

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

WEEK 3: 14 – 20 March 2022

During its **third week of work**, the United Nations Human Rights Council will continue consideration of **thematic reports** submitted under Agenda Item 3 by the Special Procedures mandate holders on the rights of persons with disabilities, right to food, counter-terrorism, albinism, violence against children, children during the armed conflict, and the right to adequate housing.

The report of the Special Rapporteur on the **rights of persons with disabilities** contains a thematic study on artificial intelligence and the rights of persons with disabilities. The Special Rapporteur on **countering terrorism** in her follow-up report to the 2010 Joint Study on Global Practices in Relation to Secret Detention in the Context of Countering Terrorism concluded that there was an “abject failure to implement the recommendations of that Study”. The Special Rapporteur on the **right to food** focused his thematic report on seeds and farmers’ rights, while the Special Rapporteur on the right to **adequate housing** chose to address the issue of spatial segregation.

As for the **country visits**, the Special Rapporteur on **countering terrorism** visited **Uzbekistan** and said she had a positive dialogue with the Government on all the issues addressed in her report.

The Council will further consider **17 reports** submitted by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The consideration of the Item 3 will conclude with the General Debate.

During the second part of the week, the Council will also hold Interactive Dialogues under Agenda Item 4, focusing on **country situations** in **Belarus, Iran, Venezuela, Myanmar, South Sudan and Syrian Arab Republic**. Consideration of Item 4 will then continue during the upcoming Week 4.

Additionally, the Council will also hold an **Annual debate** on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Panels:

14 March (16h00-18h00): Annual interactive debate on the **rights of persons with disabilities** on the theme “**Statistics and data collection under article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**”. The debate will be informed by the report of OHCHR thereon.

[A/HRC/49/60](#): The report contains guidance on a human rights-based approach to data, specifically for persons with disabilities. It argues that measuring implementation of the human rights of persons with disabilities, including disability identification, should be a requirement for data disaggregation. In this regard, the report addresses the use of censuses and general household surveys for disaggregation, and disability-specific surveys, among other tools. It also discusses the **right to privacy and data**, and the **right to access to information and data** under the Convention. The report concludes that collecting data on persons with disabilities and on the barriers they face – which is currently at an early stage – is a human rights obligation under article 31 of the Convention, and provides some concrete recommendations on how the States can best uphold the principles of the human rights-based approach to data.

Item 3¹: Thematic reports

14 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of Special Rapporteur on the **rights of persons with disabilities**, **Mr. Gerard Quinn**.

[A/HRC/49/52](#): Apart from an overview of the activities undertaken by the mandate holder in 2021, the report contains a **thematic study on artificial intelligence (AI)** and the rights of persons with disabilities. It describes the general impacts and risks that this technology constitutes, making specific references to the key rights

¹ Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

and obligations of the CRPD that apply to the development and use of artificial intelligence. The practical benefits of artificial intelligence should also be realized, as AI also offers enormous opportunities. To that end, practical recommendations as to how this can be achieved are set out in the final section of the report. The mandate holder also **draws three main conclusions**:

- (a) The unprecedented power of artificial intelligence can be a force for good for persons with disabilities, especially when tied to the achievement of the CRPD.
- (b) The well documented negative impacts of AI on persons with disabilities need to be openly acknowledged and rectified by States, business, NHRIs, civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities. Those negative impacts arise from poor or unrepresentative data sets, a lack of transparency in the technology, a short-circuiting of the obligation of reasonable accommodation, and a lack of effective remedies.
- (c) A fundamental reset of the debate is needed, based on more evidence and greater consideration of the rights and obligations contained in the CRPD and other human rights instruments.

14 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of Special Rapporteur on the right to **food**, **Mr. Michael Fakhri**.

