



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

مركز جنيف لحقوق الإنسان والحوار العالمي

CENTRE DE GENÈVE POUR LA PROMOTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET LE DIALOGUE GLOBAL

Reports on the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council

General debate on agenda Item 8 (1 October 2020)

Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA)

General Debate:

Interventions made on behalf of Groups of States.....	2
Interventions made on behalf of Human Rights Council's Member States.....	4
Interventions made on behalf of Observers.....	5
Interventions made on behalf of Civil Society Organizations.....	7
Rights of Reply:.....	9



Interventions made on behalf of Groups of States

Germany (on behalf of the European Union), Azerbaijan (on behalf of NAM), Estonia (on behalf of a Group of Countries), Kuwait (on behalf of the Arab Group), Pakistan (on behalf of the OIC), Sweden (on behalf of a Group of Countries), Austria (on behalf of a Group of Countries)

<p>Germany on behalf of the European Union¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The European Union is concerned when the fundamental principles of the international human rights system are misunderstood or called into question. - Upholding the rule of law, good governance, political pluralism and strong and independent institutions, as well as a vibrant civil society are crucial factors for a country's sustainable development. - The EU is committed to upholding the universality of human rights and rejects any attempts to use cultural relativism, security or status of development as a pretext to divert from the standards the international community has set itself in the VDPA, the UDHR, the Human Rights Covenants and other human rights treaties.
<p>Azerbaijan on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At its 18th Summit held in Baku in 2019, the NAM recalled the recommendation to States contained in the VDPA with regard to adopting national action plans to improve the promotion and protection of human rights and encouraged the NAM States to adopt such action plans. - Global human rights challenges including ongoing and protracted conflicts, terrorism, unilateral coercive measures, inequality, poverty and racial and other forms of discrimination are still on the rise around the world. - In order to effectively implement the VDPA, the international community should redouble its efforts to resolve longstanding international conflicts and disputes and address related human rights and humanitarian crises around the world.
<p>Estonia on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women and girls continue to face rights violations, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. - There is a need to adopt a gender transformative approach to all policy fields and invite women to the table, to break down silos and have a more holistic approach with the aim to fulfilling the promises of gender equality. - Welcome the initiatives at the Human Rights Council, which seek to create synergies between the work done by different UN bodies and mechanism, civil society and other stakeholders. - Peacebuilding and accountability are closely tied to work on human rights where it is important to recognize women and girls' agency.
<p>Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes with regret that the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Declaration on the Right to Development, do not receive sufficient attention. The realization of the right to development and the elimination of its obstacles deserve great attention and focus. This requires effective development policies at the national level and a just economic environment at the international level, which supports global efforts to achieve the SDGs. - The comprehensive and speedy resolution of conflicts and their consequences such as displacement, as well as of extremism, islamophobia and xenophobia are important matters for the international community. Full and targeted cooperation away

¹ The Candidate Countries Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

² Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Estonia.



	<p>from politicization, double standards and selectivity is required, while the dialogue should be used as the only means to settle conflicts, and in order to improve the performance of the Council to promote and protect human rights.</p>
<p>Pakistan on behalf of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VDPA’s prominent focus on socio-economic advancement as bedrock for enjoyment of other basic rights continues to be relevant. - Given the devastating socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, the OIC calls for full consideration of impacts on lives, health, and livelihoods in developing and least developed countries (LDCs). - The alarming rise in contempt, hatred, hostility and violence against individuals and groups, on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity and nationality, is a matter of grave concern for the OIC countries. - The sharp spike in long-standing Islamophobia, amidst the global health emergency, is disconcerting. Equally disturbing has been the closing of borders by some countries to migrant workers and refugees on the basis of origin, sex, race or religion. - People living under foreign occupation and alien or colonial domination continue to be denied their inalienable right to self-determination. - The OIC urges the international community to reinvigorate the “Vienna Spirit” and take effective and coordinated steps for the full implementation of VDPA.
<p>Sweden on behalf of a Cross-Regional Group of more than 30 states.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - States must uphold their international human rights obligations unconditionally, including those owed to foreign or dual nationals within their jurisdiction. - Deeply disturbed by politically motivated arbitrary arrests, detention and sentencing of foreign nationals. - COVID-19 pandemic should not be used as a pretext for reducing or removing access to justice and consular assistance for people in detention. - States must ensure basic standards of justice and procedural fairness for all detainees.
<p>Austria on behalf of a Cross-Regional Group of 32 states³.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intersex people - that is, individuals who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female bodies - continue to face serious and widespread human rights violations and abuses. - It is high time this Council address human rights and abuses violations against intersex people and their root causes. - Call on governments as a matter of urgency, to protect the autonomy of intersex adults and children and their rights to health, and to physical and mental integrity so that they live free from violence and harmful practices, and - investigate human rights violations and abuses against intersex people, ensure accountability, reverse discriminatory laws and provide victims with access to remedy.

³ Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay.



Interventions made on behalf of Human Rights Council's Member States

Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Armenia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Bahrain, Nepal, Sudan

1. Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VDPA condemns unequivocally foreign occupation as a systematic obstacle for enjoyment of basic rights. - The human rights crisis prevails in occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Since the publication of the last Kashmir report by the High Commissioner in July 2019, India's illegal actions have added new dimensions of human rights abuses. Urge the High Commissioner and UN Special Procedures to continue to monitor and report on the growing human rights crisis in the occupied region to the Council. - Call on India to reverse illegal actions taken since last August, respect and uphold fundamental rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people.
2. India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is important not to prioritize one set of rights over the others in the agenda of the Council as this would lead to erosion of trust. - The Right to Development deserves its due share along with other human rights as recognized in the VDPA. - Concerned that allocation of funding towards the promotion of the right to development is not along the expected level. - The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed huge socio-economic burden on developing countries which is accentuated by the existing deep inequities and inequalities in the global system. - Constraints on national capacities to implement certain rights should be duly recognized and the role of the Council in providing technical assistance and capacity building should not be limited only to a few situations.
3. Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will continue to promote the role of national human rights institution and civil societies. - During this time of pandemic, the role of NHRIs and civil society in supporting State's efforts are all the more important. - NHRI could play a significant role at regional and global level in ensuring equitable access to affordable, safe and effective vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.
4. Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pledge support to all those who have been persecuted, including on the basis of their religion and belief. - Armenia became a safe haven for a number of vulnerable religious minorities, including Yezidis and Assyrians. - Attach great importance to the dialogue of religions and civilizations since human rights are universal and not limited to religious affiliations. - Attempts to add religious dimension to existing conflicts can result in dangerous consequences aggravating the suffering of people.
5. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to avoid the selectivity and politicization of the Council's work. - Condemn the imposition of universal coercive measures violating human rights or impeding the realization of these rights. - Will continue to combat for the construction of equitable and just international order, which promotes cooperation and multilateralism.
6. Bahrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All human rights should be promoted in a fair and balanced manner, including the right to development. - Speak on pioneering initiatives of Bahrain in the field of protecting and promoting human rights. - Important to foster international cooperation, without any attempt of hindering the sovereignty of States or politicization if this Council. - Assistance should be provided to States so that they can implement their human rights agendas without any preconditions.
7. Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak on national efforts and priorities of Nepal in promoting and protecting human rights, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. - Sustained partnership and support of the international community is indispensable for LDCs.
8. Sudan	<p><i>Associates itself with the statements delivered by the Regional Groups Sudan belongs to.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council should commit itself to the principles of non-selectivity and neutrality, while considering religious and cultural peculiarities of States. - Call for giving attention to poverty eradication and development, so that the developing countries fundamental rights of their citizens.



Interventions made on behalf of Observers

Israel, Cuba, Greece, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Algeria, Russian Federation, Georgia, United Nations Development Programme, Myanmar, Azerbaijan.

1. Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of the LGBTI community see their rights limited, and are victims of violence and discrimination. - In Iran a gender equality activist can be prosecuted for “collusion against national security by normalising same sex relations”, or people can be sentenced to 100 lashes or even to death, if discovered when engaging in same sex relations.
2. Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Xenophobia, intolerance, racism and racial discrimination still prevail. - When considering human rights issues, ideological bias, double standards, manipulation, politicization, selectivity, and the imposition of punitive mechanisms are common. - The most serious threats to the right to life and peace, and the resurgence of unilateral coercive measures of a criminal nature, are ignored. - Economic blockade imposed by the US administration leads to massive violations of the rights of Venezuelan people.
3. Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full enjoyment of cultural rights, including the right of everyone to take part in cultural life (without discrimination), constitutes an integral part of human dignity. - States must refrain from altering cultural monuments without the free and informed prior consent of concerned communities, and/or without the prior information and consideration of any stakeholder involved, including relevant UN bodies, such as UNESCO. - The important role played by Civil Society, including NGOs, journalists and Human Rights Defenders.
4. China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All parties should follow the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, respect the road of development chosen – autonomously – by other countries, conduct constructive dialogue and cooperation, abandon politicization and double standards. - All countries should take people’s pursues of good life as objective and regard people’s happy life as the most significant right, so that benefits of development could be shared more widely and equitably among all people. - All countries should attach equal importance to all categories of human rights, including to the right to development.
5. Iran (Islamic Republic of)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regrets over a number of serious setbacks in the promotion of protection of a number of basic human rights with significant examples of the right to self-determination and the right to development. - The right to development is gravely challenged by the failure of the international community to end the occupation of Palestine, as well as by the US radical unilateralism and by the North's unilateral measures including sanctions and embargoes against developing countries. - The unilateral coercive measures have negatively affected almost all basic human rights, in particular the rights to health, to food, to education, to free movement and most and foremost the right to life in the targeted nations.
6. Algeria	<p><i>Aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Groups to which it belongs.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided by historical evidence, the Vienna Declaration rightly recognizes that foreign occupation poses serious obstacles to the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. It calls for the effective realization of the inalienable right to self-determination. - The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the fundamental character of the principles of indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, proclaimed by the VDPA. - The same importance must be given to all human rights, including development rights, particularly in the LDCs, while respecting the principle of non-selectivity. - Strongly encourages the OHCHR to continue efforts that would strengthen the commitment of the international community to the VDPA.



7. Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Distorted interpretations of the reasons that led to the Second World War, and the attempts of some countries to close their eyes on their own responsibilities impedes a proper response to the challenges still before us.- The world should act in solidarity in order to prevent any sliding into ideologies of hatred, extremism, discrimination on the ethnic, racial or religious ground. The only way to address this is a collective work of all governments.
8. Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stresses the importance of integration of human rights of women and the gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes throughout the UN system.- Spoke on national efforts of Georgia in protecting and promoting of human rights.
9. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expresses its appreciation for the Report of the Secretary-General on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.- UNDP is proud to support national institutions in over 40 countries.- UNDP is working increasingly more closely together in supporting NHRIs including joint programming through our Tri-Partite Partnership, recognizing NHRIs are critical actors to secure sustainable human development in the context of Agenda 2030.- Commends the work of NHRIs in responding to the many human rights-related challenges that have arisen due to COVID-19.
10. Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stresses the importance of the principle of the exhaustion of domestic remedies.- Democracy, development and respect for human rights are interdependent.- Peace, development, promotion and protection of human rights are the top priorities of the government of Myanmar.
11. Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Global human rights challenges including foreign occupation, ongoing and protracted conflicts are on the rise around the world.- The international community must take action to resolve long-standing international conflicts, and address human rights and humanitarian crises around the world.



Interventions made on behalf of Civil Society Organizations

Statements⁴ made by 42 speakers, representatives of National Human Rights Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations.

1. Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong and well-resourced NHRIs play a critical role in assisting states meet their international human rights obligations, and in realizing the SDGs. - Encourage states to establish or strengthen NHRIs where they already exist.
2. Action Canada for Population and Development (Joint Statement on behalf of 351 organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement delivered on the occasion of International Safe Abortion Day. - During the COVID-19 pandemic, some governments are increasing barriers to abortion services by deeming it a non-essential medical procedure,ⁱ or are instrumentalizing the crisis to further restrict access in law or practice.
3. International Lesbian and Gay Association (Joint Statement on behalf of 33 intersex-led organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call upon the Council, its members and observers to take further action in protecting intersex persons' autonomy, rights to health, to physical and mental integrity, to live free from violence and harmful practices and to be free from torture and ill-treatment.
4. Zero Poor in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights violations of women in Yemen, including physical, sexual and psychological torture.
5. Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to strengthen international cooperation, unity and solidarity to operationalize the right to development in responding to COVID-19 in the LDCs.
6. Friends World Committee for Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calls on the Council to undertake a global investigation of policies and practices that cause or exacerbate the risk of death or torture in transit and barriers that prevent identification of the protection needs of all migrants.
7. Mouvement contre le racismisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calls on the OHCHR to set up a technical assistance and capacity building program with the legal representative of the People of Western Sahara, the Polisario Front in line with General Assembly resolution 74/95.
8. Asociacion HazteOir.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On behalf of Father Custodio Ballester, a Catholic priest from Barcelona in Spain. - Arbitrariness and abuse of power of the Malaga hate prosecutor.
9. Federation for Women and Family Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement on behalf of the Great Coalition for Equality and Choice from Poland. - Women and girls in Poland still struggle to exercise their right to bodily autonomy and control over all aspects of their sexuality.
10. France Libertes : Fondation Danielle Mitterrand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights of people subjected to external foreign domination. - Continued occupation of Western Sahara is a serious violation of the right to self-determination of the Saharan people.
11. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (Joint Statement on behalf of 7 organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paragraph 41 of the VDPA recognizes the importance of the enjoyment by women of the highest standard of physical and mental health throughout their life span.

