



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.4/2000/L.41
13 April 2000

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 11

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Belarus*, Canada, Denmark*, Finland*, Greece*, Iceland*, Italy, Norway*,
Portugal*, Slovakia*, Spain, Sweden* and United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

2000/... Human rights and forensic science

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling its resolutions 1993/33 of 5 March 1993, 1994/31 of 4 March 1994, 1996/31 of
19 April 1996 and 1998/36 of 17 April 1998,

Recalling also the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extralegal,
Arbitrary and Summary Executions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its
resolution 1989/65 of 24 May 1989,

Welcoming the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human
Rights on human rights and forensic science (E/CN.4/2000/57), submitted pursuant to
Commission resolution 1998/36,

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional
commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Recognizing that forensic science is an important tool in detecting evidence of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,

Noting that the practice of forensic science includes examinations of both dead and living persons, and also includes identification procedures,

Noting also that, in many of the countries concerned, sufficient expertise is not available in forensic science and related fields to investigate human rights violations effectively,

Noting the need of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations for forensic scientific expertise in investigating deaths and clarifying disappearances,

Aware that several special rapporteurs have used or referred to the need for the assistance of experts in various forensic disciplines in the context of the implementation of their mandates,

1. Welcomes the increased use of forensic science investigations in situations where grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have occurred, and encourages further coordination concerning, inter alia, the planning and realization of such investigations among Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations;

2. Notes the progress made by the Office of the High Commissioner in the use of forensic experts, including the revised Cooperation Service Agreement regulating the use of forensic experts provided either by a Member State or by a non-governmental organization;

3. Recommends that the Secretary-General, with a view to promoting quality and consistency, establish procedures to evaluate the use of forensic expertise and the results of those efforts;

4. Again invites the Office of the High Commissioner and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat to consider revising the Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extralegal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, in which standard procedures for adequate post-mortem examinations (autopsies or partial autopsies) are described;

5. Recommends that the Office of the High Commissioner encourage forensic experts to coordinate further and produce additional manuals concerned with examinations of

living persons, and welcomes the initiative by the Office of the High Commissioner to publish the “Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment” in its Professional Training Series;

6. Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to consult with Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and professional organizations of forensic and related experts as mentioned in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner, of which the latest is contained in document E/CN.4/2000/57 of 15 December 1999, with a view to updating the list of experts with biographical data, including professional qualifications, current employment, contact address, gender (the nomination of female experts is encouraged), indications of availability, and the kind of assistance they could provide;

7. Recommends that the Office of the High Commissioner encourage, as appropriate, the dissemination and use of the manuals referred to in the present resolution and the setting up of courses aimed at providing training in forensic activities relating to victims of human rights violations, particularly in countries without sufficient expertise in forensic science and related fields, for example through the training of local teams;

8. Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to report to the Commission at its fifty-eighth session on progress made in this matter;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to provide appropriate resources, from within existing overall United Nations resources, to fund the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner in implementing the present resolution;

10. Decides to consider this question at its fifty-eighth session under the same agenda item.
