

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

WEEK 1: 28 February – 4 March 2022

During its first week of work, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) will host its annual **High-Level Segment (HLS)**, during which more than **140 Dignitaries¹**, including the Presidents of Tunisia, Lithuania, Colombia, Marshall Islands and Venezuela will address the Council. In the remaining days, **human rights situation in seven countries and regions** will be addressed under **Agenda Item 2**, namely the situations in Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Sudan, Afghanistan, Tigray region of Ethiopia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Council will also hold an **annual high-level panel on human rights mainstreaming** focusing on universal participation to the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund.

BREAKING! On 24 February 2022, H.E. Ms. Yevheniia Filipenko, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, addressed a letter to the President of the Human Rights Council, requesting the Council to **hold an urgent debate on “the situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression”**, as urgently as possible during the 49th session of the HRC². The Bureau of the Human Rights Council will discuss this request as a matter of urgency. Ukraine will also **table a resolution**, which will be circulated as soon as possible, and call upon the Council to adopt it.

Opening of the session: 28 March 2022, 9h00 (CET)

The session will be opened by **H.E. Mr. Federico Villegas**, President of the Human Rights Council, **H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid**, President of the 76th session of the General Assembly, **H.E. Mr. António Guterres**, UN Secretary-General, **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and **H.E. Mr. Ignazio Cassis**, President of the Swiss Confederation, the representative of the host country.

High-level segment (HLS)³: 28 February – 3 March 2022

List of dignitaries (Presidents, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs...) by Regional Groups:

African Group: Tunisia, H.E. M. Kaïs Saïed, *President of Tunisia*; Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Asia and the Pacific Group: Marshall Islands, H.E. Mr. David Kabua, *President of the Marshall Islands*; Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

Eastern European Group: Lithuania, H.E. M. Gitanas Nausėda, *President of Lithuania*; Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

Latin American and Caribbean States Group: Colombia, H.E. Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, *President of Colombia*; Venezuela, H.E. Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, *President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*; Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

Western European and Others Group: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta,

¹ As inscribed in the List of dignitaries of 27 February 2022, 6 pm (CET).

² As of 28 February 2022, 9 am (CET) the date and time of the Urgent Debate has not yet been confirmed. Please, refer directly to the official [OHCHR website](https://www.ohchr.org/) for the updated Programme of Work.

³ Given the exceptional nature of current epidemiological conditions that restrict travel and physical meetings, the high-level segment will be held in a hybrid manner – either in person or through a pre-recorded video message.

Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Also taking the floor during the HLS: European Union; Sovereign Order of Malta; Council of Europe; Commonwealth; OIC; UNHCR; UNFPA; UNDP; ICRC; UN Habitat; Organisation internationale de la Francophonie; Community of Portuguese Language Countries; International Development Law Organization, Organization of American States.

The High-level segment will be followed by the General segment.

Panels:

28 February (16h00-18h00): Annual high-level panel discussion on **human rights mainstreaming** on the theme *“The contribution of universal participation to the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the UN system on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation LDCs and SIDSs in the Work of the Human Rights Council”*. The high-level panel will gather high-level representatives of United Nations agencies and funds, high-level representatives of Member States and other stakeholders, including **H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid**, President of the General Assembly, **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, Director-General of the WHO, and **H.E. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo**, Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, among others.

Item 2⁴: Country reports

Written reports:

3 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet⁵, on human rights situation in **the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem**, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice.

[A/HRC/49/25⁶](#): The report covers the period from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021, and addresses issues relating to accountability for alleged violations of international human rights law and IHL committed by all relevant duty bearers in the OPT, encompassing the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The report provides **an update on accountability for the escalation of hostilities** in Gaza in May 2021 and previous escalations of hostilities, as well as discusses **accountability for unlawful use of force** and **accountability for violations relating to torture and ill-treatment**. The report also addresses **attacks on individuals and organizations**, and regrets the increased restrictions on the freedom of expression, association and assembly of those who defend human rights and promote accountability.

