



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

CHEMIN DU POMMIER 5
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GRP/2008/DSG.3
15 May 2008

HUMAN RIGHTS

FOLLOW-UP ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE IPU GOVERNING COUNCIL ON INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS CASES CONCERNING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Madam President,
Mr. President,

During the 118th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Cape Town (South Africa), the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians presented the cases of 218 former or incumbent members of parliament to the Governing Council. They concern 40 cases in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Honduras, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine/Israel, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

The Committee was able to recommend to the Council the closure of three cases, among them the case of Mr. Pavon Salazar from Honduras, its oldest case, as well as the cases of Mr. Anwar Ibrahim from Malaysia and Mr. Javed Hashmi from Pakistan. On the other hand, it was led to submit to the Governing Council for the first time six new cases in Afghanistan, Colombia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Sri Lanka.

The resolutions adopted by the Governing Council on each of these cases can be consulted on the IPU's website (<http://www.ipu.org/hr-e/182/182all.htm>) and in the document entitled *Results of the 118th Assembly*. The attached oral report, which the Committee's President, Senator Sharon Carstairs, delivered to the Council on 18 April 2008, provides a short description of each case.

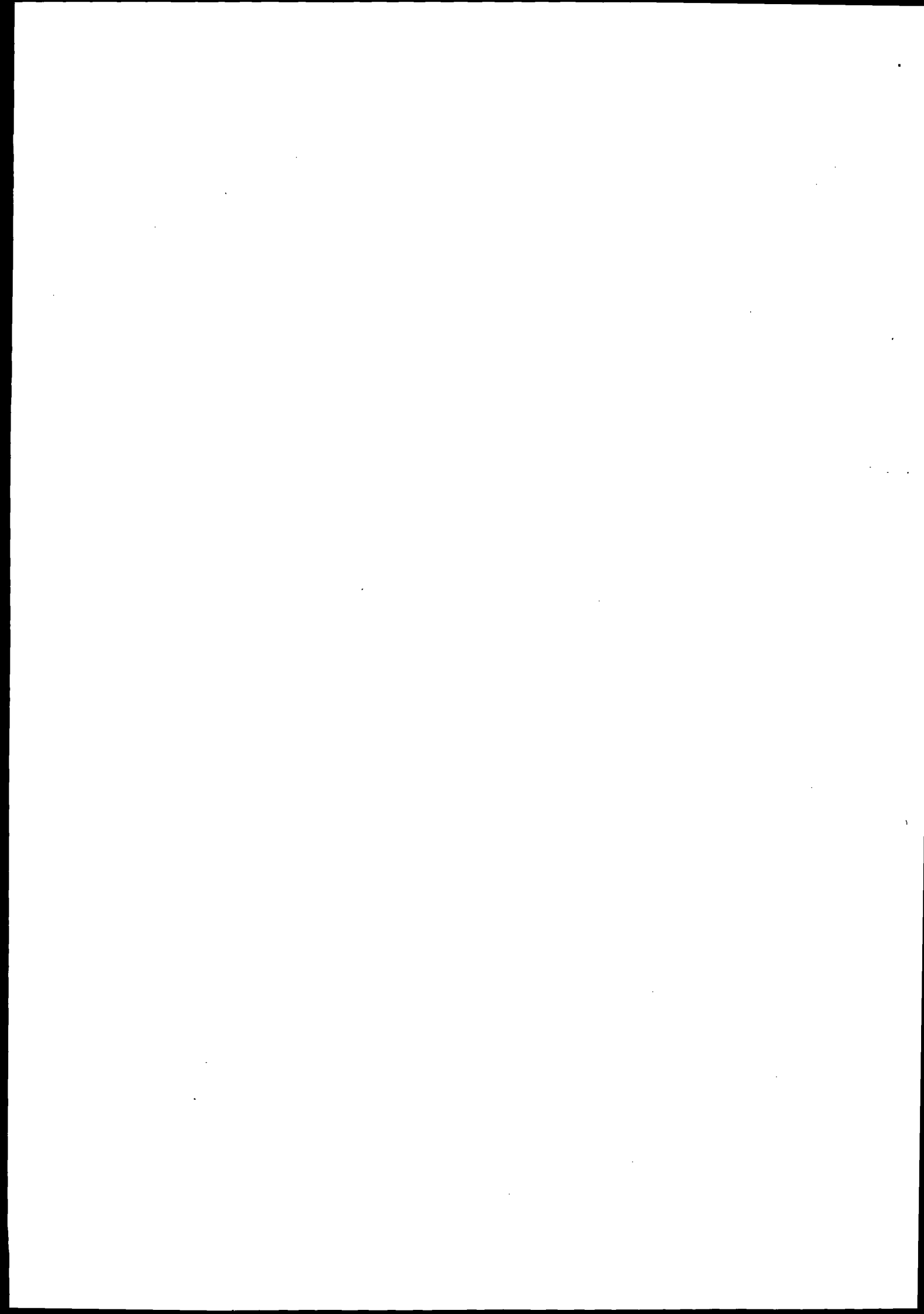
I would be pleased to provide more detailed information on cases of particular interest to your parliament. As you know, there is much that parliaments can do to contribute to a satisfactory settlement of cases before the Committee. After all, follow-up action by Member Parliaments has proven to be particularly effective. Examples of parliamentary action that have proven successful in the past may be found in Annex I.

