



OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/2

The Commission on Human Rights,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 57/196 of 18 December 2002 and recalling its own resolution 2002/5 of 12 April 2002,

Recalling all of its relevant resolutions, in which, inter alia, it condemned any State that permitted or tolerated the recruitment, financing, training, assembly, transit and use of mercenaries with the objective of overthrowing the Governments of States Members of the United Nations, especially those of developing countries, or of fighting against national liberation movements, and recalling also the relevant resolutions and international instruments adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Organization of African Unity, inter alia the Convention of the Organization of African Unity on the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations concerning the strict observance of the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity of States, self-determination of peoples, the non-use of force or threat of use of force in international relations and non-interference in affairs within the domestic jurisdiction of States,

Reaffirming also that by virtue of the principle of self-determination, all peoples have the right to determine freely their political status and to pursue freely their economic, social and cultural development,

Reaffirming further the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

Alarmed and concerned about the danger which the activities of mercenaries constitute to peace and security in developing countries, particularly in Africa and in small States,

Deeply concerned about the loss of life, the substantial damage to property and the negative effects on the policy and economies of affected countries resulting from mercenary international criminal activities,

Convinced that, notwithstanding the way in which mercenaries or mercenary-related activities are used or the form they take to acquire some semblance of legitimacy, they are a threat to peace, security and the self-determination of peoples and an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights by peoples,

1. *Welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (E/CN.4/2003/16);*

2. *Reaffirms* that the use of mercenaries and their recruitment, financing and training are causes for grave concern to all States and violate the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

3. *Recognizes* that armed conflicts, terrorism, arms trafficking and covert operations by third Powers, inter alia, encourage the demand for mercenaries on the global market;

4. *Urges* all States to take the necessary steps and to exercise the utmost vigilance against the menace posed by the activities of mercenaries, and to take legislative measures to ensure that their territories and other territories under their control, as well as their nationals, are not used for the recruitment, assembly, financing, training and transit of mercenaries for the planning of activities designed to impede the right to self-determination, to overthrow the Government of any State, or dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the right to self-determination of peoples;

5. *Requests* all States to exercise the utmost vigilance against any kind of recruitment, training, hiring or financing of mercenaries by private companies offering international military consultancy and security services, as well as to impose a specific ban on such companies' intervening in armed conflicts or actions to destabilize constitutional regimes;

6. *Welcomes* the entry into force of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries;

7. *Calls upon* all States that have not yet done so to consider taking the necessary action to sign or ratify the International Convention;

8. *Welcomes* the cooperation extended by those countries that received a visit by the Special Rapporteur on mercenaries;

9. *Also welcomes* the adoption by some States of national legislation that restricts the recruitment, assembly, financing, training and transit of mercenaries;

10. *Invites* States to investigate the possibility of mercenary involvement whenever and wherever criminal acts of a terrorist nature occur;

11. *Takes note* of the convening by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the second meeting of experts on traditional and new forms of mercenary activities as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/232, of 24 December 2001;

12. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, as a matter of priority, to publicize the adverse effects of mercenary activities on the right of peoples to self-determination and, when requested and where necessary, to render advisory services to States that are affected by these activities;

13. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to continue taking into account in the discharge of his mandate that mercenary activities are continuing to occur in many parts of the world and are taking on new forms, manifestations and modalities;

14. *Urges* all States to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of his mandate;

15. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the Special Rapporteur with all the necessary assistance and support for the fulfilment of his mandate, including through the promotion of cooperation between the Special Rapporteur and other components of the United Nations system that deal with countering mercenary-related activities;

16. *Also requests* the Special Rapporteur to consult States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the present resolution and to report, with specific recommendations, his findings on the use of mercenaries to undermine the right to self-determination to the Commission at its sixtieth session;

17. *Decides* to consider at its sixtieth session the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination under the same agenda item.

47th meeting

14 April 2003

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 37 votes to 9, with 7 abstentions.

See chap. V. - E/CN.4/2003/L.11]