

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
FORTY-FIRST SESSION
*Official Records**



THIRD COMMITTEE
56th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 25 November 1986
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 56th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMFR (Netherlands)

Later: Mr. MUGUME (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/41/3, 180, 274 and Add.1, 317 and Add.1, 507, 710, 719, 778, 787; A/41/183, 189, 213, 315, 326, 337, 343, 354, 398, 461 and Corr.1, 462, 494, 523, 607, 667, 729, 771; A/C.3/41/1, 3, 6, 10, 11; A/C.3/41/L.94)

1. Mr. FAROUQUE (Sri Lanka) said that the 1982 Colombo Seminar on National, Local and Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights had demonstrated that regional arrangements must evolve freely and spontaneously from within the region itself. Despite the divergence of views, the participants had agreed by consensus on recommendations for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian region. For the many cultures and political systems represented, development was a common aspiration. In that connection, the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights must be recognized - economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political. Regional promotion of human rights must also involve practical dialogue on the right to development, education, and employment. Acknowledgement of all existing political systems and socio-economic orders was a prerequisite for any such dialogue. Given the complexity of the political, socio-economic and cultural systems in Asia and the Pacific, regional efforts to promote human rights would require time, patience and dedication.

2. Regional efforts must be complemented by strengthening the role of local international institutions and creating new institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Educational programmes in the field of human rights would also contribute to the establishment of regional arrangements. In that connection, the Sri Lankan delegation welcomed the Committee's action to encourage such public information activities.

Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.94

3. Mr. FAROUQUE (Sri Lanka) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.94 on behalf of its sponsors, joined by Mongolia. The draft resolution on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian Pacific region was almost identical to resolution 1986/57 of the Commission on Human Rights. Among other things, it requested the Secretary-General's assistance in establishing a depository centre for United Nations human rights materials in Bangkok. It also renewed the invitation to States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to comment on the report on the Colombo Seminar, and invited the Secretary-General to finalize preparations for a human rights training course in the region. The sponsors hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.94 would be adopted by consensus.

4. Mr. ORAMAS-OLIVA (Cuba) said that imperialist régimes were again using the theme of human rights as a smoke-screen. Self-styled champions of human rights, they branded anyone who did not concur with their viewpoint. Champions of human rights, however, did not arm bands of mercenaries to destabilize Governments. Nor

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(Mr. Oramas-Oliva, Cuba)

did they mine the ports of sovereign nations, subjugate the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, or perpetuate apartheid.

5. A society must, first and foremost, attempt to solve the basic problems of employment, health and housing, without which enjoyment of civil and political rights was not possible. It was paradoxical that the so-called human rights defenders were stressing civil and political rights - which they implemented only partially at best - over all the others. It was not enough to declare that human beings were worthy of respect; conditions must be created to foster that respect.

6. Cuba maintained no ties whatsoever with American régimes which violated human rights, namely, the United States, El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala and Paraguay. In every case, United States backing was the common denominator.

7. Among the régimes which violated human rights was the dictatorship of Stroessner in Paraguay, the oldest tyranny on the continent. In Chile, the human rights situation had not improved, but worsened. The report of the Special Rapporteur on Chile was as superficial as it had been the year before. It was selective and its conclusions were partial to the Pinochet régime. The report emphasized the Pinochet Government's promises to promulgate a Constitution in the first quarter of 1987. What it failed to mention was that the Chilean Government had been making the same promise for years. It made no mention of the victims of repression who had been constantly exposing the torture, the political assassinations, the disappearances, the arbitrary detentions. Neither did the report mention the statistics on arbitrary arrests and other violations, compiled by the Chilean Commission on Human Rights.

8. The report contained no in-depth analysis of the current state of siege, nor did it refer to the secret police or military structure responsible for it. In short, the report was unbalanced. It only served the Chilean Government in its attempt to deceive the United Nations.