The Committee would be grateful for information on any such action your parliament is taking with regard to the cases in question. On its behalf, I wish to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General

- Annex I:** Courses of action parliaments may take in support of the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.
- Annex II:** Report of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to the IPU Governing Council, Cape Town (South Africa), 18 April 2008.





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ANNEX I

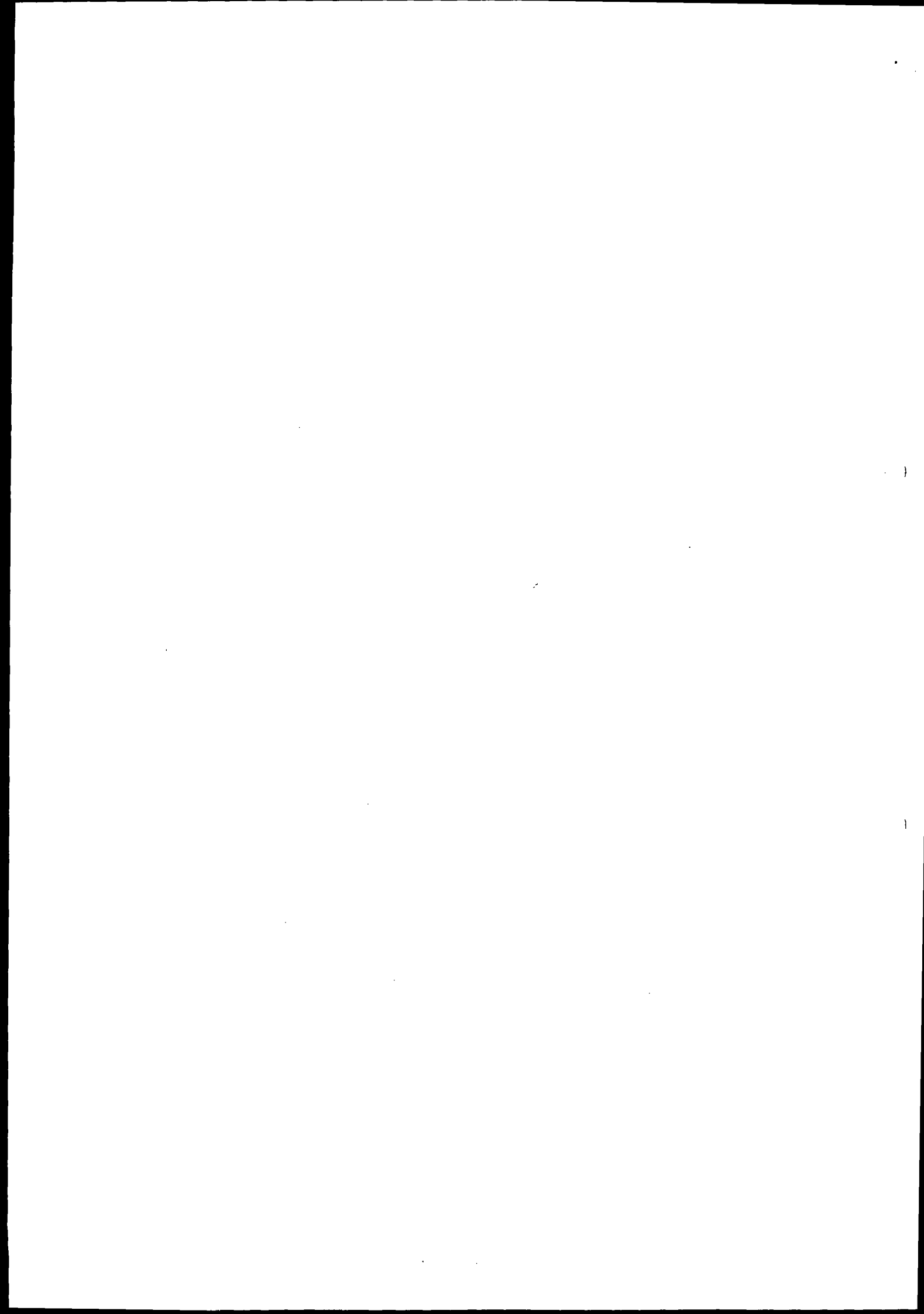
COURSES OF ACTION PARLIAMENTS MAY TAKE IN SUPPORT OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