[A/HRC/49/43](#) "*Seeds, right to life, and farmers rights*": the report provides a framework for the advancement of **farmers', indigenous peoples' and workers' rights** and a **guide for States** to ensure that the world's seed systems are biodiverse and safe and fulfil human rights obligations. It discusses how seed systems is a human rights concern and the challenges posed by industrial intensification and corporate concentration of power, argues that **farmers' rights** are human rights – and thus should be promoted and protected. The report also names **pesticides** as a human rights concern. The report concludes that flourishing and resilient seed systems are key to the full realization of the rights to life and to food, and regrets that **Global South communities are disproportionately harmed**, especially smallholder farmers/peasants, indigenous peoples, women, children and agricultural workers.

15 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while **countering terrorism**, **Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin**.

[A/HRC/49/45²](#) "*Follow-up report on the Joint Study (2010) on Global Practices in Relation to Secret Detention in the Context of Countering Terrorism (A/HRC/13/42)*": the report illuminates the **abject failure to implement the recommendations** of that Study with profound consequences for individuals systematically, tortured, rendered across borders, arbitrarily detained, and deprived of their fundamental rights. The report demands again that **accountability, reparation, and transparency** be implemented by States responsible for these grave human rights violations. The report provides the **context** and the **recap** of the 2010 Study. The **Annex** names all individuals mentioned in the 2010 Report. The Special Rapporteur profoundly regrets that not a single person named has had adequate remedy for the profound violations of human rights they experienced. The report also provides information on the **evolution** of secret detention practices, and the **consequences** of failure to address them, such as creation of new sites of secret and arbitrary detention, on the examples of detention sites in **North-East Syria** and practices of arbitrary mass and secret detention directed at the Uyghurs and other ethnic groups in the **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China**. Failure to implement the 2010 recommendations has enabled and facilitated **human rights violations in the name of countering terrorism** across the globe. New modalities of transfer across borders have developed, circumventing required legal protections including non-refoulement; mass detention without legal process has been normalized by certain States; and exceptionality in trial process involving charges of terrorism remains entrenched. **Reversing these trends** requires recommitment to human rights protection, exposing the misuse of counter-terrorism measures, addressing impunity and providing adequate remedy to the victims.

[A/HRC/49/45/Add.1³](#), *visit to Uzbekistan*: the official visit took place from **29 November to 7 December 2021**. The Special Rapporteur commended the Government of Uzbekistan for having **repatriated its nationals** in a sustained and effective manner **from conflict zones abroad**. She highlighted the Government's integrated, multidisciplinary and inter-agency approach to reintegration. Other States could learn valuable and practical lessons from the work being undertaken by Uzbekistan in this realm.

² As of 14 March 2022, only Advance Unedited Version in English is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

³ As of 14 March 2022, only Advance Edited Version in English is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

Several significant **human rights challenges** resulting from the security, counter-terrorism and extremism frameworks are operational in Uzbekistan: the criminal law concerning terrorism and extremism is broad and vaguely defined; the use of the term “extremism” in national law and practice is concerning. The national legal frameworks should be reviewed and revised. The Special Rapporteur also commended the Government for the positive role that it has played in addressing the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in neighbouring Afghanistan.

For Comments by the State please refer to [A/HRC/49/45/Add.2](#): “Uzbekistan is pleased that the Special Rapporteur recognized the positive steps the Government has taken under new administration, most notably the release of thousands of prisoners previously detained in sustained violation of their right to freedom of conscience and religion, modernization of the legal system, a reduction of child and forced labour in the cotton fields, as well as accession to the CRPD. Uzbekistan thanked the Special Rapporteur for her constructive proposals and recommendations aimed at improving the legislative framework, cooperating with international organizations and resolving the situation of vulnerable Afghan citizens; modernization of prison facilities, ratification of the UN international treaties in the sphere on human rights, establishment of an independent oversight mechanism to combat terrorism.”

15 March: Interactive dialogue on the first report of the new Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by **persons with albinism**, *Ms. Muluka Miti-Drummond*.