9. Meanwhile, reports of illegal executions and disappearances in Guatemala had not been investigated. Worse still, the military officers murdering their own people went unpunished on the pretence that they were paving the way for democracy. Violations in Guatemala would continue until adequate legal instruments were substituted for the repressive machinery in place. Even the United States press contained reports of violence in Guatemala.

10. The human rights situation under the Duarte Government in El Salvador was alarming. Under that Government, in spite of its democratic trappings, the number of human rights victims and violations had tripled since the time of the military dictatorships in the 1970s. Torture was still practised, as it had been under the earlier military dictatorships. Even the archbishop of El Salvador had condemned the policy of torture, and the Salvadorian people had felt compelled to seek radical solutions.

11. The Special Representative, as politically short-sighted as ever, had ignored violations cited by many human rights organizations; he refused to recognize that

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(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

the Salvadorian armed forces and paramilitary groups were responsible for innumerable violations. From the report, it might seem that the army was acting independently and had nothing to do with the Duarte Government.

12. The United States Embassy in El Salvador had been the source of much of the information contained in the report. And it was the United States Government which was obstructing dialogue between the Salvadorian Government and the liberation movements in El Salvador. Responsibility for the gross human rights violations in El Salvador must be placed squarely on the United States.

13. Mr. VARKONYI (Hungary) said that the human rights of millions of people were placed in jeopardy by underdevelopment, imperialism, destabilization policies and the international economic situation. The threat of nuclear war, in particular, endangered the enjoyment of the right to life and the right to live in peace. In that respect, the designation of 1986 as the International Year of Peace was of paramount importance.

14. Some delegations had adopted a one-sided approach to the items, trying to teach others what "true democracy" was. In fact, mutual respect, tolerance and understanding would contribute more effectively to genuine co-operation in the field of human rights.

15. In some countries, theories of racial superiority were used to justify exploitation of the indigenous population. Economic exploitation often went hand in hand with racism, particularly in cases of discrimination against migrant workers and their families. Lately, Xenophobia had gained ground even in some highly developed countries. Since all efforts by the international community had failed to change the South African policy of apartheid, more effective action must be taken. It must be recognized that certain States were providing indirect, if not, direct, assistance to South Africa, mainly through economic and military collaboration with the régime. Until such time as apartheid was eradicated, the South African régime must be isolated and the sanctions imposed upon it, observed. South Africa must also cease its flagrant violations of international law in Namibia.

16. The right to self-determination must be granted to the Arab people in the Middle East. Territorial expansion and defiance of basic human rights would have adverse long-term effects even on Israel. An international conference under United Nations auspices held much promise for settlement of the Middle East crisis - so vital to world peace.

17. The threat to the sovereignty of the Central American and Caribbean countries had increased. In El Salvador, human rights violations persisted, even as the living conditions of the citizens deteriorated. As indicated in the Special Representative's report (A/41/710), the army's death squads were still active and the number of political prisoners had increased. In Chile, the military régime persisted in maintaining a climate of violence and of terror. That situation worsened with the declaration of a state of siege in September 1986. The military

(Mr. Varkonyi, Hungary)

Government of Chile was willing to go to any lengths to maintain the current system. It had yet to fulfil the promise it had made to the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-fifth session.

18. Unfortunately, the Special Rapporteur's report on Afghanistan was one-sided. Such an approach, amounting at times to 'interference in the country's internal affairs, would not help the Afghan people. The human rights of the Afghan people were threatened mainly by foreign intervention directed against the country's legitimate Government. Negotiation was the sole means of achieving a settlement. The Afghan Government had repeatedly offered to hold talks with its neighbours.

19. Mr. GORAJEWSKI (Poland) said that there was a clear need for deeper analysis of the interrelationship between the economic and social aspects of development, and closer international co-operation on social matters. The rapid social changes in many countries over the past decade had given rise to new problems such as the environment, technological disasters, drugs and indebtedness, requiring concerted international action.

20. The activities of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the social area must be streamlined and their work programmes must be rearranged in accordance with the established priorities. His delegation looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on measures to strengthen the Commission for Social Development, and the Commission's proposals, to be submitted in 1987. The reference in Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/14 to the need to take into account the provisions of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development was very timely.