At its 153rd session (September 1993), the Inter-Parliamentary Council adopted the resolution on the results of the Budapest Symposium on the role of Parliament as guardian of human rights, held in May 1993. It invited Parliaments to take the following action:

- ▶ Circulate as widely as possible the Committee's public reports and the resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council concerning cases dealt with in those reports;
- ▶ Systematically bring such cases to the attention of bodies for the defence of human rights operating within their parliaments;
- ▶ Sponsor those MPs whose situation is being monitored by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and, in connection with such action, to have recourse to the procedures advocated by the Council such as contacts with the authorities of the countries concerned, directly or through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs."

In addition, the following courses of action have proven successful in the past:

- ▶ Approaches to the President of the Parliament and other parliamentary colleagues of the countries concerned;
- ▶ Contacts with the Ambassadors of the countries concerned;
- ▶ Contacts by the Ambassador of your country in the countries concerned;
- ▶ Transmission of the Committee's report and the Council's resolutions to appropriate government officials;
- ▶ Ensuring media coverage of the Union's human rights activities;
- ▶ Parliamentary visits, which also provide an ideal opportunity to follow up Council resolutions.





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ANNEX II

REPORT OF THE **COMMITTEE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS** TO THE IPU GOVERNING COUNCIL

Cape Town, 18 April 2008

Dear Mr. President,
Dear colleagues,

I would first of all like to thank the delegations who came to see us for the time they took for this exchange of views, which is always an opportunity for us not only to better understand the cases before us, but also to share our concerns with delegations. I would also like to thank the many parliaments that have provided information in writing.

During this session, the Committee examined 70 cases in 35 countries and held 12 meetings with delegations or representatives of the parliamentarians concerned. The Committee also met with the victims or their representatives in five of the cases. The resolutions submitted for your approval concern the cases of 218 parliamentarians in 20 countries around the world.

I would like to start my report by presenting to you the cases which the Committee proposes for closure owing to their settlement. I hope that it will not be too awkward for you to find the resolutions since the document you have before you is in alphabetical order.

HONDURAS

I am very pleased to inform you that the Committee's examination of its longest-standing case has come to a satisfactory end. Mr. Pavón was murdered in 1988, following testimony he gave to the Inter-American Court of Human rights on disappearances in Honduras. After having come to a virtual standstill, the investigation was reopened in 1996, in great part owing to the insistence of the Committee, and led to the identification of two military officers as suspects. One of them died in Hurricane Mitch. A long trail led to the arrest, extradition, and prosecution of the other suspect. He was recently found guilty and is serving his sentence.