[A/HRC/49/56](#) “*Harmful practices and hate crimes targeting persons with albinism*”: the report sets out the priorities of the mandate, and argues that the human rights violations experienced by persons with albinism can be considered as harmful practices which can also fall under the rubric of hate crimes. Human rights violations against persons with albinism based on their colour, range from discrimination, stigmatization, disinheritance and banishment from the family and community to extreme violence, including beatings, burnings, sexual abuse, cutting of body parts and amputation of limbs, torture, exploitation in the form of human trafficking and killings. The report discusses some of the **challenges** in dealing with a hate crime and addresses the need for strong robust measures, including specific laws to tackle hate crimes against persons with albinism. The report also provides **strategies to end hate crimes and harmful practices** against persons with albinism and refers to **existing regional initiatives**, including in the **African Union, Southern African Development Community, European Union** and **Organization of American States**.

15 March: Interactive dialogue on the Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on **violence against children**, *Ms. Najat Maalla M’jid*.

[A/HRC/49/57](#): the report summarizes the damaging effects of two years of the **COVID-19 pandemic** on child protection and well-being. The report sets out an evidence-based case centred on the **investment in strengthened and integrated services** for children and their caregivers and highlights the key role of children as **agents of change**. Such investment provides a high return for children, families and society at large. The report also addresses the issue of ending the deprivation of liberty of **migrant children**, discusses how the violence against children has increased and become less visible, and provides some way forward, while reminding that, beyond the COVID-19, ongoing crises caused by conflict, food insecurity, climate change, natural disasters and political instability also continue to expose children to multiple forms of violence.

15-16 March: Interactive dialogue on the Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for **children and armed conflict**, *Ms. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter*.

[A/HRC/49/58](#): the report explores **progress and challenges** in ending and preventing grave violations and in strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including in **Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria** and **Yemen**. The Special Representative outlines the activities undertaken during the **25 years of the mandate** and the challenges faced and progress achieved in addressing grave violations against children. She also lays out her **advocacy** activities, including through her focus on lessons learned and best practices, provides information on her efforts to build **partnerships**, including with **African Union, European Union, League of Arab States, North Atlantic Treaty Organization**, as well as within the United Nations system, civil society and academia, and outlines priorities and makes **recommendations** to enhance the protection of children affected by conflict.

16 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of the Special Rapporteur on **adequate housing** as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, **Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal**.

[A/HRC/49/48](#)⁴ “*Spatial segregation and the right to adequate housing*”: alongside historic forms of spatial segregation, such as those that existed in apartheid **South Africa**, the Special Rapporteur points to informal settlements, resettlement sites, gated communities, and residential institutions as **types of spatial segregation** that can have similar damaging and long-lasting consequences. The report examines how land use planning and discriminatory zoning, physical barriers, forced evictions and displacement, social and public housing policies, criminalization and stigmatization of minority groups can become **drivers of spatial segregation**. Active and deliberate policies of spatial segregation are still being deployed in some countries as tactics of ensuring racial, religious and other forms of domination. States need **to prevent, prohibit and eradicate** all practices amounting to spatial segregation and apartheid, as required by international law. The report discusses how strategic litigation, housing policies, urban and territorial planning, and neighbourhood upgrading programs can be effective. The report is the second of two interrelated thematic reports of the Special Rapporteur. His first report on discrimination in the context of housing ([A/76/408](#)) was presented to the 76th session of the General Assembly in 2021.

Presentation of thematic reports by the High Commissioner, Secretary General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (15 March 2022):

- Report of the open-ended intergovernmental working group (IGWG) on **transnational corporations and other business enterprises (TNCs)** with respect to human rights on its seventh session, held from 25 to 29 October 2021. Chair-Rapporteur: **Mr. Emilio Rafael Izquierdo Miño**.

[A/HRC/49/65](#): the Report on the **seventh session** of the open-ended IGWG on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights provides information on the organization of the session, summarizes opening and general statements as well as the negotiation of the **third revised draft legally binding instrument**. It also lists the recommendations of the Chair-Rapporteur, including that the Chair-Rapporteur prepare a programme of work for the eighth session, and that the Chair-Rapporteur promote State-led direct substantive intergovernmental negotiations during the **working group’s eighth session, to be held in 2022**, on the basis of the updated draft legally binding instrument.

