

Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 24 June 1969; ratified: 10 May 1978.

Venezuela's third periodic report has been submitted but is not yet scheduled for consideration by the Committee; the fourth periodic report was due 1 November 1996.

Reservations and Declarations: Venezuela filed a reservation to paragraph 3 (d), article 14 (the right of defendants to be tried in their presence).

Optional Protocol: Signed: 15 November 1976; ratified: 10 May 1978.

Reservations and Declaration: Same as for article 14 (3) (d) of the ICCPR.

Second Optional Protocol: Signed: 7 June 1990; ratified: 22 February 1993.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 21 April 1967; ratified: 10 October 1967.

Venezuela's 14th and 15th periodic reports were due 4 January 1996 and 1998 respectively.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 17 July 1980; ratified: 2 May 1983.

Venezuela's fourth periodic report was due 1 June 1996.

Torture

Signed: 15 February 1985; ratified: 29 July 1991.

Venezuela's initial report (CAT/C/16/Add.8) has been submitted and is scheduled for consideration at the Committee's May 1999 session; the second periodic report was due 27 August 1996.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 13 September 1990.

Venezuela's initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.54) has been submitted and is scheduled for consideration at the Committee's January 2000 session; the second periodic report was due 12 October 1997.

Reservations and Declarations: Paragraphs (b) and (d) of article 21 and article 30.

THEMATIC REPORTS**Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights****Arbitrary detention, Working Group on:**

(E/CN.4/1998/44, para. 19)

The report notes that an urgent appeal was sent to the government but no details of the case were provided.

Disappearances, Working Group on enforced or involuntary: (E/CN.4/1998/43, paras. 394–396)

No new cases of disappearance were transmitted to the government. Of the 10 reported cases four have been clarified. Three of the six outstanding cases occurred in December 1991 and concern student leaders who had reportedly been intercepted by security forces during a commercial fishing expedition. A fourth case concerned a businessman arrested in February 1991 in Valencia City,

Carabobo, by the police. The fifth case concerns a 14-year-old girl who was allegedly abducted in March 1993 following a military raid on her house in the peasant community of 5 de Julio, municipality of Catatumbo, State of Zulia. And the sixth case concerns a person who was allegedly detained in February 1995 in the vicinity of Puerto Ayacucho, State of Amazonas, by members of the Navy Infantry, following incidents in which eight Venezuelan soldiers were reportedly ambushed and killed by Colombia guerrillas.

The government replied, stating: the person concerned was living in Colombia, but the exact whereabouts were not specified; in three cases it had been impossible to determine the whereabouts of the individuals since the shipwreck of their boat, but they may possibly have drowned or died of natural causes; one case was before the Military Court of Maracay, which had been hearing the case against a number of members of the military suspected of involvement in the disappearance; in one other case the investigations undertaken by the Prosecutor's Office and the police had, to date, proved unsuccessful.

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/68, paras. 12, 14, 15, 17, 29, 30, 32, 36, 39, 57, 61, 65, 68; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, paras. 420–427)

The report notes that between November 1994 and October 1995, 274 persons died at the hands of state security bodies. Information indicated that, in many of these cases, police officers killed offenders and then claimed that clashes had taken place. The security bodies alleged to be the most involved in human rights violations are the State Police, the National Guard, and the Metropolitan Police, with the State Police apparently responsible for 33 per cent of deaths attributed to the security forces during the period under review.

An urgent appeal was sent to the government requesting that the necessary measures be taken to protect the right to life of the director of the Apostolic Vicariate's Human Rights Office in Puerto Ayacucho, Amazonas, who was threatened with death during an interview at a local radio station with the director of an industrial company in the area. The Vicariate reportedly launched a campaign on behalf of various Indian communities in the State of Amazonas, whose members were being evicted by industrial company officials acting with the acquiescence of the local authorities.

Complaints transmitted to the government related to: six killings by members of the Metropolitan Police; one killing by members of the Sucre Municipal Police; one killing by members of a police branch, as a result of shots fired by the police during an altercation; one killing by an unidentified branch of the police; the death of a 13-year-old child when members of the police tried to stop a family fight; the killing of a 16-year-old by members of the Metropolitan Police in Calle Estanque, Coche Parish; and, the death of one person who was killed in Caracas by shots fired by a National Guard officer.