MALAYSIA

As you will recall, Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, spent six years in prison on charges of corruption and sodomy until the Federal Court quashed his conviction in the sodomy case. He was unable to stand in the recent elections in Malaysia since it was only last Monday that he recovered his political rights. But he was able to campaign and apparently did so successfully, since the number of his party's seats rose from 1 to 31. His wife, who was re-elected, has announced her intention to step down, which would open the way for her husband to rejoin the parliament through a by-election. In the light of these developments, the Committee proposes that you close this case.

MONGOLIA

I am pleased to be able also to report positive developments in this case, which concerns Mr. Zorig's murder ten years ago. Germany and the United Kingdom have favourably responded to Mongolia's official request for technical assistance with the investigation. I think I can safely say that this result is in no small part due to your Committee's insistence and the cooperation of the parliaments of Germany and the United Kingdom. We hope that Japan, which was also asked for assistance, will also respond favourably, and that a team of forensic experts will soon be able to travel to Ulaanbaatar to help solve this crime. The Committee will continue to follow developments, and proposes to report back to you in due course.

PAKISTAN

In April 2004, Mr. Javed Hashmi was found guilty of circulating an allegedly forged letter which criticized the army and its leadership, and he was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment. He was released last August and has meanwhile been re-elected to parliament. During its session here in Cape Town, the Committee had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hashmi personally. He had come all the way from Pakistan to thank the Committee for its support throughout his incarceration. The Committee proposes that you close this case owing to its satisfactory settlement.

I will now turn to the Committee's pending cases.

BANGLADESH

I am glad to say that there is some progress to report in the investigations into the grenade attacks in January 2005 on Mr. Shah Ams Kibria, a former Finance Minister of Bangladesh, which claimed his life, and in August 2004 on Sheikh Hasina, the leader of the Awami League and former Prime Minister, who was more fortunate. The focus in the investigation has now shifted to the possible implication of an Islamic extremist group and led to the arrest of several of its members. The Committee hopes that the authorities will soon reveal the findings that support this shift of focus. At the same time, the Committee is keen to know what has happened to those who were originally arrested in Mr. Kibria's case, and whether the allegation that four of them were tortured has been looked into.

While the case of Sheikh Hasina at first only concerned the grenade attack on her life, it has since July 2007 also concerned her arrest and prosecution on charges of extortion and corruption under the far-reaching Emergency Power Rules, which accusations she denies. In fact, the source has voiced concern that her prosecution may be intended to prevent her from engaging in political activity and contesting the elections later in the year. There is concern that one of the co-accused may have been tortured. The Committee has invited the Bangladesh authorities to provide official information on these points and requested the Secretary General to send an expert to observe the trial.

BELARUS

Mr. Gonchar, a prominent politician in Belarus and fierce opponent of President Lukashenko, disappeared, together with his friend Mr. Krasovsky, more than eight years ago and has still not been found. You will recall that in 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe endorsed the report of its Rapporteur, Mr. Pourgourides, who concluded that steps had been taken at the highest State level to cover up the real circumstances surrounding the disappearances.

We believe that there are a number of essential points that, if fully investigated, would help shed more light on the circumstances and motives of their disappearances. The Belarusian delegation has provided the Committee in Cape Town with an extensive document, which it is hoped will finally provide some answers to these long-standing questions.

BURUNDI

As you know, the Committee examines two long-running cases of murders of six parliamentarians and of an attempt on the life of another, all of which took place in the 1990s. Disappointingly, the parliamentary working group in Burundi entrusted with giving further impetus to these cases has not been able to do so since it first met in October of last year owing to the current political climate in the country. The Committee remains convinced that, together with a strong and effective Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which hopefully will soon be established, the working group can make a crucial contribution to advancing justice in these cases. The Committee calls therefore on the parliamentary authorities to make every effort, with the assistance of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to allow the working group to fulfil its mission. At the same time, the Committee considers that, irrespective of the working group and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the authorities should act without delay on the important leads in several of the cases to ensure justice.

COLOMBIA

The Committee was glad to meet with a delegation from Colombia here in Cape Town and have an opportunity to hear first-hand about developments in Colombia.

