

**ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL****CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL**E/CN.4/166
5 May 1949

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifth session

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON INFORMATION GROUPS
OR LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEES.*

1. The Commission on Human Rights, at its third session, considered "that the functions of information groups and local human rights committees, as set forth in the resolution of the Economic and Social Council of 21 June 1946, could not be defined unless the measures decided on by the Commission for implementing the Covenant on Human Rights were taken into consideration, and decided to postpone the study of this question until it had decided on these measures" (E/800 - paragraph 22).

2. Since the third session of the Commission, the Secretary-General has received additional information concerning the establishment of information groups or local human rights committees from certain Governments which had not already replied to his letter of 30 September 1946, in which he drew their attention to the Council resolution 2/3 of 21 June 1946, inviting Member States "to consider the desirability of establishing information groups or local human rights committees within their respective countries to collaborate with them in furthering the work of the Commission on Human Rights."

This information is contained in the replies which Governments have sent to the Secretary-General's letters of 17 and 27 May 1948, regarding the implementation of recommendations on economic and social matters.

3. Additional information groups or local human rights committees have been established since the third session of the Commission in Poland and Siam, and existing non-governmental organizations have been utilized for the purposes envisaged in resolution 2/3 of the Council in Canada and France.

* The Secretary-General distributed to the third session of the Commission a note on the functions of information groups or local human rights committees (E/CN.4/115), and, to the second session of the Commission, a report on the establishment of information groups or local human rights committees (E/CN.4/28 and Add. 1 and 2). This document contains additional information which has been received since the third session.

The Government of Venezuela has stated its intention of considering the possibility of establishing such committees in the future; the Government of Pakistan has noted the resolution for future guidance; the Government of New Zealand has taken no action pending the further advancement of the work of the Commission on Human Rights and the clarification of the functions of information groups, and the Government of the United Kingdom has postponed consideration of the formation of such groups in view of the decision of the Commission on Human Rights quoted in paragraph 1 above. The Government of Greece draws the attention of the Secretary-General to the fact that it has transmitted to the Secretariat a note prepared by Professor Constantine F. Stathiados on human rights legislation in Greece during the year 1947.

4. The relevant extracts from the replies of these Governments are to be found in Annex A of this document.

5. Little information is available on the actual work performed by these additional groups where they exist. The reply from the Government of Siam reports that a committee was appointed to examine the draft International Declaration, Covenant and Measures for Implementation and reported to the Government its approval in principle of the drafts proposed by the Commission on Human Rights. The reply from the Government of Poland states that a Section on Human Rights has been established in the Institute of International Affairs, that the Polish Association for the United Nations is giving the problem the most careful consideration and that research has been initiated in human rights in which prominent personalities of the legal and other professions are participating. The reply from the Government of France states that French experts have from the beginning participated in the work of the Commission on Human Rights and its two sub-commissions, and that for some time there have existed in France national organizations interested in human rights, the principal one being the Ligue des droits de l'homme. The reply from the Government of Canada states that there exist many active voluntary organizations concerned with the protection of human rights and the Canadian Government has not, therefore, considered it necessary to establish special groups other than the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Replies from the Governments of Norway and of the United States contain no additional information to that given in paragraph 6 of E/CN.4/115.

6. The Turkish Government informed the Secretary-General by letter of 23 June 1948 that the United Nations Turkish Group for the Establishment and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, established on

/17 October 1946

17 October 1946 (E/CN.4/28 - Annex A) would act as the correspondents nominated by the Government to furnish information and documentation for the Year-Book on Human Rights.

The text of the letter from the Turkish Government is to be found in Annex B of this document.

7. In discussing the question of local human rights committees, the Commission may wish to consider whether such groups may be utilized in implementing resolution 217(III), part D, of the General Assembly concerning the publicity to be given to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ANNEX A

1. Extract from the letter of the Government of Canada of 7 July 1948.
(See E/963/Add.6 - page 8).

"RESOLUTION 2/9 - 21 June 1946 - Commission of Human Rights

Section 5 - There are in Canada many active and articulate voluntary organizations which are concerned with the protection of human rights and the Canadian Government has therefore not considered it necessary or desirable to establish information groups or local human rights committees other than the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."

2. Extract from the letter of the Government of France of 16 July 1948.
(See E/963/Add.8 - page 5).

"RESOLUTION 9 (II) of the Economic and Social Council concerning the Commission on Human Rights.

French experts have taken part from the beginning in the work of the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press and the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

France has for long had a considerable number of national organizations interested in human rights. The Human Rights League (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme), which is the most important and the oldest of these organizations, has played a foremost role in this field since its foundation about fifty years ago."

