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IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251 OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”

**Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the
situation of human rights defenders, Hina Jilani**

Addendum

Summary of cases transmitted to Governments and replies received *

* The present document is being circulated in the languages of submission only, as it greatly exceeds the word limitations currently imposed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Singapore

589. On 27 October 2006, the Special Representative together with the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention sent an urgent appeal concerning **Mr Ravi**, a human rights lawyer, who is the defense counsel for 11 Falun Gong practitioners in four separate cases brought to the court by the authorities. According to the information received, on 19 September 2006 Mr Ravi was arrested by the police near MacDonald's Restaurant in Yishun, Singapore, whilst eating with his niece and nephew. He was taken to And Mo Kui Police Station and interrogated without legal counsel. Neither at the time of arrest nor subsequently did the police notify him of any charges against him. The police then sent him to Changi Hospital, and informed the family only after having taken Mr Ravi there. Mr Ravi's youngest sister complained to the police and questioned on what authority they did it. The Police replied that they were still investigating him, without specifying for what. The family of Mr Ravi and his friends were informed that they would have to wait for the report of the doctor at Changi Hospital. Mr Ravi was examined by the doctor on the same day and was declared to be healthy. He was released conditionally into family care.

However two days later, despite the medical results, the police threatened Mr Ravi's family that unless they agreed to send him to a mental hospital, they would put Mr Ravi in jail where they would have no access to him. As a consequence, the family accepted and Mr Ravi was forcibly committed to Adam Road hospital and sedated against his will. He remains kept in the mental hospital. Concern was expressed that the alleged threats made by the authorities against Mr Ravi may have represented an attempt to prevent him from carrying out his human rights work, in particular his ability to legally represent 11 Falun Gong practitioners whose cases are pending.

Communications received

590. In a letter dated 6 December 2006, the Government replied to the joint urgent appeal sent on 27 October 2006 stating that the allegations contained in the letter were completely untrue and Mr Ravi's arrest had nothing to do with his professional activities including his work with the 11 Falun Gong practitioners, or any of his other activities connected with human rights matters. According to the Government, Mr Ravi was arrested by the police for disorderly behaviour in public, after a member of the public called the police on 18 September 2006 and reported that a barefooted man was making a nuisance of himself in public. Police allegedly responded to the call and found Mr Ravi, who was involved in an apparent argument with another individual. Despite advice from his female relative and a female friend who were at the scene, as well as several warnings from the Police to behave himself, Mr Ravi did not do so and continued to shout incoherently. After failing to heed repeated warnings by the Police, Mr Ravi was arrested. At the time of his arrest, Mr Ravi was informed that he was being placed under arrest for the offence of disorderly behaviour. The Police had not decided at the time of arrest whether to charge Mr Ravi in Court. Mr Ravi was interviewed while in Police custody. During this interview, Mr Ravi allegedly did not request the presence of a lawyer. The Government declared that while in Police custody, Mr Ravi was examined by a doctor who wrote a referral letter for Mr Ravi to be further examined at the Institute of Mental Health. This referral letter was allegedly handed to a female relative of Mr Ravi who bailed him out and told the police that she did not wish to send him to IMH for examination.

The Government asserted that the police did not commit Mr Ravi to a mental institution, forcibly or otherwise, nor was his family compelled by the police to do so but a male relative of Mr Ravi had caused Mr Ravi to be admitted to Adam Road Hospital (a specialist private hospital offering psychiatric and psychological services), for treatment. However, the Government stated that he has since been discharged from Adam Road Hospital.

Observations

591. The Special Representative thanks the Government of Singapore for its response to her communication of 27 October 2006 and is encouraged by its willingness to investigate alleged violations. She is disappointed however that she did not receive a response to her communication of 19 September 2006. The allegations are serious and the Special Representative would urge the Government to provide a detailed substantive response assuring that an investigation has been launched into this case. The Special Representative wishes to remind the Government of Singapore of its obligations under Articles 6 (b) and (c), and 12 of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.