There is certainly good news to report. Five of the six former Congress members who were in the hands of Colombia's main guerrilla group, FARC, have been released since the beginning of the year. Their release has put an end to years of agonizing uncertainty for them and their families. That said, recently released footage showing a seriously weakened Mr. Lizcano, the only remaining former Congressman still in FARC hands, and the prolonged suffering of many others in captivity in the jungle of Colombia underscore the need for their urgent release. The Committee therefore continues to urge the Government of Colombia and FARC to persist in their efforts to conclude a humanitarian agreement. The Committee also intends to cooperate closely with the President of the Colombian Congress to organize a meeting in support of such an agreement.

In the cases of parliamentarians belonging to the Patriotic Union (Unión Patriótica - UP) who were assassinated or forced into exile, the Committee is pleased to inform you that the Inter-American Commission will soon rule on the merits of the cases, which we believe is essential to ensuring that full justice is done.

Security risks remain a daily concern for many Colombian Congress members. The Committee is obliged to bring to your attention the case of Mr. Wilson Borja, who was targeted in a murder attempt in 2000 and regularly receives death threats. Although his life is clearly at risk, the authorities have decided to withdraw his security detail. The Committee urges them to remedy this situation as a matter of urgency and provide him with effective protection, and investigate the threats.

Senator Gustavo Petro has been at the forefront in denouncing links between paramilitary groups and members of the Colombian Congress, which has given rise to a political scandal of enormous proportions. Although he enjoys an extensive security detail, the Committee believes that these measures will ultimately fail if the perpetrators of the threats against him are not identified and brought to justice. The same is true in the case of Senator Córdoba. The Committee therefore urges the authorities to take all necessary action to this effect.

Finally, there is the case of former congressman Jorge Tadeo Lozano, who was convicted and given a heavy prison sentence in 2000 as a result of fundamentally flawed proceedings. Though he has been on parole since 2004, there are allegations about undue limitations on his freedom. We have now been informed that the Inter-American Commission may soon take action in his case and thus address the multiple concerns that have emerged.

ECUADOR

Parliamentary immunity for opinions expressed and votes cast in parliament is a cornerstone of representative democracy. Respect for this principle is at the heart of the case of the dismissal on 7 March 2007 of fifty-six members of Congress in Ecuador, more than half its membership.

Indeed, the report of the on-site mission that you decided last year to send to Ecuador firmly concluded that they were dismissed in breach of the Constitution of Ecuador and on account of votes they cast in the exercise of their parliamentary mandate. The elaborate meeting that the Committee held with a high-level delegation from Ecuador here in Cape Town has not changed this fundamental conclusion.

Although the pursuit of justice for the fifty-six members of Congress was successful at first, a new Constitutional Court in Ecuador, which was designated under highly questionable circumstances, set aside what was for them a favourable ruling and considered the matter closed, thereby denying them an opportunity to obtain legal redress.

They may now also be subjected to criminal proceedings that are directly linked to the exercise of their parliamentary mandate, which may well impede their participation in any forthcoming elections. The Committee therefore calls on the authorities to drop these charges and allow them to exercise their political rights fully.

Turning to the other, long-standing case in Ecuador concerning Mr. Hurtado and Mr. Tapia, who were shot dead in February 1999, the Committee was very pleased to meet in Cape Town with the son of Mr. Hurtado. He is the President of the recently re-enacted Special Inquiry Commission entrusted with elucidating the circumstances of the murder, and he told the Committee that the Commission is enjoying all the necessary political and financial support to do its work. Indeed, the Committee is confident that under these circumstances, the Commission's sustained and critical action will ultimately lead to the arrest and trial of the remaining suspects and shed light on the motive and masterminds of the murder.

ERITREA

The Eritrean authorities continue to remain completely silent to the IPU's plea for the release of 11 former parliamentarians. They have been in incommunicado detention since 18 September 2001 after publicly calling for democratic reforms. No one knows where they are held, or even whether they are all still alive, and they have never been brought before a judge. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has concluded that their most basic rights have been violated.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity here in Cape Town once again to put out a pressing appeal, especially to our African colleagues, the African Union, the African Parliamentary Union, and the Pan-African Parliament, to do their utmost to ensure that the recommendations of the African Commission are applied and that the former parliamentarians are released.