21. There were important differences in the approach of some delegations to the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and that of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Attempts had been made to make a distinction between individual rights and those of people and society as a whole. That was a class approach. It was disturbing that certain States were continuing to boycott the Covenants and were refusing to comply with international norms relating to the political and socio-economic rights of the individual. Poland firmly believed that human rights were indivisible and interdependent.

22. The socialist system strove to secure for the working people rights that the capitalist system for the most part could not assure. The socialist system did not limit itself to proclaiming formal political rights, but guaranteed them in all spheres of life and ensured the necessary conditions for their implementation. The rights proclaimed under socialism were not subject to privilege of private property.

23. His delegation believed that the submission of a report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan was entirely inappropriate. As the Special Rapporteur himself admitted in the report, the current situation in Afghanistan was the result of internal developments which, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, could not be considered in the United Nations. Afghanistan was a party to

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(Mr. Gorajewski, Poland)

the International Covenants and to the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It had submitted reports to the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The real issues, which were not being addressed, were destructive activities inside Afghanistan, supported from abroad and aimed at undermining the legitimate Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Important steps had recently been taken by the Afghan Government with a view to widening the social base of the national democratic revolution and promoting national reconciliation. The problem of Afghanistan could be solved only at the political level, and the most promising approach was talks, with the participation of the Secretary-General's Special Representative.

24. Mass and flagrant violations of human rights in Chile had been exacerbated after the introduction of a state of siege in September 1986, despite world-wide protest and condemnation. Poland expressed its solidarity with the struggle of the Chilean people for the restoration of their fundamental human rights.

25. MR. DARGEL (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled that the Byelorussian SSR had sponsored a very important resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council in connection with the International Year of Peace. The Soviet Union and other States of the socialist community had put forward a programme for ending the race in nuclear and other weapons and ensuring equal security for everyone; without peace and the guaranteed right to life, any talk of human rights was meaningless.

26. The Byelorussian SSR had always maintained that peace was indivisible and that even more human rights should be enshrined in international instruments and national laws. The practical realization of human rights depended in the first place on the domestic economic and social policies of States. In the socialist countries, the constant enhancement of the well-being of the working people and the strengthening of democracy constituted the main goal of socialist development.

27. In those States whose social structure was characterized by the exploitation of man by man, the driving force was to secure profits for the exploiters at the expense of the labour of others. The chase for super profits was the main cause of many social ills of such societies - unemployment, hunger, homelessness, disease, crime and so forth. The limited attempts at change being made were all doomed to failure since those problems were an organic part of the life of society. In that connection, the right to work was the material basis for many other rights.

28. For more than 13 years, the mass information media had regularly reported on the violence, murders, abductions and human rights violations of the Fascist dictatorship in Chile, where such crimes had become State policy. The representative of Chile on the Committee could not even attempt to justify that policy, since he did not represent a Government elected by the people. Nine tenths of the population rejected the despotic junta. It has taken power in a coup prepared and generously financed by the United States secret services and transnational corporations. In Chile civil and political rights simply did not exist. The hopes of elections under the Constitution which had been forged through

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under a fraudulent plebiscite by the junta in 1980 had been dashed by Pinochet in 1985. The economic situation was critical, yet the people and the progressive forces of Chile were courageously struggling to overthrow the junta. They must be supported by the international community. References in the report to hopes of a dialogue with the Fascist Junta were inexplicable; it was also unclear why the decision of the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 1986/63 regarding the title of the report had been disregarded.

29. The sufferings of the people of El Salvador resulting from the policy of the dictatorial régime aroused legitimate anger and indignation in the entire world community. The reasons for the gross and mass violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in El Salvador lay in the economic and social situation which had developed as a result of almost 50 years of cringing service of the interests of the United States by military and terrorist régimes. In El Salvador 14 families controlled most of the country's wealth while 40 per cent of rural families were landless, and unemployment and illiteracy affected up to 50 per cent of the population. The patriots of El Salvador united in the revolutionary democratic front had put forward a programme of socio-economic change but the dictatorial régime did not wish to lose its privileges and was continuing its practices of terror and violence, depriving the Salvadorian people of all human rights and freedoms. That situation was made clear both in the report, and in the oral presentation by the Special Rapporteur.

