



See page 5 and 6

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ROUND-UP OF SESSION

Press Release HR/1359
11 March 1983

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ADOPTS WIDE-RANGING MEASURES FOR CONTINUING

UNITED NATIONS ACTION TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

1983 Annual Session Lasts from 31 January to 11 March

The Commission on Human Rights today concluded its 1983 session, bringing to a close six weeks of debate, study and consultations in which the members agreed on wide-ranging measures for continuing United Nations action to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms world-wide.

The 43-nation* Commission provides over-all policy guidance for United Nations human rights programmes and activities, and began this year's session on Monday, 31 January.

Some of the measures agreed at the session concern the human rights situations in specific regions and countries, including occupied Arab territories, southern Africa, Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Iran, El Salvador, Poland, Guatemala, Chile, Western Sahara, East Timor and Equatorial Guinea.

The Commission voted to close consideration of the situation in Bolivia, declaring that the situation there had improved and continued to do so since the change of Government in that country of October 1982.

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* Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Finland, Fiji, France, Gambia, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Ukrainian SSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, Zaire, and Zimbabwe.

It strongly reaffirmed its call to parties to the present conflict in Kampuchea to cease all hostilities forthwith and for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea to enable the Kampuchean people to choose and determine their own political process through free and fair elections under the United Nations supervision.

It stressed that efforts towards a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean problem should lead to the establishment of an independent, free and non-aligned Kampuchea and thereby achieve durable peace for Southeast Asia. It decided to keep the situation in Kampuchea under review as a matter of priority at its 1984 session.

It called for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and for a political settlement of the situation there on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops, full respect for its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status and of strict observance of the principle of non-intervention and non-interference. It affirmed the right of the Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour.

It urged all concerned to work towards a settlement which would ensure that the Afghan people determine their destiny free from outside interference. It expressed its appreciation and support for the efforts and constructive steps taken by the Secretary-General in the search for a solution to the problem and requested him to continue these efforts. It appealed for humanitarian relief assistance, with a view to alleviating the hardship of Afghan refugees, in co-ordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

It decided to consider this matter at its 1984 session as a matter of high priority.

On East Timor, it reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of this territory to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolution. It declared that its people must be enabled freely to determine their own future on the basis of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations human rights instruments.

It called upon all interested parties, namely Portugal, as the administering Power, and the representatives of the East Timorese people, as well as Indonesia, to co-operate fully with the United Nations with a view to guaranteeing the free and full exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of East Timor.

On Iran, it expresses its profound concern at the continuing grave violations of human rights there as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on that country. It voiced profound concern in particular with the evidence of summary and arbitrary executions, torture, detention without trial, religious intolerance and persecution, especially of the Baha'is, and the lack of an independent judiciary and other recognized safeguards for a fair trial.

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It urged once more the Iranian Government to ensure for all individuals within its territory the rights recognized in the Covenant on civil and political rights subject to its jurisdiction.

It requested the Secretary-General or his representative to continue direct contacts with the Iranian Government on the grave human rights situation prevailing in that country, including the situation of the Baha'is. It requested the Secretary-General or his representative to prepare a comprehensive report on the direct contacts and the human rights situation there. It directed that this report should include conclusions and suggestions as regards the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in that country, and that it should be submitted to it next year.

The Government of Iran was requested once more to extend its co-operation to the Secretary-General or his representative.

The Commission decided to continue its consideration of the human rights situation in Iran next year.

On El Salvador the Commission expressed "deepest concern" that "human rights violations of the most serious nature" continued in that country and that as a result its people continued to suffer. It deplored the fact that appeals for the cessation of violence had not been heeded, citing in particular the appeals made by the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission itself and the international community in general.

It renewed for another year the mandate of the Special Rapporteur who has been studying and reporting on the situation for the United Nations, and decided to consider the question again next year as a matter of high priority.

It expressed alarm at the recent reports of bombings and indiscriminate rocketing of urban areas in El Salvador, which were not military targets, such as in the city of Berlin in the department of Usulután.

It noted that the El Salvadoran situation clearly had its root causes in internal political, economic and social factors, and reaffirmed the right of the Salvadoran people to freely determine their political, economic and social future without interference from outside and in an atmosphere free from intimidation and terror. It reiterated once more its appeal to all States to abstain from intervening in the international situation in El Salvador and to suspend all supplies of arms and any type of military assistance, so as to allow the political forces in that country to restore peace and security and the establishment of a democratic system.

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