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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL  
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR  
REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND  
TERRITORIES

ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Provision of expert assistance in the field of  
human rights

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Introductory note to the report by the expert, Mr. Fernando Volio,  
appointed in accordance with Economic and Social Council  
resolution 1984/36

1. I am submitting my report on my third mission to Equatorial Guinea, which took place in November 1984 in accordance with the mandate I had the honour of being assigned by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the basis of a recommendation by the Commission and the decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in 1984. When Mr. William Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, asked me whether I could undertake a further mission to Equatorial Guinea, I thought how pleasant it would be to work once again with him and his staff; whose valuable support and co-operation had been indispensable for the work I had done in 1979 and, in particular, in 1980. The assignment would also give me an opportunity to work once again with the Commission and, in general, the Centre for Human Rights. I naturally accepted the mission out of a sincere desire to see for myself how the Equatorial Guinean people and Government had been dealing with the difficult human rights problems they had faced since the last time I had been with them. The visit would, above all, bring me into contact with a noble people which deserves all the happiness in the world.

2. When I began my work, I had the good fortune to have the determined and valuable co-operation of the Centre for Human Rights and, in particular, the persons who accompanied me on the visit. In Malabo, I also enjoyed the efficient, generous and valuable co-operation of the representatives of the United Nations Development Programme.

3. The Government of Equatorial Guinea gave me a cordial welcome, for which I am grateful. It helped me to carry out the task assigned to me, although, if some of the problems I encountered during the mission could have been avoided, my work would have been easier and more fruitful. I wish to draw particular attention to the very cordial treatment and valuable co-operation I received from His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.

4. Under the resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, my mandate was to study, in conjunction with the Government of Equatorial Guinea, the best way of implementing the Plan of Action proposed by the United Nations in 1980. In other words, I was to carry out an evaluation of the Plan, which is intended to promote human rights. The evaluation would make it possible to take other appropriate measures for the development of further co-operation between the Government of Equatorial Guinea and the United Nations in the promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms. My task was thus not to conduct an on-the-spot investigation of the human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea, although the evaluation might ultimately give some idea of what is happening in this area and I believe that, to a large extent, it does.

5. Because of circumstances beyond my control, which are explained in paragraph 8 of the report, my visit was very short, but this did not seriously hamper me in my work - both because of its nature, which has already been described, and because of my knowledge of the country and the problems it faces. If I had had more time, my report would have contained a greater wealth of significant detail, but I do think that, for the purpose of the co-operation between the Government of Equatorial Guinea and the United Nations that will be necessary in future, it does give you an idea of how the Plan of Action is being implemented and of what the human rights situation in that country is like. In my opinion, such co-operation is essential to participation by the United Nations and to the success of the efforts being made by the Government of Equatorial Guinea to consolidate its achievements and to take the necessary action to ensure the observance of fundamental rights and freedoms.

6. As you will see from the report I am now submitting, significant changes in the human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea, have taken place, in accordance with the 1980 Plan of Action. More could and ought to have been done, even despite the situation in the country, but positive results have been achieved and they will make it possible to continue to work towards the goal set in the Plan of Action, namely, the full restoration of human rights. Such continuing efforts are essential if the country is to consolidate the results it has achieved thus far. Otherwise, all the efforts made by the Government and by the United Nations will have been wasted. I therefore strongly recommend that relations between the Government and the United Nations should be maintained with a view to the full implementation of the Plan of Action and the adoption of other measures that are suited to the situation as it now stands. Closer, on-going co-operation thus has to be established so that advantage may be taken of the experience gained thus far. United Nations technical and economic assistance to Equatorial Guinea will thus enter a new and more fruitful phase, thereby enabling the international community to find ways and means of working with the Government of Equatorial Guinea to improve every aspect of the people's standard of living in the context of the promotion and protection of human rights.

7. As I indicated when I wrote my report, I did not receive the documentation which I requested on some of the laws enacted by the Government of Equatorial Guinea, but it was sent to the Centre for Human Rights after I had completed my report. The laws in question are available for consultation in the Secretariat.

8. I am confident that this report will provide guidelines for action to be taken by the Commission along the lines I have indicated. My aim is to serve the Equatorial Guinean people and to further the cause which you are so devotedly promoting with a view to the achievement of peace and well-being everywhere.