30. Her delegation noted the efforts that were being made by the Government of Guatemala to overcome the consequences of fascism; however, the Government was encountering resistance on the part of the Fascist-leaning military and political apparatus which were continuing the practice of gross and mass violations of human rights against people of the country and the democratic forces. The Committee should take a decision which would contribute to democratic change in Guatemala and strengthen the position of the Government in its efforts to eliminate the remnants of Fascist dictatorship and human rights violations.

31. In general the decisions contained in the report of the Economic and Social Council corresponded to the goals of the United Nations in the struggle against apartheid, racism and militarism and mass and gross violations of human rights. However, her delegation was categorically opposed to consideration in the United Nations of the human rights situation in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The politically tendentious, supposedly impartial report concocted from false conjectures and hostile statements by paid killers openly served the goals of imperialist terrorist policy against the Afghan people, who had chosen the road of radical socio-economic change.

32. Her delegation was prepared to continue to participate in fruitful co-operation among States in ensuring basic rights and fundamental freedoms and in implementing measures corresponding to the interests of the peoples, peace and collective security. It wished to stress the importance of the proposal made by the Soviet Union that a representative conference of States parties to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe dealing with the whole range of

(Ms. Dargel, Byelorussian SSR)

questions of humanitarian co-operation, including contacts between individuals, questions of information, culture and education, should be held in Moscow. That conference would undoubtedly give further impetus to international co-operation in the protection of human rights.

33. Mr. LEWIS (Canada) said the Committee should consider the wide gap between the noble sentiments espoused by so many delegations and the bleak reality of human rights in most parts of the world. In the course of its existence, the United Nations had developed a solid foundation for the promotion of human rights, and had produced a virtual revolution in international law and practice, placing individuals and groups at the forefront of protective and promotional measures. It had rendered States accountable for their behaviour towards their own citizens, and robbed even the most powerful countries of their traditional defences and excuses for obstructing international scrutiny. Yet because of the frailty of some of the procedures and machinery for promoting human rights, budgetary cuts could have debilitating effects on already strained programmes; any additional reductions would further erode public support for the Organization in numerous Member States.

34. Following discussions with citizens in every region of Canada, the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee on Canada's International Relations had expressed the view that the promotion of human rights was a vital expression of Canadian values and of universal values to which all Governments, like individuals, were subject.

35. The United Nations had a fundamental concern for the rights of the individual; it was extraordinary that the espousal of those rights should engender conflict. During the 1970s Canada had drawn attention to two of the most egregious human rights situations of the era, Uganda and Argentina. As a result, it had been threatened with action by the Organization of African Unity and with bilateral economic sanctions by Argentina. After a few years both Governments had changed and their new representatives had expressed appreciation for the limited measures taken by the United Nations to promote constructive change. It was not clear what might have happened in other situations if the Organization had taken stronger action at the right time. In the 1940s it might have been able to prevent the drift to South African racism and the scourge of apartheid. If it had responded to evidence of flagrant violations committed by the Government of the Shah of Iran it might have spared Iran the bloodshed and suffering it had endured under the current régime for the past seven years.

36. Those and other situations, revealed the protective capacity of various great powers, and their ability to shield surrogate States and allied régimes; the capacity of regional organizations to prevent decisive action against their member States; and a reluctance to violate the principle of the sovereignty of States in order to permit an objective investigation of the facts. The result had been an uneven series of accomplishments, and many situations had been allowed to pass unnoticed.

