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**PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION : PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND
PROTECTION OF MINORITIES**

**Written statement* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental
organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated
in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2nd July 2004]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human rights abuses against Congolese citizens in Angola

The U.N. estimates that up to 100.000 Congolese citizens have been deported from the diamond-rich border province of Lunda Norte in Northern Angola to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in April/May 2004. Angolan authorities began the expulsions of the migrants in December 2003, following a swoop on all foreigners mining diamonds illegally. Many of the expelled Congolese claim to be born in Angola.

Angolan military forces had subjected the migrants to brutal physical abuse and appalling human rights violations in order to force the migrants to leave Angolan territory. Testimonies from the expelled Congolese accused Angolan soldiers of brutal body searches, rapes, beatings, executions and the deliberate separation of families. Many of the women and girls were gang-raped under the pretext of body searches. Some of the migrants have been forced to undergo degrading public strip searches for diamonds. Many of the deported Congolese arrived exhausted and systematically stripped off their belongings in DRC. Humanitarian organisations have expressed their concern about the poor medical state of the expelled people. A number of refugees were drowned in attempting to cross Tungila river, separating both countries, during their exodus to DRC.

Due to international pressure the Angolan President ordered the suspension of the expulsions in May 2004. The forced repatriation of Congolese nationals has caused hostility towards Angolans who depend on neighbouring Congolese markets to purchase food and other necessary items. Angolan refugees from the province of Cabinda and other provinces of Angola living in DRC have been attacked by the population in DRC in retaliation for the forced expulsions.

Furthermore Society for Threatened Peoples is alarmed by many reports of human rights violations committed by Angolan soldiers towards Congolese nationals in the Angolan province of Cabinda. Testimonies from Cabindan human rights organisations indicate widespread abuses of human rights by Angolan troops: Against a background of escalating military conflict between the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) dozens of Congolese nationals became victims of killings, rape, torture and illegal detention.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the UN Sub-Commission to urge the Angolan government to respect the basic human rights and dignity of Congolese nationals living in Angola and to refrain from any forced expulsion.