[A/HRC/49/65/Add.1](#) *Addendum*: the Addendum provides the Text of the third revised draft legally binding instrument with the textual proposals submitted by States during the seventh session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.

- Report of the High Commissioner on an intersessional full-day panel discussion on **the right to social security in the changing world of work**, held on 1 November 2021.

[A/HRC/49/33](#): The report contains a summary of the **intersessional panel**, held on 1 November 2021 with a view to identifying challenges and best practice. The panel discussion focused on how the normative content of the right to social security and the corresponding human rights obligations of States can guide policymaking in the area of social protection. The panel provided an opportunity for States and relevant stakeholders to learn from shared experiences and best practices on strengthening the protection of the right to social security. Despite progress made to extend social protection in many parts of the world, the human right to social security is not yet a reality for the majority of the world’s population, and the COVID-19 crisis has made this right even more pressing and urgent. States, rights holders and other stakeholders identified the need for further engagement and opportunities for technical assistance and cooperation in this area.

⁴ As of 14 March 2022, only Advance Unedited Version in English is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

- Report of the High Commissioner on the full-day intersessional seminar on good practices, key challenges and new developments relevant to **access to medicines and vaccines**.

[A/HRC/49/34](#): The report contains a summary of discussions at a **full-day intersessional seminar**, held on 8 December 2021, focused on **good practices, key challenges and new developments** in the area of access to medicines and vaccines as one of the fundamental dimensions of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Recommendations were focused on **ways to improve universal access to medicines and vaccines** in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the need to treat COVID-19 vaccines as a **global public good**, in order to ensure a global response to the pandemic and universal and equitable access to medicines and vaccines without discrimination. The report highlights that closing the gap between advanced economies and developing countries requires international solidarity and cooperation. States should also step up their support for initiatives to ensure universal and equitable distribution of vaccines, such as the COVAX Facility.

- Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on good practices for establishing national normative frameworks that foster **access to information held by public entities** (freedom of opinion and expression).

[A/HRC/49/38](#): The report sets out good practices at the international, regional and national levels and makes recommendations. The right of access to information is recognized in international human rights law and **States have the obligation to respect and ensure** this right to everyone without distinction. The report recognizes an **abundance of normative guidance** and good practices to design, align and amend national legal frameworks in line with international human rights law and allow for effective ways of providing access to information. However, despite the existing guidance **implementation continues to lag** in many respects. The report highlights several recommendations, and notes that for national normative frameworks to best foster access to information, their compatibility with a State's human rights obligations should be ensured already at the drafting stage. The normative framework should be recognized by law, based on a principle of maximum disclosure, provide for proactive publication, incorporate procedures that facilitate access and include independent oversight and review. In addition, States should proactively publish information in the public interest on a continuous basis in an accessible manner; promote access to the Internet; and redouble their capacity-building efforts.

- Report of the OHCHR on good practices and challenges faced by States in using the guidelines on the **effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs**.

[A/HRC/49/42](#): The report outlines good practices and challenges faced by States in using the guidelines on the **effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs**. The guidelines refer to several basic principles that should guide the effective implementation of the right, with a focus on participation in electoral processes, in non-electoral contexts and at the international level. The report highlights how decision-making processes that affect peoples' lives should be guided by international human rights law and ensure transparency, access to information and participation at the local, national and international levels. The report highlights, that decision-making processes affecting peoples' lives should be guided by international human rights law and ensure transparency, access to information and participation at the local, national and international levels. In conclusion, the report states that **political will remains the most important factor** in creating a **supportive environment that fosters participation**, which is crucial for the effective implementation of the guidelines.

- Report of the Secretary-General on the **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**.