37. Most prominent among the States not subject to examination was the Soviet Union, although there was no shortage of material documenting the Soviet Union's

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

total failure to abide by its Charter and treaty obligations in the field of human rights. Soviet Jews had suffered from a systematic campaign to obliterate their culture, language and religious heritage. Those who lived in the Soviet Union were subjected to a virulent campaign of anti-Semitism. Those who attempted to emigrate were the targets of intimidation, prosecution, incarceration in psychiatric hospitals, internal exile and imprisonment. Soviet Jewry had become a focal point in the rhetorical battles of the Cold War. Prominent cases had been settled as bargains and trade-offs in a cynical campaign of public relations, leaving the fundamental issues untouched. Requests for family unification were turned into criminal charges of malicious hooliganism. Freedom was given to a handful, while visas were denied to tens of thousands. The Soviet Constitution and Bill of Rights were converted into weapons for the prosecution. For the almost 50 million Muslims living within the Soviet Union, the open practice of their religion was impossible. In the past few years there had been a dramatic escalation in Soviet activities against Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists and Catholics in an attempt to destroy the basis of their religious practices. For Soviet dissidents of every faith the words "human rights" were a cynical phrase in the vocabulary of legal repression. It was difficult for a world that sought to trust Soviet promises on arms control to reconcile these promises with what was known of Soviet commitments to human rights.

38. For more than six years, the people of Afghanistan had been subjected to a war of occupation and liquidation by the Soviet forces. Atrocities had been documented by the Committee's own Rapporteur. Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence, and condemnations by the United Nations, no attempts had been made by the Soviet authorities to square their record in Afghanistan with their solemn pronouncements in support of respect for human rights and the self-determination of peoples.

39. There continued to be reports of prisoners of conscience in countries as ideologically diverse as Chile and Cuba, South Africa and Viet Nam. In Nicaragua, a country that had emerged from brutal dictatorship but had yet to fulfil the high hopes of its liberation, there were clear limits on trade union activities, free expression and political organization. Disappearances, summary executions, extra-judicial punishments and torture were common practices by Governments of the left and right alike in virtually all areas of the world. Not even the servants of the Organization were free from arbitrary persecution, as had been seen in Romania's treatment of Liviu Bota.

40. One of the most persistent forms of repression was directed against minority groups. In Iran, adherents of the Baha'i faith had been subjected to a concerted campaign of intimidation, persecution and imprisonment. The Bulgarian authorities had pursued an unrelenting campaign of forced assimilation of ethnic Albanians, Gypsies and Armenians. Recently the Government had gone so far as to deny the existence of a group of Turkish origin comprising almost 10 per cent of the Bulgarian population.

41. Many of those situations had their roots in complex histories of irrational colonial borders, legacies of conquest or long periods of foreign rule. In a few

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

cases, like that of Cambodia, human rights violations had been exacerbated by occupation by neighbouring Viet Nam. In many situations human rights depredations were one element in a complex scenario, whether demands for devolution by Tamil minorities of Sri Lanka, civil strife in El Salvador, or controversial displacements by the Government of Ethiopia. Yet no political rationalization could be a substitute for a vigilant insistence on respect for human rights.

42. The regional variations were equally complex. In Central America, several States had only recently begun to escape the twin nemeses of authoritarian governments and chronic social under-development. In El Salvador the Government had co-operated with the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and confirmed its commitment to full respect for human rights. Yet the police and judicial services had yet to prove their ability to ensure the effective protection of individuals and respect for human rights. The process of national reconciliation was undermined by the continuing civil strife and a failure of both sides to honour the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

43. He welcomed the commitment of Guatemala's new civilian Government to human rights reforms, but regretted the slow progress and noted the need for further change. In South America, a number of countries had turned to democratic rule and the commitment to human rights, but Paraguay and Chile remained notable exceptions.

44. United Nations human rights machinery was inadequate. What was required was the ability to act rapidly in urgent cases, a capacity to establish fact-finding and conciliation missions and a longer-term strategic approach, including recommendations that would strengthen the capacity of States to safeguard human rights. The critical roles of special rapporteurs and special representatives must be recognized and their capabilities strengthened.

