



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2006/NGO/150
3 March 2006

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixty-second session
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

**Written statement* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of the
Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and Other Minorities (IFPRERLOM),
a non-governmental organization on the Roster**

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

[13 February 2006]

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

Southern Cameroons

In 1993 it was requested of the Government of Cameroon to authorise the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on Torture of the Commission on Human Rights to conduct a fact-finding mission under his mandate. The mission took place from 12 to 20 May 1999 and the SR, Sir Nigel Rodley, collected first-hand information from a large number of sources, evaluating the situation regarding torture and other ill-treatment in Cameroon. Sir Rodley subsequently made a series of recommendations to the Government on a number of measures to be adopted in order to comply with commitments with the object of putting an end to torture and other ill-treatment (E/CN.4/2000/9/Add.2).¹

During his visit Sir Rodley received information from non-governmental sources and a large account of witnesses indicating that torture was widespread and sometimes used indiscriminately against people in arrest. The SR also visited places of detention under the authority of the gendarmerie and various central prisons.

Whilst appreciative of cooperation from the Government of Cameroon in facilitating the visit, the SR noted with concern that despite the fact that Cameroonian law criminalises torture, reflecting the definition of torture contained in article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which the State is a party, it was “clear from the mission that the law is flagrantly disregarded by police and gendarmerie officials.”²

In his report, the SR recommended that; “the highest political authorities should proclaim in public statements and internal governmental instructions that torture and other ill-treatment committed by public officials will not be tolerated”; “[t]he gendarmerie and police should establish special services designed to investigate complaints of, and to weed out, serious wrongdoing, such as torture”; and “the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and on the independence of judges and lawyers should be invited to visit the country.”³

At its thirty-first session, in November 2003, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) considered the third periodic report of Cameroon (CAT/C/CR/31/6), welcoming the third by Cameroon, whilst adopting several critical conclusions and recommendations. The Committee found of particular concern that torture seemed to be a very widespread practice in Cameroon, and was “troubled by the sharp contradictions between consistent allegations of serious violations of the Convention and the information provided by the State party.” In particular the Committee noted with concern; reports of the systematic use of torture in police and gendarmerie stations after arrest; reports of torture, ill-treatment

1

[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument)

2

[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument)

³ “Section B: Recommendations”

[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2000.9.Add.2.En?OpenDocument)

and arbitrary detention; and the reluctance of victims or their relatives to lodge complaints, through ignorance, distrust or fear of reprisals.⁴

In light of the above conclusions and recommendations and further to recent alarming reports of arbitrary arrest and detention of leaders of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC),⁵ including the arrests on 11 November 2005, in which SCNC Vice Chairman Nfor Ngala Nfor and Bui County Chairman Stephen Kongso were detained and held incommunicado for several weeks, the Commission on Human Rights is urged to

call upon Cameroon to provide further information in follow-up on the recommendations made by the SR and the CAT in particular in terms of successful actions taken to end arbitrary detention; torture, ill-treatment in police and gendarmerie stations and prisons; and work undertaken to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses against any intimidation or ill-treatment; and

request that the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and on the independence of judges and lawyers be invited to visit Cameroon.

Balochistan

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expresses its concern at the increasing number of reported disappearances and systematic torture at the hands of security and intelligence agencies. In particular, a number of such reports from Balochistan “reflected a distinct pattern of persecution”, despite being largely inaccessible to national media and human rights monitors.⁶

In December 2005 and January 2006 HRCP sent a fact-finding mission to parts of Balochistan to document and report on the human rights situation. In both Dear Bugti and the Kohlu area, the mission received reports of indiscriminate bombing and that action by armed forces had led to deaths and injuries among civilians, including women and children.⁷

Many complained about the heavy deployment of paramilitary forces in the area and use of excessive force. There were also alarming reports of summary executions. Furthermore, across Balochistan the HRCP found widespread instances of ‘disappearances’ and of torture inflicted upon people held in custody. Whereas a settlement for the problems facing the current war-like situation in Balochistan may primarily lie in a political settlement, it is of utmost concern that human rights violations, continuing to beset the region, are urgently addressed.

4

<http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/03160cd35c14bdd0c1256e68003617ac?Opendocument>

⁵ www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-africa_democracy/cameroon_3052.jsp
www.unpo.org

⁶ http://www.hrcp-web.org/images/publication/balochistan%20report/pdf/balochistan_report.pdf

⁷ http://www.hrcp-web.org/images/publication/balochistan%20report/pdf/balochistan_report.pdf

Whereas an immediate ceasefire by all parties is urgently needed, the Commission on Human Rights is called upon

to urge Pakistan to respect the economic and political rights of the indigenous Balochistan;

to request a high-level investigation into reports of extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions, torture and disappearances; and

to urge the government of Pakistan to provide complete and unimpeded access to human rights organisations to visit jail and police stations.

Ahwazi Arabs in Iran

More than four million indigenous Ahwazi Arabs live in the south-western region of Iran, mainly in the province of Khuzestan or Al-Ahwaz and constituting an indigenous, ethnic, national and linguistic minority in Iran. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalized and discriminated against.⁸

On 15 April 2005 in the provincial city of Ahwaz, security forces reportedly opened fire on thousands of peaceful demonstrators killing at least 61 men, women and children, injuring over 800 and arresting thousands, according to Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and BBC.⁹ There have been reports of incidents of torture according to AI, HRW and other human rights organizations and several appeals for urgent action have been issued based on reports of fear of torture, ill-treatment, and incommunicado detention and incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention.¹⁰

Most recently a report (AI Index: MDE 13/006/2006) issued on 1 February 2006, concerns the whereabouts and safety of Reza Haidari, aged 11, Kazem Sayahi, aged 14, Hashem Jassem Sawari, aged 18 Hadi Washahi, aged 17, Said Manabi, aged 20, Saleh 'Abidawi, imam Sheikh Saleh al-Haydari, imam of Da'ira mosque and several others. These persons, all members of Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority were reportedly arrested in the city of Ahwaz in Khuzestan province on 11 and 12 January 2006. It is feared that they are held incommunicado and at risk of torture or ill-treatment.¹¹

The arrests took place after clashes in Ahvaz between Iranian security forces and members of the Arab Ahwazi community, in the context of an initially peaceful demonstration on occasion of the Muslim festival of 'Id al-Adha on 11 January, led by Sheikh Saleh al-Haydari, imam (prayer leader) of Da'ira mosque in Ahvaz. According to reports, demonstrators were demanding an end to the persecution of Arabs, poverty and

⁸ www.ahwaz.org.uk

⁹ www.ahwaz.org.uk

¹⁰ <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130762005?open&of=ENG-IRN>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGMDE130652005?open&of=ENG-IRN>
<http://www.ahwaz.org.uk/HRW-report-Khuzestan.pdf>

¹¹ <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130062006?open&of=ENG-IRN>

unemployment among Arabs, and the release of political prisoners arrested since April 2005 following unrest in Khuzestan province.

IFPRERLOM notes with concern the tension that has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. As the cycle of violence in the Khuzestan province threatens to intensify, IFPRERLOM appeals to the Commission on Human Rights

to call upon Iran to investigate incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention, reports of torture and ill-treatment;

to call, as a matter of urgency, for a follow-up to the initial request by UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, to the government of Iran to arrange a visit; and

to urge authorities in Iran to implement measures to promote and protect the rights of minorities, including the indigenous Ahwazi Arabs, Balochis and other minority groups in Iran.
