

Follow-up Report on the UPR of Papua New Guinea

The human rights performance of Papua New Guinea was reviewed on 11th May under the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism with the PNG's *Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations in New York*, H.E. Robert Aisi, heading the government's delegation. Other members of the delegation were Ms. Nanai Puka-Areni of the Constitutional & Law Reform Commission; Mr. Joseph Molita of the Ombudsman Commission and Mr. Sakias Tamero of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The review attracted quite a number of states participating in the interactive dialogue. The key human rights concerns and issues raised during the review were as follows: *governance and corruption, violence against women and girls, impact of mining and other forms of extractive industries to the environment, bad infrastructure and lack of basic services, police brutality, HIV/AIDS, the right to education and the rights of people with disabilities.*

Our Joint Submission (FMSI, Franciscans International and Edmund Rice International), which focused on the **right to education and the rights of people with disabilities** was first shared with several country delegations to the UN via e-mail, followed by individual lobbying with some of those permanent missions. A one-hour briefing was held at in the Franciscans International Office just prior to the UPR with representatives from six permanent missions attending, namely: *Australia, Brazil, Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.* 'Human Rights Watch' was also invited speak about their concerns at this meeting. Fr. Leonard Tarai, OFM, came to Geneva to be present at his country's UPR and at the meeting he offered his views of human rights in the country. Br Jim Jolley also spoke on the education issues raised in our joint report.

A positive aspect of our Joint Submission is that of all the NGO Stakeholder's Reports submitted to the UN, our Report was most used and quoted by the OHCHR's Stakeholder's Compilation which is one of the official documents used for the UPR.

Although many issues were raised during the review, it was surprising that not a single country raised the issue of human rights' violations committed in Bougainville in the past nor did the PNG national report refer to this relatively recent turbulent history of the country.

During PNG's report to the member states, the Ambassador heading the delegation committed PNG to having an *open door policy* for any the Special Rapporteur to visit to the country, and that other international HR instruments PNG is yet to ratify will be done in due time.

Whilst several state delegations raised concerns about education (such as ensuring equal access and free, compulsory basic education for all children) and concerns about disability issues, some of the more important ones were not put, for example, the need to have more fully qualified teachers in schools and to ensure that there are enough schools and classrooms for all children, and that the curriculum is appropriate to the needs of children in secondary schools.



Fr Leonard Tarai, OFM, Br Jim Jolley and the Human Right Watch representative at the UPR briefing held at Franciscans International



Briefing meeting at FI Office