977); in 1992, a seminar was held to consider national measures to be adopted to ensure the enforcement of international humanitarian law; the Inter-Ministerial Commission on the Enforcement of International Humanitarian Law was established in 1994 with responsibilities related to the implementation and enforcement of international humanitarian law on the basis of proposals submitted to the national authorities on legislative and regulatory provisions and measures to guarantee the implementation of the basic international instruments; Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions excludes from the scope of humanitarian law situations of internal disturbances and tensions on the basis that they are not armed conflicts; and there is a need to fill a legal gap, initially by means of a set of principles, then a declaration and then, if international consensus permits, legal rules establishing obligations for states by means of an international treaty.

**World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, Report of the S-G to the CHR:** (E/CN.4/1997/36, paras. 85, 98)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Buenos Aires organized a seminar—"Inter-religious Encounter: A Prayer for Peace"—to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the UN and the International Year of Tolerance. This was attended by 700 people representing the media and non-governmental organizations. For Human Rights Day, UNIC prepared a special press kit which was distributed to the media and local NGOs. In connection with activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, UNIC organized a workshop on the worldwide situation of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the Argentine situation. The objectives of the workshop were to find ways to preserve indigenous culture, protect the homes of indigenous peoples, and help them to gain respect and improve their ways of living.

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## BAHAMAS

**Date of admission to UN:** 18 September 1973.

### TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

**Land and People:** Bahamas has not submitted a core document for use by treaty bodies.

#### Racial Discrimination

Succeeded: 5 August 1975.

The fifth through 11<sup>th</sup> (1984-1996) periodic reports of Bahamas have not been submitted; the 11<sup>th</sup> periodic report was due 4 September 1994.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Article 4.

At its March 1997 session the Committee considered implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report from the government. The Committee's concluding observations (CERD/C/50/Misc.5/Rev.1) noted that no report has been submitted since 1982 and that the government had not responded in a timely fashion to the invitation to participate in the meeting and furnish relevant information. The Committee decided to send a communication to the government setting out its reporting obligations and urging that the dialogue with the Committee be resumed as soon as possible. The Committee suggested that the government consider availing itself of the technical assistance offered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to draw up and submit as soon as possible an updated report.

#### Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 6 October 1993.

Bahamas' initial report was due 5 November 1994.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraph (a) of article 2; paragraph 2 of article 9; paragraph (h) of article 16; paragraph 1 of article 29.

#### Rights of the Child

Signed: 30 October 1990; ratified: 20 February 1991.

Bahamas' initial report was due 21 March 1993.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Article 2.

### THEMATIC REPORTS

#### *Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights*

**Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/60, para. 87)

The report recalls the 1993 judgement of the U.K. Privy Council, the supreme judicial instance for the member states of the Commonwealth, in which it was held that awaiting the execution of a death sentence for five years after it had been handed down constituted in itself cruel and inhuman punishment. The report notes that, in October 1996, the Privy Council ruled that, in the Bahamas, it may be considered cruel or inhuman to execute a prisoner who has been on death row for more than three-and-a-half years. The report cites information indicating that the Privy Council was of the view that the five-year ruling was not to be regarded as a fixed limit applicable in all cases, but as a norm which may be departed from if circumstances required.

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