In preparation of this report, OHCHR requested Israel and the State of Palestine to **provide information on any accountability measures** adopted during the reporting period. The **State of Palestine** responded on 24 November, while **Israel** did not respond. OHCHR also requested other States Members of the UN to provide information on the steps taken by them as third States to promote compliance with international law. As of 30 November, **Cuba, Spain** and **Tunisia** had responded.

The report concludes that the human rights situation in the OPT **deteriorated** during the reporting period, while **impunity** remained widespread and pervasive.

3 March: Interactive dialogue on the written update of the OHCHR on situation of human rights in **Sri Lanka**, including on progress in reconciliation and accountability.

[A/HRC/49/9⁷](#): The report focuses on developments since the High Commissioner’s last report on Sri Lanka in February 2021. OHCHR noted the **constructive engagement of the Government**, including detailed written

⁴ Agenda Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.

⁵ Henceforth, “the High Commissioner”.

⁶ Advance Unedited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 24 February 2022.

⁷ Advance Unedited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 26 February 2022.

inputs sent in response to a list of questions to the Government, the acceptance of the OHCHR visit in January 2022 (did not take place due to the COVID-19 situation) and virtual consultations.

The High Commissioner stressed that the **drafting of a new Constitution** will be of fundamental importance, and addressed the issues related to **militarisation** and **land disputes**, increasing **majoritarianism**, the continued pattern of intimidation and **threats to civil society and victims**, and the cases of **custodial deaths, torture and ill-treatment**. She further discussed the **Prevention of Terrorism Act** Amendment Bill presented to Parliament in February 2022.

The High Commissioner expressed concern about the **continued lack of accountability** for past human rights violations and recognition of victims' rights and highlighted the **trends towards militarization and ethno-religious nationalism**. She concluded that a comprehensive vision for a genuine reconciliation and accountability process, and deeper institutional and security sector reforms were urgently needed. She also **reiterated the recommendations** previously made to Sri Lanka in paragraphs 60 and 61 of her 2021 report and offered several recommendations to the UN entities, including in relation to reviewing the contributions of Sri Lanka to UN peacekeeping operations and the systems for screening Sri Lanka personnel.

3 March: Interactive dialogue on the comprehensive written report of the High Commissioner on human rights situation in **Nicaragua** that assesses progress and challenges regarding that situation.

[A/HRC/49/23](#)⁸: The report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Since August 2018, the OHCHR Regional Office has only been able to monitor the situation in Nicaragua **remotely**, despite repeated requests for access. It sent **six communications to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** requesting information about the human rights situation: the Government responded by rejecting the legitimacy of its human rights monitoring, but without providing the information requested.

The report discusses the situation of human rights in Nicaragua in the context of the **electoral process** (presidential elections of 7 November 2021), and describes a pattern of serious violations of civil and political rights. The report also addresses the **right to personal liberty, freedom from torture and humane conditions of detention**; human rights of **indigenous peoples and people of African descent**, and gender equality, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive rights, mentioning increased **femicides** and the application of the **total ban on abortion** since 2006. The report further addresses the undue restrictions on the **right to freedom of expression** affecting the media, and the violations against **human rights defenders**, as well as the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

The High Commissioner issued a number of **recommendations** to the Government, including calls on Nicaragua to release all persons arbitrarily detained and waive all charges against them, restore the rule of law and amend all legislation that unduly restricts civic space.

4 March: Interactive dialogue on the comprehensive written report of the High Commissioner on human rights situation on the situation of human rights in **Afghanistan**, focusing on, inter alia, the accountability of all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses in the conflict.

[A/HRC/49/24](#)⁹:

Oral updates:

3 March: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Eritrea, Mr. Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker**.

4 March: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the **Sudan** since the military takeover.

4 March: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the **Tigray region of Ethiopia** and on progress made in the context of the joint investigation undertaken by OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

⁸ Advance Unedited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 26 February 2022.

⁹ As of 28 February 2022, 9 am (CET), the report [A/HRC/49/24](#) has not yet been made available on the dedicated [OHCHR webpage](#). We are thus unable to provide its brief summary.