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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF DETAINEES

Written statement submitted by the International Movement for
Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples, a non-governmental
organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[8 August 1988]

Respect for the human rights of international civil servants, as well as their security and independence, is a question that affects the entire international community, and should be a matter of concern to it.

Although there is no lack of cases of violations of human rights throughout the world, we should not forget those that directly affect the very Organization under whose auspices we are meeting and to which the peoples and founding Governments assigned the task, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, of "encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all".

Since the adoption by the Sub-Commission, one year ago, of a resolution (1987/21) expressing its concern "that some 50 staff members are still detained, imprisoned, reported missing - some having even died in detention - or held in a country against their will", according to the information in our possession, the situation, far from having improved, has continued to deteriorate.

In spite of the satisfactory solution of some cases, including that of Liviu Bota, former Director of UNIDIR, who was held against his will in his country, Romania, for more than two years and on whose behalf the Sub-Commission had made an appeal, numerous other arbitrary arrests have occurred during the past year. Current statistics indicate about 100 cases of detention, disappearance, assassination, execution, death in detention and prohibition from leaving a country.

The United Nations bodies concerned with human rights have a special responsibility with respect to the civil servants whose rights have been violated, who are being arbitrarily detained or whose freedom of movement and action is under threat.

The Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities are the executing agencies for the United Nations mandate concerning respect for, and the protection of, human rights. How can they hope that the studies, investigations and delicate missions that they decide to undertake in most parts of the world will be carried out with all the requisite impartiality and vigilance if the civil servants and experts to whom these tasks are entrusted feel that their security is being threatened or that they are being subjected to strong pressures or restricted in their freedom of action? How can these civil servants and experts fulfil their task of protecting and promoting human rights if they do not receive the backing and support of the very bodies that assigned them to carry out those studies, investigations and missions?

The International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples, being aware of the importance of this question and concerned at the deteriorating situation, recommends that the Sub-Commission assign one of its members to examine violations of the rights of international civil servants and experts, as well as constraints imposed on their freedom of action and threats to their independence, with a view to determining, inter alia, the effect of these violations and acts of interference on the effective functioning of United Nations organs, particularly those concerned with human rights.