

(g) measures taken against organizations involved in racial propaganda; and (h) the situation of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East;

- ♦ give greater attention to programmes intended to improve relations between ethnic groups as well as to ensure the adequate development and protection of less developed groups;
- ♦ continue and develop further the training of judges and law enforcement officials in matters relating to the exercise of individuals' rights and freedoms and, in particular, on the right not to be discriminated against on racial grounds;
- ♦ continue efforts aimed at strengthening the court system and the independence of the judiciary;
- ♦ consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 169 with regard to indigenous peoples;
- ♦ take further measures in order to provide minorities and indigenous groups with elementary education in their own languages; and
- ♦ reinforce measures to protect human rights in Chechnya, Ingushetia and North Ossetia, in particular to ensure that serious breaches of international humanitarian law do not remain unpunished, that the victims are afforded just and adequate reparation, and to ensure normal conditions of life and return for displaced persons.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Arbitrary detention, Working Group on: (E/CN.4/1988/44/Add.1, Opinion No. 14/1997)

Opinion No. 14/1997 related to the case of a retired naval officer who was arrested in February 1996 by the Federal Security Services (FSB) in St. Petersburg, and charged with treason under article 64 of the Russian Criminal Code. Information indicated that the FSB had limited the officer's access to an attorney of his choice on the grounds that his affair involved "state secrets". The Working Group (WG) noted that the Constitutional Court declared this limitation imposed by the FSB as unconstitutional, resulting in the officer finally being represented by an attorney of his choice. Information indicated: the arrest and charges were linked with the officer's work, which involved the preparation of a report on the dangers of nuclear waste in the Northern Fleet for the Norwegian non-governmental environmental group Bellona Foundation; the only information provided to the Foundation had already been published in the Russian media; the arrest occurred in the context of an emerging pattern of persecution of environmental activists who are connected with the Bellona Foundation in Russia; and the officer was being detained solely on the grounds of his research and his legitimate activities on behalf of the Bellona Foundation.

The government affirmed that the charges against the officer included the transmission of secret and top secret information that had not been published by the press and had no connection with the environment, and denied any persecution of the Bellona Foundation. The government provided the WG with details concerning the legal proceedings, the charges, and the criminal investigation under way.

Information subsequently provided by the source indicated that the officer had been released pending trial but was not allowed to travel outside St. Petersburg while awaiting the court date. The WG decided to keep the case open, pending further information once the trial is completed.

Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1998/43, paras. 13, 323-328)

During the period under review, the Working Group (WG) transmitted 33 newly reported cases of disappearance to the government. Of the 160 cases transmitted in the past, two allegedly occurred in 1996 and concerned ethnic Chechens who are said to have been arrested by OMON, the Special Forces of the Russian Interior Ministry. Some 150 cases concerned persons of ethnic Ingush origin who reportedly disappeared in 1992 during the fighting between the ethnic Ossetians and the Ingush. Eight other cases concerned persons who reportedly disappeared in 1994 in the Ingush Republic. The Northern Ossetian forces are said to have acted with the acquiescence of the OMON. All of the newly reported cases occurred in Chechnya, the majority in late 1994 and early 1995. The Russian military forces were allegedly responsible.

The government stated that, with regard to the cases transmitted in 1996, an investigation was being carried out by the General Procurator's office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Security Service. With regard to the cases reported to have occurred in Chechnya, the government informed the WG that investigations were being carried out throughout the Northern Caucasus region by officials of the Russian Federation Ministry of the Interior in the Chechen Republic, in order to determine the whereabouts of the persons reported as missing. The government stated that there was no record of the missing persons in the data banks of the Central Information Centre or the Central Department for the Execution of Punishment of the Ministry of the Interior, and suggested that representatives of the Chechen Republic Ministry of the Interior meet the persons who reported the disappearance in order to obtain information which would help it to determine the fate of the disappeared person.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, para. 17; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 343-351)

The government provided information in response to several communications sent during 1996. The information outlined several cases including: a journalist killed near Budennovsk, where the responsible member of the