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SUB-COMMISSION ACTS ON PERSECUTION OF BAHAI RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN IRAN

Recommends Measures for United Nations Assistance
In Resolving Human Rights Situations in El Salvador and Afghanistan

(Received from the United Nations Information Service, Geneva.)

The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, at a meeting in Geneva on Wednesday (9 September), said it was convinced that the persecution of the Baha'i community in Iran was motivated by religious intolerance and desire to eliminate the Baha'i faith, and recommended measures to ensure further review by the United Nations of the "perilous situation" facing this religious community.

The Sub-Commission took this action after it had heard at its current session statements which, it said, clearly demonstrated "the systematic persecution of the Baha'i in Iran, including arrests, torture, beatings, executions, murders, kidnappings, disappearances, abductions and many other forms of harassment.

It drew the attention of its parent body, the Commission on Human Rights, to this problem. And it requested Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to submit all relevant information on the matter to the next session of the Commission to be held in February 1982.

In seven resolutions adopted at two meetings, the Sub-Commission also approved measures and recommendations for United Nations action to assist in the resolution of the human rights situations in Israeli-occupied Arab territories, El Salvador and Afghanistan.

It approved arrangements for continued work on its study on discriminatory treatment in the administration of justice, and on the updating of its report on transnational corporations and other organizations assisting the colonial and fascist regime in South Africa.

It took the first step towards reactivation of its consideration of the question of the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

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It heard a progress report on a study which it has requested on the status of the individual and contemporary international law. It began consideration of a draft resolution on the establishment of the post of a United Nations Human Rights Commissioner. It received an amendment to this draft, proposing that consideration of this question be postponed to its next session.

Action on Baha'i in Iran

The resolution on the Baha'i in Iran was sponsored by the experts from Norway, Ghana, France, Mexico, India, Zambia, Costa Rica, Panama, United Kingdom, Ethiopia and Peru, and was adopted by 19 votes in favour to none against, with 5 abstentions.

In the text as adopted, the Sub-Commission also expressed its "profound concern" for the perilous situation facing this religious community. It expressed concern that the Government of Iran appeared to have ignored all previous approaches made on their behalf.

It expressed its appreciation for the efforts already made by the Secretary-General on their behalf, and urged him to continue his efforts to persuade the Iranian Government to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i community and to grant them religious freedom.

Action on Israeli-Occupied Arab Territories

The resolution on the human rights situation in Israeli-occupied Arab territories was sponsored by the experts from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Egypt, India, Zambia, Sudan, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, Morocco, Romania, Nigeria, Yugoslavia and Ethiopia. It was adopted by 20 votes in favour to 1 against, with 4 abstentions.

In this draft, the Sub-Commission recalled United Nations resolutions on the subject, and deplored the refusal of the Israeli authorities to abide by them.

It recommended that the Commission on Human Rights take a number of actions, including in particular the recommendation that the Commission:

-- Reaffirm the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and the establishment of a fully independent and sovereign state in Palestine;

-- Reaffirm the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their home and property, from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and call for their return in the exercise of their right to self-determination;

-- Reaffirm the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and urge the Israeli authorities to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, and to stop

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