

The report further notes that: because of the growing division of the country along ethnic lines, persons belonging to the Hazara ethnic minority have difficulty moving around freely and entering hospitals in Kabul; a study conducted by UNICEF showed that 90 per cent of the children in the city believed that they would die during the conflict; most inhabitants are cases of borderline nourishment, the population is suffering psychologically from post-traumatic stress disorders and the suicide rate among women is said to be on the rise; and, purges in the academic community have been based partly on ideological considerations and partly as a means of settling scores.

With regard to Kandahar province, the SR noted, *inter alia*, that: reports indicate that a massive campaign of forced conscription is taking place in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, especially in the villages; inhabitants of Kandahar city are not trusted by the Taliban since the Taliban are viewed by them as occupiers; and, reports from former Taliban prisoners detained by the Northern Alliance indicate that they were forced to give blood, did not receive any medical treatment and some had pieces of cloth with salt placed on their wounds.

Commentary on conditions in Jalalabad notes, *inter alia*, that: there is no education, not even Koranic schools, for girls; some women in the city who were considered immoral had been killed in unclear circumstances; a number of educated women in the city are reported to have been threatened and harassed by the Taliban; and political prisoners are equated to prisoners of war, including persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities who currently oppose the Taliban movement on the battlefield. The report also notes that: criminal and civil cases have separate judicial proceedings but the division between criminal and military jurisdictions is not clear; the judiciary does not have independent power to decide who is qualified to be a judge, to appoint judges or to implement and monitor the implementation of amnesty decrees; and, in order to become a judge, one must know about Islamic teachings and come from a religious school. The current critical situation in the battlefield and the resulting lack of funds are cited as the reasons why education for women is not available; and, the head of the judiciary has stated that experience had proven that the people of Afghanistan had to be shown the right way by force, as rules and regulations would never be respected if attempts were made to enforce them in a peaceful atmosphere.

With regard to Sheberghan, capital of Jowzjan province, the report notes, *inter alia*, that: mass graves were reportedly found in November 1997, presumed to hold the bodies of as many 2,000 Taliban fighters taken prisoner by the Northern Alliance as well as commanders of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (NIMA), traders and other prominent local personalities, some of whom were allegedly beheaded. The report states that: forensic work on 10 bodies at one site showed that the individuals were all young males dressed in summer clothing; many had serious, probably fatal, gunshot

wounds to various parts of the body; two showed evidence of having received medical treatment; and several still had unspent rounds of ammunition in their clothing. It was concluded that these individuals were battle casualties and not prisoners who had been deliberately executed. The report notes that: at nine unexcavated well sites there were bulldozed tracks up to the well mouth; seven are plugged with earth; two are open with water visible at a depth of about 10 metres; at all nine there are spent cartridges; at three wells there is evidence of the presence of anti-personnel mines as well as one grenade; and two pieces of a human skull were found lying near the earth plugging one of the wells. On a stretch of highway between Mazar-i-Sharif and Hairatan, numerous bodies were found and, the report notes, there was clear evidence that victims had been tied up individually or several together; there were numerous spent cartridges and the bodies were lying largely covered with sand in a row on either side of a ridge; and forensic evidence supports the allegations that at two of the three areas examined human rights abuses were carried out.

In terms of Bamyan province the report notes, *inter alia*, that: in the Hazarajat region, the Taliban has maintained what amounts to a blockade of the region, mostly populated by persons belonging to the Hazara ethnic minority; this *de facto* blockade has led to shortages of food and medicines and starvation because of floods, crop failure and lack of access to food aid; and, a representative of the Taliban denied there is a blockade and pointed to the fact that Bamyan can be reached from the north of the country where he said that the Northern Alliance has looted UN warehouses containing food destined for Hazarajat.

The conclusions of the report refer to, *inter alia*: all types of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, armed hostilities resulting in massive loss of life as well as all forms of torture and ill treatment and, in particular, killings which have taken place in northern Afghanistan; the widespread non-observance of the international laws of war and humanitarian norms within and outside the battle zones in Afghanistan, resulting in, for example, the ill-treatment of prisoners of war and the imposition of inhumane conditions of detention; the pronounced ethnic and religious dimensions to the armed hostilities among the warring factions, leading to an absence of a distinction in the administration of criminal justice between prisoners of war, political prisoners and persons detained on religious grounds and the failure to make a distinction between combatants and civilians when prisoners are exchanged; and the fact that infringements on women's rights in Afghanistan are such that they pose serious threats to the enjoyment of even the most basic rights, including the right to life, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban where women continue to be denied access to education and employment. The report notes: the deliberate blockade of roads by the Taliban in areas under their control; the lawlessness and banditry prevailing along the roads controlled by the Northern Alliance that give access to the provinces of the isolated Hazarajat region in central Afghanistan, possibly