LEBANON

Four parliamentarians have been murdered in Lebanon in the last two years. You were already examining two of these murders, namely that of Mr. Gibran Tuani and Mr. Walid Eido. This time, the Committee also brings to your attention the killings of Mr. Antoine Ghanem and Mr. Pierre Gemayel. What all four parliamentarians shared was their outspokenness, plus the brutality of their murders. Clearly, those responsible wanted to send a harsh warning to those wishing to speak out on critical issues.

The International Independent Investigation Commission examining the murder of former Prime Minister Hariri, which was established in 2005, is also looking into these four cases. The Commission, whose work is coming to an end, has laid the groundwork for subsequent effective action by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to identify and hold the culprits to account. The only thing outstanding is for the National Assembly to approve the establishment of the Tribunal. The Committee therefore calls on the Assembly and the parliamentary authorities to do everything possible to overcome the current political crisis in Lebanon in order to make this happen.

MYANMAR

The military in Myanmar showed their ruthlessness again last autumn by severely repressing the peaceful demonstrations by monks and civilians. Five parliamentarians who were then arrested have now been sentenced to prison terms for their participation in the demonstrations. One parliamentarian was severely ill-treated and lost his sight in one eye, an appalling criminal act that has remained totally unpunished. The Committee urges the authorities to immediately release the five parliamentarians along with their thirteen colleagues who continue to languish in jail.

There is no reason to believe the junta is serious about a transition towards democracy. Next month, the people of Myanmar will be asked to vote on a Constitution drafted by a National Convention that was completely controlled by the military and did not allow for a free exchange of views. It is therefore not surprising that the text that will be put to a referendum provides sweeping and overriding powers for the military. What is more, in the present circumstances, the referendum is bound to take place in a climate of fear, distrust and lack of total transparency, and can therefore have no credibility.

The Committee insists that the only viable way out of the current crisis is for the military regime to engage in a genuine dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, all concerned parties and ethnic nationality groups. The international community can play a crucial role in this respect by bringing its pressure to bear on the authorities and by expressing, as things now stand, its rejection of the referendum process and outcome. We therefore call again on Member Parliaments of the IPU, in particular China and India as neighbouring countries, to lend their full support in this respect.

PALESTINE / ISRAEL

In early February this year, IPU President Casini and the Secretary General went on an official visit to Israel. They raised with the authorities the cases of the former and incumbent members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) which you have before you. They were told by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that a visit to Mr. Marwan Barghouti could be arranged and that there was no reason not to provide the information which you have been requesting for some time now in all these cases. Unfortunately, it has not been possible so far to arrange for a visit to Mr. Barghouti, nor has the Committee received the requested information. Despite this, there is some new information in these cases which I can report to you.

The first concerns Mr. Hussam Khader, a former member of the PLC. In view of the report of the lawyer who observed Mr. Khader's trial on behalf of the IPU, the Committee - and indeed you - have considered that it fell far short of a fair trial. Last year, Mr. Khader became eligible for early release and he filed a petition to this effect. The Committee sent a barrister, Mr. Sadakat Kadri from London to observe the proceedings of the release committee. His report is before you. Unfortunately, Mr. Khader's petition was dismissed at the close of a procedure which the Committee can only consider to have been arbitrary and unworthy of a State respecting the rule of law.

The Committee has also learned that 19 charges are pending against Mr. Sa'adat which reportedly all have to do with his leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and none of them allege direct involvement in crimes of violence. As you may recall, Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat was abducted in March 2006 from a prison in Jericho and taken to Israel. The Israeli authorities wanted him for the murder in October 2001 of the Israeli Minister of Tourism, Mr. Zeevi. A month after his abduction, however, the charge was dropped for want of evidence. The Committee believes that this clearly shows that his abduction and transfer to Israel was not related to the murder charge, but rather to his political views.

The Committee has reason to believe that political views rather than any specific criminal activity on their part are also behind the arrest and continuing detention of the PLC members elected in January 2006 on the Change and Reform list. The Committee is particularly concerned at the rearrest of one of the parliamentarians in question, Mr. Abderrahman Zaidan. Mr. Zaidan had in fact given testimony to the Committee in April 2007 and approximately one month later, was rearrested and we do not know

why. The Committee also remains deeply concerned at the continuing detention of PLC Speaker Dr. Aziz Dweik, as his health is reportedly very precarious.