45. The El Salvador and Afghanistan reports had been subjected to selective and arbitrary decisions concerning length and distribution, which reduced their usefulness. The Iran report was so lamentable as to be virtually irrelevant. There must be greater uniformity in the designation and reporting functions of special rapporteurs. They must be allowed to conclude their work, notably in Guatemala and El Salvador, where commitment to democratic principles did not guarantee compliance in practice.

46. States such as Iran and Afghanistan, which refused to co-operate with United Nations human rights activities, should be subject to international opprobrium and have their behaviour made public. States which did co-operate, on the other hand, were entitled to some confidentiality and discretion on the part of the special rapporteur.

47. Countries such as Haiti, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Uganda, which were just emerging from difficult human rights situations, should be supported by the international community in every way to help them restore those rights.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

48. Additional support on human rights matters from national, regional and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged, and he welcomed the human rights training programmes organized by the Centre for Human Rights. Non-governmental organizations had always been better than Governments at describing situations with brutal clarity because they were less inclined to hide behind lofty rhetoric. Indeed, the criticism of Governments should not deter the United Nations from answering the hopes of peoples everywhere who looked to it for inspiration.

49. Mr. ANDRADE-DIAZ-DURAN (Guatemala) said that Guatemala fully supported United Nations efforts to promote human rights. But international bodies must treat countries objectively and without selectivity so as to avoid becoming the voices of sectarian interests.

50. His own country had made great strides, recognized by the international community, in restoring human rights after a long period of political unrest and violence. That was why the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, who had enjoyed his country's full co-operation, had been terminated.

51. There were now free, democratic and internationally observed elections in Guatemala, with the full participation of the population. The new constitution paid special attention to human rights and stipulated procedures to ensure their implementation. Such democratic guarantees as an independent judiciary, habeas corpus and amparo were also ensured. The Government was acting on its declared commitment to guarantee human rights by withdrawing reservations concerning human rights instruments, correcting police abuses, introducing appropriate institutional reforms, providing basic services for persons displaced and resettled during the previous period of disorder, adopting measures to guarantee the rights of detainees and establishing machinery for the investigation of appeals. Guatemala had appointed a commission on human rights to study and update human rights legislations and a human rights prosecutor with broad powers to ensure the protection of human rights. A thorough investigation was under way to clarify the cases of disappeared persons and a law was about to be submitted to Congress to help their families.

52. The Guatemalan Government was not only co-operating closely with international human rights bodies but also organizing seminars, symposiums and conferences on human rights to help educate public opinion and the media, which now operated freely in a climate of democratic pluralism. While some subversion and terrorism persisted in the country, a sound democratic alternative to such forms of struggle now existed and subversive groups were being asked to choose dialogue over confrontation in the interests of all.

53. He welcomed the support and understanding that Guatemala had received from the international community, which had duly recognized its progress in human rights. He hoped that the General Assembly would proceed as the Commission on Human Rights had in its resolution 1986/62. His delegation supported draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.57/Rev.1.

(Mr. Andrade-Díaz-Duran, Guatemala)

54. In judging the human rights situation in Guatemala, delegations must avoid selectivity and not give credence to critical reports from unreliable sources. Those sources were deliberately trying to project a negative image of Guatemala in the hope of receiving financial, military and other help with a view to establishing a totalitarian régime in the country. The adoption of resolutions stressing negative aspects of the situation in Guatemala could only encourage those elements that preferred violent solutions to the implementation of human rights. Guatemala was prepared to continue to co-operate with the United Nations but felt that it was completely unnecessary for the human rights situation in his country to remain on the agenda of the General Assembly.

55. Mr. MUGUME (Uganda) took the chair.

56. Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas) said that, although the United Nations had done a great deal to combat human rights violations, much more remained to be done. Member States must accept in good faith the decisions and directives of the United Nations in order to maintain international peace and security, provided that State sovereignty was respected. The international community must continue to uphold the principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration. The Bahamas was party to international instruments to combat apartheid, racial discrimination and genocide. Its Constitution allowed for legal recourse for any individual whose fundamental rights had been infringed. The Bahamas would co-operate in efforts to establish better national and international procedures for the realization of human rights.

