

LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON

II. GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ICCPR General Comment 8 (Sixteenth session, 1982): Article 9: Right to Liberty and Security of Persons, A/37/40 (1982) 95 at paras. 1-4.

1. Article 9 which deals with the right to liberty and security of persons has often been somewhat narrowly understood in reports by States parties, and they have therefore given incomplete information. The Committee points out that paragraph 1 is applicable to all deprivations of liberty, whether in criminal cases or in other cases such as, for example, mental illness, vagrancy, drug addiction, educational purposes, immigration control, etc. It is true that some of the provisions of article 9 (part of para. 2 and the whole of para. 3) are only applicable to persons against whom criminal charges are brought. But the rest, and in particular the important guarantee laid down in paragraph 4, i.e. the right to control by a court of the legality of the detention, applies to all persons deprived of their liberty by arrest or detention. Furthermore, States parties have in accordance with article 2 (3) also to ensure that an effective remedy is provided in other cases in which an individual claims to be deprived of his liberty in violation of the Covenant.

2. Paragraph 3 of article 9 requires that in criminal cases any person arrested or detained has to be brought "promptly" before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power. More precise time-limits are fixed by law in most States parties and, in the view of the Committee, delays must not exceed a few days. Many States have given insufficient information about the actual practices in this respect.

3. Another matter is the total length of detention pending trial. In certain categories of criminal cases in some countries this matter has caused some concern within the Committee, and members have questioned whether their practices have been in conformity with the entitlement "to trial within a reasonable time or to release" under paragraph 3. Pre-trial detention should be an exception and as short as possible. The Committee would welcome information concerning mechanisms existing and measures taken with a view to reducing the duration of such detention.

4. Also if so-called preventive detention is used, for reasons of public security, it must be controlled by these same provisions, i.e. it must not be arbitrary, and must be based on grounds and procedures established by law (para. 1), information of the reasons must be given (para. 2) and court control of the detention must be available (para. 4) as well as compensation in the case of a breach (para. 5). And if, in addition, criminal charges are brought in such cases, the full protection of article 9 (2) and (3), as well as article 14, must also be granted.

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- ICCPR General Comment 25 (Fifty-seventh session, 1996): Article 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right of Equal Access to Public Service, A/51/40 vol. I (1996) 98 at para. 14.

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14. In their reports, States parties should indicate and explain the legislative provisions which would deprive citizens of their right to vote. The grounds for such deprivation should be objective and reasonable. If conviction for an offence is a basis for suspending the right to vote, the period of such suspension should be proportionate to the offence and the sentence. Persons who are deprived of liberty but who have not been convicted should not be excluded from exercising the right to vote.

- ICCPR General Comment 27 (Sixty-seventh session, 1999): Article 12: Freedom of Movement, A/55/40 vol. I (2000) 128 at para. 7.

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7. Subject to the provisions of article 12, paragraph 3, the right to reside in a place of one's choice within the territory includes protection against all forms of forced internal displacement. It also precludes preventing the entry or stay of persons in a defined part of the territory. Lawful detention, however, affects more specifically the right to personal liberty and is covered by article 9 of the Covenant. In some circumstances, articles 12 and 9 may come into play together. e/

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e/ See e.g. Communication No. 138/1983, *Mpandajila v. Zaire*, para. 10; Communication No. 157/1983, *Mpaka-Nsusu v. Zaire*, para. 10; Communication Nos. 241 and 242/1987, *Birhashhwirwa/Tshisekedi v. Zaire*, para. 13.

- ICESCR General Comment 14 (Twenty-second session, 2000): Article 12: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health, E/2001/22 (2000) 128 at paras. 8 and 34.

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8. The right to health is not to be understood as a right to be healthy. The right to health contains both freedoms and entitlements. The freedoms include the right to control one's health and body, including sexual and reproductive freedom, and the right to be free from interference, such as the right to be free from torture, non-consensual medical treatment and

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experimentation. By contrast, the entitlements include the right to a system of health protection which provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the highest attainable level of health.