The Committee's concerns about due process rights in the proceedings brought against the parliamentarians in question were borne out by a recently published report of an Israeli human rights organization. The report, entitled "Backyard proceedings", reveals the absence of such rights in the Israeli military courts in the West Bank.

In all these cases the Committee urges the Knesset to play its role as a guardian of human rights and to prevent and remedy human rights abuses, whether they concern Israeli citizens or Palestinians in the hands of the Israeli authorities.

Lastly, I have to bring to your attention a new case concerning a PLC member, namely that of Ms. Mariam Saleh, former Minister for Women Affairs. She is at present in administrative detention and the facts on file suggest that her arrest and detention is arbitrary. I would like to point out in this respect that, in her case as well as in that of the Change and Reform parliamentarians, a military court had first ordered their release on bail, but those orders seem to be systematically overturned on appeal, leading to indefinite detention.

PHILIPPINES

You will perhaps recall that the Committee carried out a mission to the Philippines one year ago regarding the case of six opposition members accused of rebellion. Your Committee was concerned that political considerations might be behind this case. A few months later, in July 2007, the Supreme Court exonerated the parliamentarians concerned of the charges and found that they had been brought for political ends. If the story were to end there it would indeed be a good news story, but this is unfortunately not so. A multiple murder case against Mr. Ocampo is still pending, and murder charges in Nueva Ecija brought against Representatives Ocampo, Maza, Casiño and against former Representative Mariano are being pursued. In addition, a new case was brought against Teodoro Casiño for allegedly obstructing the course of justice. He had in fact asked security forces who wanted to arrest a party colleague to show an arrest warrant. When they were unable to do so, he insisted on accompanying his colleague to the police station. A new case was also brought against Representative Ocampo in March 2008, when a petition for Writ of Amparo was filed against him and top officials of the Philippine Communist Party, in connection with the alleged abduction of a woman by communist rebels. Given the political motivation behind the previous rebellion charges brought against the parliamentarians, your Committee fears that all these proceedings are part of an ongoing effort by the Government, to remove them and their political parties from the democratic political process.

RWANDA

Mr. Léonard Hitimana disappeared in April 2003 and has still not been found. The authorities were initially quite confident that he had in fact left the country and that they would be able to locate him abroad, as they did in the case of others who had also disappeared. However, this has not happened. The Committee fears that the investigation may not be proceeding with the necessary rigour and diligence. As long as his fate has not been established, we can only reiterate our deep concern that Mr. Hitimana may have been the victim of an enforced disappearance.

SRI LANKA

At the invitation of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, the Committee carried out a mission to Sri Lanka from 21 to 24 February. I take this opportunity to thank the Parliament and our former colleague, Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe, for the organization of the mission and the efforts made to arrange the requested meetings, especially a meeting with President Rajapakse. The delegation's written report will be submitted to all parties with whom the delegation met for any comments they may have before it is presented to you next October.

Unfortunately, the resumption of hostilities following the abrogation of the cease-fire agreement between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has brought a string of new political killings. After the murder of Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham in December 2005, and of Mr. Nadaraj Raviraj in November 2006, the cases of the murder of three more members of parliament have been submitted to the Committee: Mr. Maheswaran, a member of the opposition United National Party was shot dead on 1 January 2008 while attending a religious ceremony. Mr. Dassanayake, a member of the Government, was killed in a roadside bomb attack on 8 January, and Mr. Sivanesan, a member of the opposition Tamil National Alliance, was killed in a Claymore mine attack on 6 March. The Committee strongly condemns these murders and urges the authorities to conduct thorough and independent investigations into these crimes.

The Committee is appalled at the kidnapping of relatives of four Tamil National Alliance parliamentarians before the vote on the budget in November and December 2007 to prevent them from voting against the budget. It stresses that such practices negate the free exercise of the mandate and are a serious threat to democracy.