3. Extract from the letter of the Government of Greece of 16 June 1948.
(See E/963/Add.27 - page 6).

"ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESOLUTION 2/9 - Human Rights Commission.

By its letter 4464 of 16 June 1948, the Greek Delegation to the United Nations transmitted to the Secretariat a note prepared by Professor Constantine F. Stathiados on the subject of the human rights **legislation in Greece during the year 1947.**"

4. Extract from the letter of the Government of New Zealand of 2 June 1948.
(See E/963/Add.35 - page 9).

"The terms of the resolution have been noted but no action has been taken for the establishment of an information group or a local human rights committee pending the further advancement of the work of the Commission on Human Rights and the clarification of the functions of information groups. It may be noted, however, that in the preparation of the New Zealand comments on the report of the second

/session of

session of the Commission of Human Rights forwarded to the Secretary-General on 2 June 1948 under cover of Note No. 97, the assistance of authorities outside the Government service was sought."

5. Extract from the letter of the Government of Norway of 28 June 1948.
(See E/963/Add.4 - page 2).

"A National Committee on Human Rights has been established in collaboration with the Norwegian Association for the United Nations."

6. Extract from the letter of the Government of Pakistan of 18 October 1948.
(See E/963/Add.21).

"Karachi, 18 October 1948

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and in continuation of his note No. D.2530-C/48 dated 31st July 1948, has the honour to say that the Government of Pakistan has noted for further guidance the decision contained in paragraph 6 of resolution No. 2/9 of the Economic and Social Council regarding the Commission on Human Rights."

7. Extract from the letter of the Government of Poland of 7 August 1948.
(See E/963/Add.12 - page 5).

"Research has been initiated in the field of Human Rights in which are participating many prominent personalities of the legal and other professions. A Section on Human Rights has been established in the Institute of International Affairs. At the same time, the Polish Association for the United Nations is giving this problem the most careful consideration. A publication is being published dealing entirely with this subject."

8. Extract from the letter of the Government of Siam of 13 August 1948.
(See E/963/Add.19 - page 5).

"A committee was appointed by His Majesty's Government to consider the Draft International Declaration on Human Rights, Draft International Covenant on Human Rights and the Measures for Implementation. The Committee has reported to His Majesty's Government its approval in principle of the Drafts and the Measures for Implementations as proposed by the Commission on Human Rights."

9. Extract from the letter of the Government of the United Kingdom of 15 August 1948. (See E/963/Add.13 - page 5).

"At the third session of the Commission on Human Rights it was decided that the functions of information groups on local human rights committees could not be defined at the moment (E/800 paragraph 22, page 7). His Majesty's Government has therefore postponed consideration of the formation of such groups or committees."

10. Extract from the letter of the Government of the United States of 12 July 1948. (See E/963/Add.7 - page 28).
Economic and Social Council Resolution 2/9 - 21 June 1946.

"The Economic and Social Council by a resolution adopted June 21, 1946, invited Members of the United Nations to consider the desirability of establishing information groups or local human rights committees within their respective countries to collaborate with them in furthering the work of the Commission on Human Rights.

The United States maintains close liaison with over 200 non-governmental organizations interested in the subject of human rights. These organizations are supplied with the documents relating to United Nations activities in this field and their comments and suggestions receive careful study.

In addition, special meetings have been held with representatives of these organizations before the second and third sessions of the Commission on Human Rights. The last meeting with these organizations was held on March 4, 1948 and discussions included the proposed Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Human Rights, implementation and freedom of information."

11. Extract from the letter of the Government of Venezuela of 5 August 1948.
(See E/963/Add.14)

"Resolution of 21 June 1946 on human rights. The Chancellery has not yet established any local information groups, but is considering the possibility of doing so in the near future."

ANNEX B

TEXT OF THE LETTER FROM THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT
TURKISH PERMANENT DELEGATION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
578/87

New York, 23 June 1948

The Principal Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and referring to His Excellency's note dated 23 April 1948, Ref. No. SOA 17/01/ES, requesting the names and addresses of correspondents in Turkey who could furnish information and documentation to the Secretariat on the subject of human rights, has the honour to inform Him that the Secretariat may communicate directly with the "United Nations Turkish Group for the Establishment and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", where all data and material about Turkey to be published in the Yearbook on Human Rights could be obtained.

The address of the above mentioned organization is given below:

Birlesmis Milletler Insan Haklarini ve
Ana Hürriyetleri Koruma ve Sağlama
Türk Gurubu Baskanlığı

Kocak Hani, No. 3,

Ankara, TURKEY