[A/HRC/49/63](#): The report complements the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture submitted to the GA at its 76th session, provides information on the activities of the Fund and describes, in particular, the **recommendations for grants adopted by the Board of Trustees** of the Fund at its 54th session, which was held remotely from 4 to 8 October 2021. **Since its establishment 40 years ago**, the Fund has awarded more than 5,000 grants in over 120 countries for a total amount of nearly \$200 million to assist approximately 1.2 million survivors of torture and their families. In **2021**:

- the Fund **received** contributions and pledges from 20 Member States, as well as public donations, amounting to a total of \$10,526,415 – a relatively stable income stream in relation to 2020.
- the Fund **awarded** grants to 180 civil society organizations, providing direct medical, psychological, social and legal services to over 47,000 survivors of torture in 89 countries across the world.
- at least 10 organizations associated with the Fund were subjected to **reprisals**.

The Board recommended a total of 188 annual grants for projects to be implemented in 92 countries in **2022**.

- Report of the Secretary-General on the **Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**.

[A/HRC/49/64](#): The present report provides information on the status of the Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, including on its financial situation.

The minimum required on an annual basis to guarantee a functioning Special Fund is \$500,000, which enables it to support up to 20 projects per year with a reasonable level of funding per project (\$25,000–\$30,000).

In 2021, contributions to the Special Fund were received from **Portugal, Denmark, Czechia, France, and Germany** and amounted to \$399 190.

The Annex lists a total of 103 projects approved by the OHCHR Grants Committee since the establishment of the Special Fund since its creation in 2012, including in **Armenia, Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Gabon, Honduras, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mozambique, New Zealand, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uruguay**.

- Report of the High Commissioner on the Intersessional seminar on the **challenges and opportunities of young people in the field of human rights**, held on 12 April 2021.

[A/HRC/49/32](#): The seminar was divided into **two panels**: challenges and discrimination faced by young people in the realization of their rights (1); and youth mainstreaming in human rights mechanisms and next steps on youth and human rights at the international level (2). The report summarizes the contributions made by panellists, States, youth-led and youth-focused organizations and other civil society organizations.

It concludes that the situation of young people worldwide demonstrates the **interrelatedness and interdependence of human rights of youth**, including, unequal access to education, lack of decent jobs and precarious working conditions, negatively affecting their human rights, including rights to adequate housing, health and participation. Young people in vulnerable situations often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. The digital divide has placed young people at a particular disadvantage.

Evidence indicates that **United Nations human rights mechanisms lack a sufficient focus on youth**. The involvement of youth and youth-led organizations as equal partners in decision-making processes and in human rights mechanisms at all levels is a prerequisite to ensure the full realization of human rights of youth. Panellists and participants **recommended a number of measures** for the Human Rights Council to consider and assess, with the aim of promoting youth participation in intergovernmental human rights processes and advancing the human rights of young people at the international level.

- Report of the High Commissioner on the **rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities**.

[A/HRC/49/36](#): The report contains information on relevant developments of UN human rights bodies and mechanisms, and on the activities undertaken by the OHCHR that contribute to the promotion of and respect for the provisions of the **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**, and the provisions of relevant international human rights treaties. The report specifically mentions that **four-point agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality**, anchored in the lived experiences of Africans and people of African descent, that was presented in July 2021. It also focuses on the **early warning mechanisms** and protection of the existence of minorities in 2021, when OHCHR addressed situations of minorities in **Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Iran, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Moldova**. Additionally, the report focuses on topics such as discrimination; hate speech; economic, social and cultural rights of minorities; minorities and climate change; empowerment and participation; human

rights situation of Roma communities; linguistic minorities; discrimination and statelessness; religious or belief minorities and faith-based actors; and UN network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities OHCHR will continue to support minority participation, including through its redesigned online fellowship on people of African descent and its largely expanded minority fellowship programme.

- Report of the High Commissioner on a comprehensive approach to promoting, protecting and respecting **women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations**, including good practices, challenges and lessons learned at the national, regional and international levels.