TURKEY

This is a long-standing case which now concerns five former members of the Turkish parliament of Kurdish origin. Ms. Zana, Mr. Dicle, Mr. Dogan and Mr. Sadak were sentenced in December 1994 to a 15-year prison term for membership of an armed organization. The European Court of Human Rights concluded in 2001 that the proceedings had failed to comply with fair trial guarantees. Two retrials were held which both also fell short of fair trial standards, and at the second they were sentenced to seven years and 6 months imprisonment. They were released in July 2004. Leyla Zana and her colleagues have brought the case before the Cassation Court, where it is still pending. As to Mr. Sinçar, he was killed in September 1993 in circumstances suggesting that he was the victim of an extrajudicial execution. An initial investigation concluded that members of Hezbollah were responsible for his killing, but no one was arrested. The parliament has now reported that a trial is under way and the Committee would like to receive more detailed information in this respect.

ZIMBABWE

When the Committee met with the leader of the Zimbabwean delegation and another delegation member during the 116th Assembly in April last year, it was pleased that the parliament had debated two outrageous incidents involving Mr. Biti and Mr. Chamisa, namely the systematic beating-up by the police of participants in a prayer meeting on 11 March 2007 and the attack, one week later, badly injuring Mr. Chamisa at Harare International Airport. Unfortunately, the Parliament has done nothing to ensure that both criminal acts are duly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. The police claimed that the 11 March meeting was in fact part of a defiance campaign of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change and not a prayer meeting, and that Mr. Chamisa should have made a formal complaint. The Committee affirms that the treatment inflicted by the police on Mr. Biti, Mr. Chamisa and others is a gross violation of human rights, irrespective of whether the meeting was authorized or not, or was or was not a prayer meeting. It also believes that the assault on Mr. Chamisa, which was extensively covered in the national and international media, should be investigated even if he has not lodged an official complaint.

As to Mr. Madzore, who was arrested on 28 March 2007 and reportedly tortured while in police custody, he was released in August after the charges against him were withdrawn before plea. The Committee reminds the authorities that they have a duty to investigate allegations of torture. Indeed, their failure to do so is just what encourages police and security officials to use torture. Mr. Job Sikhala's torture in January 2003, which has remained unpunished although he provided detailed information, is a case in point. The Committee is bound to note with the utmost concern that in none of the cases in question have the authorities complied with their constitutional duties, nor has the parliament effectively exercised its oversight function. On the contrary, law enforcement agencies have been allowed to continue torturing and ill-treating even members of parliament with complete

impunity. The Committee sincerely hopes that the newly elected parliament will take its oversight function more seriously and use its powers to ensure that the law enforcement agencies do their duty. I shall now turn to two cases in countries which are new on our list.

AFGHANISTAN

The first concerns Ms. Malalai Joya, a member of the Lower House of the Parliament of Afghanistan. Ms. Joya, a well-known human rights defender and staunch critic of the former warlords, had her parliamentary mandate suspended on 21 May 2007, for what the House considered insulting remarks she had made in a television interview about the functioning of parliament and about several fellow parliamentarians. The sources affirm that the suspension is unlawful and Ms. Joya has filed an appeal with the Supreme Court, which is pending. The Committee stresses the fundamental importance of freedom of expression and respect for procedure in cases involving such serious measures as suspension of the mandate. We are also concerned that the parliament apparently took no action when fellow parliamentarians made insulting remarks about Ms. Joya. And we are deeply concerned at the death threats against Ms. Joya, which must be taken extremely seriously. Ms. Joya has already been the target of several attempts on her life, and the Committee therefore urges the parliament to afford her the necessary protection.

EGYPT

The Committee submits to you the case of Mr. Ayman Nour in Egypt. Mr. Nour, founder of the opposition Al-Ghad party, is serving a five-year prison term after being found guilty in December 2005 of forgery and counterfeiting for the purpose of registering his party. The Committee has received conflicting information from the authorities and the sources as regards almost every aspect of this case, and in particular Mr. Nour's conditions of detention, his state of health and the medical treatment he is receiving. In accordance with its normal practice in such cases, the Committee suggested that an on-site mission to gather first-hand information from the competent authorities and Mr. Nour himself would help clarify those issues. The Speaker of the People's Assembly made every effort to organize the mission, for which we thank him, but unfortunately the Attorney General did not authorize a visit to Mr. Nour. The mission was therefore unable to proceed. The Committee now hopes that the Attorney General will reconsider his decision.

Thank you for your attention.