⁴ Including Joint Statements.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women in prostitution are working and living conditions which lead to the denial of their health.
12. Female Synergy for peace and sustainable development <i>(interrupted by the Chairman)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violations of children rights in Yemen, including targeted killings.
13. Sikh Human Rights Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully supports good initiatives to integrate gender in all aspects of Public institutional life in accordance with the Vienna Declaration. - Requests India to fully support the spirit of Vienna Declaration and conduct any due diligence on human rights organisations without affecting their core work.
14. International Muslim Women's Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to bring to an end the practice of ethnic cleansing. - The people of Indian occupied Kashmir are facing extermination.
15. World Jewish Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So-called “honour killings” are on the rise in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.
16. World Muslim Congress <i>(interrupted by the Chairman)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The denial of the right of self-determination is a violation of human rights. - The right to self-determination of people of Jammu and Kashmir is undermined.
17. International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The undermined right to self-determination of the Yemeni people.
18. Solidarité Suisse-Guinée	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to protect children in Yemen from any form of exploitation.
19. Al Baraem Association for Charitable Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call for OHCHR to provide technical assistance and capacity building to caste affected countries to tackle effectively caste and descent based discrimination.
20. Guinea Medical Mutual Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights violations of Yemeni children, especially malnutrition.
21. Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Right to privacy in Tunisia.
22. Global Welfare Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persecution of human rights defenders in India.
23. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freedom of religion in Bahrain.
24. CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation <i>(interrupted by the Chairman)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harassment of human rights defenders and protecting human rights in India.
25. Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abuses of human rights of Dalits, including violence.
26. United Nations Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Vienna Declaration guarantees equal treatment for all nations and non-selectivity when considering human rights. - Israel is routinely condemned by the UN human rights bodies, including, most recently, ECOSOC resolution rebuking only Israel for violating women’s rights.
27. International Human Rights Association of American Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The right to self-determination in Hawaii, Alaska, Kashmir and for many Indigenous Peoples.
28. Liberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child rights violations in Indian state of Assam.
29. Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased harassment of human rights defenders in the GCC states.
30. Villages Unis (United Villages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child rights to education in Yemen.
31. International Institute for Rights and Development Geneva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions of movement, of access to places of worship and freedom or religion in Middle East.



32. Ingenieurs du Monde	- Pakistan denied access to Independent Experts, including in order to address violations of the right to freedom of religion.
33. European Centre for Law and Justice	- Right to freedom of religion in India: violations of rights of Indian Christians.
34. Servas International	- Action plans to end global inequalities, a sustainable support system including debt relief and an international solidarity fund are urgently needed.
35. Health and Environment Program (HEP)	- Women's rights: female genital mutilation, polygamous marriages in Cameroon.
36. International Women's Health Coalition	- Global Gag Rule, a policy that prohibits foreign NGOs from receiving US global health funds if they engage in abortion-related activities, undermines fundamental human rights, including the rights to life, health, equality, and expression.
37. African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters	- Disproportional use of force in Jammu and Kashmir.
38. Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI)	- Violations of rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil.
39. Prahar	- Women's rights: gender-based violence in India.
40. African Green Foundation International	- Welcome the decision by Sri Lanka to withdraw from co-sponsorship of resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1.
41. International Buddhist Relief Organisation	- Women's rights and efforts to reconciliation in Sri Lanka.
42. Basnayake Elmostakbell for Developpement	- Women's rights: sexual exploitation of Dalit women in India.

Rights of Reply:

- **India** (in reply to the statement made by Pakistan),
- **Brazil** (statement on Brazil efforts to protect the rights of indigenous peoples),
- **Pakistan** (in reply to the comments made by India).

Full recording of the General Debate on Item 8 is available on the [UN WebTV](#)