



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2004/NGO/216
11 March 2004

ENGLISH AND SPANISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixtieth session
Item 14 (c) of the provisional agenda

**SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:
MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS**

**Written statement* submitted by the Fédération des associations pour la défense
et la promotion des droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization
in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 February 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The Situation of Displaced Women in Colombia

Context

- Population's forced displacement is a serious infraction to Humanitarian International Right and a complex and systematic violation to the civil population's Human Rights. This phenomenon has reached critical levels in Colombia, especially due to the inability of the State for preventing its continuous occurrence, as well as for guaranteeing the respect for the rights of the people affected and its effective repair in the face of the multiple and negative results it brings about.
- The Colombian State only recognized displacement as a national problem since 1995, although displacement victimizes the country since 1985 in a massive way. According to the Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES), from 1985 on, 2,800,000 people in the country have been forced to abandon their place of residence. According to the same source, in 2002 alone, 412,553 people were displaced, that is, more than twice as much as the figure reported in 1996 (180,000 people). Between 1997 and 2002, 1,924,853 people were displaced.
- According to official figures, 480 municipalities were affected by displacement in 2000. In 2001 this figure increased to 819 municipalities, and in 2002 it reached 887. This means that for that period, 87% of the national territory was affected by displacement.
- The scope of governmental programs in this area is only partial and in the last years there has been an alarming set back in the attention offered to displaced people especially in the field of health, psycho-social repair, alimentary security and socio-economic stability.
- There no policies for the prevention of displacement. At different times, the Defensoría del Pueblo and the NGO's have advised the Colombian government of threats against the civil population with no result. An example of this is the case of the Afro-Colombian community from Jiguamiandó (Department of Chocó) where 150 people suffered forced displacement in March, 2003. Other examples are the displacement of indigenous people from Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Departments of Magdalena, Cesar and Guajira) and the massive displacement occurring in November, 2002, and January, 2003 in the Eastern part of the Department of Antioquia.
- The current government's politics is centered in promoting the population's return without guaranteeing the execution of the principles of will, security and dignity as it was demonstrated in the cases of El Salado (Bolívar) and El Carmen (Cundinamarca), in which the population faces new abuses by armed actors and their alimentary security has been threatened.

Women in situation of displacement

- In the context of displacement, the situation of women is quite alarming, as it was evidenced by the U.N. Reporter on Violence against Women in her last report on the country. In Colombia, 79.5% of the displaced population is composed of women and

children (boys and girls). For the period going from 1997 to June, 2003, the Conferencia Episcopal reports that 52.4% of the displaced population is composed of boys and girls younger than 18 years of age. For the same period, 49.5% of the displaced population corresponds to women and 37.9% to house female leader.

- Women must face a double discrimination: that of being women and that of being displaced. They assume, without any support, the largest load for the maintenance of the household, with no guarantee at all of their labor rights. Displacement also hinders their access to education and the labor market, and it exposes them to circumstances of accumulation bringing about damaging effects in regard to sexual and reproductive health and a bigger vulnerability in the case of rape and sexual abuse.
- The United Nations have formally recognized violence against woman as gender related violence and as a specific type of discrimination. Abuses victimizing women involved in warfare, especially forced displacement, must be considered as violence against woman. Forced displacement certainly generates disproportionate effects in their lives.
- States belonging to the U.N. have committed themselves to the prevention and sanction of all types of violence and discrimination against women. Therefore, it is necessary that the Colombian State adopts urgent measures to prevent displacement and to assist displaced women taking into consideration the particular effects it has on them.
- To act in agreement with international commitments, it is urgent for the Colombian government to assume and develop the rector principles of internal displacements and the multiple recommendations of the System of the United Nations, especially those of the Reporter of the United Nations on Violence Against Woman and of the Human Rights Commission, thus guaranteeing the promotion, protection and the full and effective validity of the Human Rights of the women.

Petitions

The Human Rights Commission of the U.N. must:

- Specifically include, as a point of concern, the situation of displaced women and of women victimized by sociopolitical violence in Colombia.
- Establish a system to monitor the recommendations of the United Nations for Colombia and in particular, those of the Special Reporter on Violence against Women.
- Follow up the commitments of the Table of Donors for Colombia, carried out in London in July, 2003. The members of this Table manifested “their serious concern for the humanitarian crisis experienced by the country and, in particular, for the luck of the people internally displaced and for the serious situation of Human Rights and Humanitarian International Right.”
- Urge the Colombian government to fully accept these recommendations and especially to establish a public policy including affirmative action measures for displaced women.

- Request to the Colombian State the development of effective mechanisms to overcome impunity in the cases of violations to the Human Rights of women occurring in the context of the armed conflict or increased as a result of this. It is urgent that the cases of violence based on gender are investigated and that their perpetrators are judged according to the law.
