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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 11

FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF
THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Written statement submitted by the International Fellowship
of Reconciliation, a non-governmental organization in
consultative status (category II)*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is distributed in accordance with Economic and Social Council Resolution 1296 (XLIV)

1. One aspect of item 11, "the question of the programme and methods of work of the Commission", is fundamental to this Commission. IFOR wishes to draw attention to one troublesome matter, which impacts negatively on the credibility of the Commission. All too frequently, Member States do not comply with the resolutions of the Commission, but the credibility of the Commission is at stake when the Member State in question is also a member of the Commission. This question is central to the issue of "programmes and methods", because a refusal to comply, while retaining the authority as a member of the Commission, engenders contempt and heightens the possibility of non-compliance by other Member and observer States.

* This written statement was prepared in collaboration with Freedom House, a New York-based human rights and public policy organization, founded more than 50 years ago to oppose the Nazi onslaught in Europe. Since that time, it has been a steadfast advocate for human rights and civil liberties. Its current Chairman, Ambassador Max M. Kampelman, served as the Head of the United States delegation to the Paris and Madrid rounds of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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2. As part of its review of "programmes and methods" the Commission ought to hold accountable any Government that prohibits or hinders the work of NGOs - and especially any Government that refuses entry into its country by duly designated representatives of the Commission, particularly a Member of the Commission!

3. This year, IFOR accredited representatives from Freedom House, the well-known New York-based Human Rights Organization, whose current Chairman is United States Ambassador Max Kampelman. Its Annual Survey of political rights and civil liberties around the world is highlighted by a special report, prepared for this Commission, which is available on request. It includes chapters on the list of those Governments considered to be the worst violators of human rights during 1992. In alphabetical order: Burma, China, Cuba, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Viet Nam.

4. Among its tasks - to name but two examples - the Commission focuses on the violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals and also on the suffering of minorities. Yet, in today's world, we see the plight of majorities that are the victims of a most vicious system of repression. We are referring to the denial of the most fundamental of human rights to whole populations, due to their ethnic or national background. Freedom House's Annual Survey gives a number of such examples, that go from Cuba in the West to North Korea in the East.