57. The reports before the Committee showed that some countries had made major improvements. They had been willing to co-operate with the special representatives and rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights. His delegation called upon other countries to do likewise. The decision to study the human rights situation in a particular country seemed, in many cases, to have been motivated by political bias rather than genuine humanitarian concern. The United Nations should adopt a new procedure, or strengthen its existing machinery, in order to monitor the human rights situation in all countries of the world.

58. His delegation wished to commend the United Nations human rights bodies for the guidance they provided to the international community; it particularly appreciated the decision of the Commission on Human Rights to renew the mandates of working groups and special rapporteurs to examine alleged human rights violations in areas such as torture, religious freedom, involuntary disappearances and summary or arbitrary executions.

59. His delegation commended the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations for their work in the field of human rights. It was unfortunate that the reports before the Committee did not give more information about the work of non-governmental organizations.

60. Every effort should be made to achieve a consensus on the draft resolutions before the Committee. Political disagreements must be set aside. The purpose of the United Nations was not to act as an international judge and jury, but to provide a co-ordinating centre for international activity.

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61. Ms. NGUYEN BINH THANH (Viet Nam) said that the United Nations campaign against fascism, neo-fascism, nazism and totalitarianism was as old as the Organization itself. Her country could not refrain from comment on the emergence of neo-Nazi and Fascist ideologies and organizations in certain Western countries. Apartheid and zionism, the two most abhorrent forms of racial intolerance, fascism and racial hatred, had been repeatedly condemned in United Nations resolutions. The Ku-Klux-Klan party, well known for its racism and terrorism, carried on its activities with impunity in a major Western country which often claimed to be a champion of human rights.

62. The fight against neo-fascism, nazism and totalitarianism called for sustained legal and administrative action. States which had not yet done so should become parties to the international legal instrument in that field. Her delegation would once again sponsor the Committee's draft resolution on that issue.

63. Turning to the question of human rights and mass exoduses, she said that her delegation welcomed the adoption of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees (A/41/324). As recommended in the report (para. 71), there was no need for new divisions or posts within the Secretariat. The policies of South Africa and Israel were the reason for the mass exoduses of refugees in those areas of the world. Viet Nam supported the many General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights resolutions condemning human rights violations in the Arab territories occupied by Israel.

64. The international community was still gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Chile. Despite the elections and change of Government in El Salvador and Guatemala, those countries were still far from establishing democracy. Her delegation called for the continuation of the dialogue in El Salvador in order to achieve a comprehensive political solution. The mandate of the special rapporteurs investigating the situation in those three countries should be extended.

65. Mass unemployment in the industrialized capitalist countries was a gross violation of human rights, entailing the denial of the right to work, the loss of social, civil and cultural rights and loss of livelihood. It was regrettable that some Western industrialized countries, particularly the United States of America and Canada, had used their position in the Committee to lecture other countries about human rights. The United States representative had made no mention of the plight of ethnic minorities, American Indians, the elderly and the homeless in her own society. A few days before, the United States of America had repeatedly called for a vote on draft resolutions concerning humanitarian assistance to refugees. The results of those votes eloquently indicated the sad and pitiful isolation of that country within the Committee.

66. It was the duty of Member States to refrain from exploiting the issue of human rights in order to interfere in the internal affairs of other States. The report by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan (A/41/778) was nothing but a compilation of lies. It was absurd to expect the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to give any co-operation whatsoever to the author of the report, whose hostility and

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

political bias was so evident. The Afghan people was a proud and heroic people which had thrown off the medieval yoke of oppression and exploitation, only to be subjected to an undeclared war and a campaign of hostility from those who opposed the independence of peoples. The report on Afghanistan and the draft resolution on that subject (A/C.3/41/L.76) could only undermine progress towards a peaceful solution. Her delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.