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Specific legal obligations

34. ...Furthermore, obligations to respect include a State's obligation to refrain from prohibiting or impeding traditional preventive care, healing practices and medicines, from marketing unsafe drugs and from applying coercive medical treatments, unless on an exceptional basis for the treatment of mental illness or the prevention and control of communicable diseases. Such exceptional cases should be subject to specific and restrictive conditions, respecting best practices and applicable international standards, including the Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and the Improvement of Mental Health Care. ^{c/}

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^{c/} The Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and for the Improvement of Mental Health Care (General Assembly resolution 46/119, annex) and the Committee's General Comment No. 5 (1994) on persons with disabilities, apply to persons with mental illness; the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (*Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex), as well as the Beijing Declaration and Programme for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (*Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I), contain definitions of reproductive health and women's health, respectively.

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- CEDAW General Recommendation 19 (Eleventh session, 1992): Violence Against Women, A/47/38 (1992) 5 at para. 7(d).

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7. Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention. These rights and freedoms include:

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(d) The right to liberty and security of person...

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- CERD General Recommendation XX (Forty-eighth session, 1996): Article 5: Non-Discriminatory Implementation of Rights and Freedoms, A/51/18 (1996) 124. For text of General Recommendation, see **EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION - RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**.
- CERD General Recommendation XXVII (Fifty-seventh session, 2000): Discrimination Against Roma, A/55/18 (2000) 154 at paras. 12-14 and 16. For text of General Recommendation, see **EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION - RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**.
- CERD General Recommendation XXIX (Sixty-first session, 2002): On Article 1, Paragraph 1, of the Convention (Descent), A/57/18 (2002) 111 at paras. 1 and ee. For text of General Recommendation, see **EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION - RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**.
- CERD General Recommendation XXX (Sixty-fifth session, 2004): Discrimination Against Non-Citizens, A/59/18 (2004) 93 at paras. 11, 18-21 and 34. For text of General Recommendation, see **ALIENS - GENERAL**.
- CERD General recommendation XXXI (Sixty-seventh session, 2005): The Prevention of Racial Discrimination in the Administration and Functioning of the Criminal Justice System, A/60/18 (2005) 98 at preamble and paras. 4, 14 and 20-24. For text of General Recommendation, see **EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION - RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**.
- ICCPR General Comment 9 (Sixteenth session, 1982): Article 10: Humane Treatment of Persons Deprived of Liberty, A/37/40 (1982) 96 at para. 3. For text of General Comment, see **HUMAN DIGNITY**.
- ICCPR General Comment 24 (Fifty-second session, 1994): Issues Relating to Reservations Made upon Ratification or Accession to the Covenant or the Optional Protocols Thereto, or in Relation to Declarations under Article 41 of the Covenant, A/50/40 vol. I (1995) 119. For text of General Comment, see **RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS**.

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- ICCPR General Comment 28 (Sixty-eighth session, 2000): Article 3: Equality of Rights Between Men and Women, A/55/40 vol. I (2000) 133 at paras. 13 and 14. For text of General Comment, see **EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION - GENDER DISCRIMINATION - General**.
- ICCPR General Comment 29 (Seventy-second session, 2001): Derogations from provisions of the Covenant during a state of emergency, A/56/40 vol. I (2001) 202 at paras. 11, 13(b) and 16. For text of General Comment, see **DEROGATIONS**.
- ICESCR General Comment 15 (Twenty-ninth session, 2002): The Right to Water (arts. 11 and 12 of the Covenant), E/2003/22 (2002) 120 at paras. 12(c)(i), 37(d), 38, 40 and 42. For text of General Comment, see **ADEQUATE OR DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING - FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER**.
- CRC General Comment 3 (Thirty-second session, 2003): HIV/AIDS and the Rights of the Child, A/59/41 (2004) 89 at paras. 6, 19, 37 and 38. For text of General Comment, see **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - GENERAL**.
- CRC General Comment 4 (Thirty-third session, 2003): Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, A/59/41 (2004) 102 at paras. 23, 36, 39(a) and 39(f). For text of General Comment, see **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - HEALTH**.
- CRC General Comment 6 (Thirty-ninth session, 2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin, A/61/41 (2005) 15 at paras. 3, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31, 40, 56, 57, 61-63, 82, 84 and 85. For text of General Comment, see **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - GENERAL**.