[A/HRC/49/37](#): In 2021, it was estimated that 235 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection, which marked an alarming increase of 40% over the previous year. The report was prepared based on submissions by 25 States, 4 NHRIs, 2 regional mechanisms, 13 civil society organizations, 1 academic institution, and complemented by additional research. It focuses on **five illustrative examples** of the human rights issues experienced by women and girls in humanitarian situations: gender-based violence; health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; education; economic security; and access to justice. The report argues that a **comprehensive approach** to promoting, protecting and respecting women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations entails the **implementation of a human rights-based approach** in all interventions throughout the humanitarian programming cycle. It also focuses on some of the gaps in implementing such a comprehensive approach, including evidence gaps; lack of meaningful participation of women and girls in humanitarian responses, including support for women-led organizations; gaps in accountability mechanisms and approaches; limited funding; and funding or programmatic requirements. Based on the analysis contained in the report, **detailed recommendations** are provided for States, UN agencies, humanitarian actors, donors and other stakeholders.

- Report of the Secretary-General on the **safety of journalists**, with a special focus on the activities of the network of focal points in addressing the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity and taking into account the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and the follow-up thereto.

[A/HRC/49/66](#) – *Note by Secretariat* referring to report [A/76/285](#) submitted to GA76: The report highlighted that **journalists continued to face attacks, online and offline**, and were subjected to death threats, threats of physical violence, including sexual assault, threats of violence against family members, harassment, hate speech, trolling, doxing, and smear campaigns.

A number of States passed or proposed to pass laws that **unduly restricted the freedom of expression online**, such as cybersecurity laws, or laws targeted at the dissemination of false information. The **criminal prosecution** of journalists continued to raise concern, including the lawsuits initiated by corporate actors and political figures to silence critical and investigative journalism.

The report equally addressed the **strengthening the safety and protection of journalists**, underlining that:

- sustained political will and efforts were needed to improve the safety of journalists and address the persistent impunity for violations;
- effective laws and measures had to be put in place by States to prevent attacks;
- ensuring accountability for human rights violations against journalists was essential;
- awareness had to be raised of the safety of journalists, the freedom of expression and the critical role of female journalists.

The role of **media organizations, social media companies and civil society** in facilitating and advising journalists on measures they can take to increase their security online was also addressed, including measures such as the use of encryption and anonymity tools.

- Report of the High Commissioner on the outcome of the consultation on ways to **harmonize laws, policies and practices relating to mental health with the norms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and on how to implement them.

[A/HRC/49/29](#): the report contains a summary of the discussions at the consultation, held on 15 November 2021, on the best ways to harmonize national laws, policies and practices relating to mental health with the norms of the CRPD. The consultation was focused on: (a) exploring and sharing promising experiences of

reform of laws, policies and practices guided by a human rights-based approach in the field of mental health; and (b) highlighting key aspects of legal reform based on the Convention. Recommendations were formulated for States and all other relevant stakeholders, including health professionals, with a view to designing and implementing legal and policy reforms, as well as other measures, with a human rights-based approach in all sectors relevant to mental health in line with the Convention. During the discussion, representatives of Colombia, Costa Rica, Israel, Malaysia, Timor Leste and the United Kingdom took the floor, as well as representatives of the treaty bodies, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, organizations of persons with disabilities and academia.

- Report of the OHCHR on the fourth intersessional meeting for **dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

[A/HRC/49/59](#)⁵: the report contains a summary of the fourth intersessional meeting for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda that was held on 18 January 2022, in advance of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The previous three intersessional meetings on human rights and the 2030 Agenda were held in January 2019, December 2019 and January 2021. The report provides summary of the proceedings, including the opening session and the thematic discussion, which also focused on human rights-based and gender-transformative recovery to COVID-19, as well as some conclusions and key messages.

- Report of the OHCHR on addressing a legacy of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law **through transitional justice measures** can contribute to sustaining peace and the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 16.

[A/HRC/49/39](#): the report explores the interconnections between **transitional justice, sustaining peace, and sustainable development**, highlighting their shared goals and objectives. It suggests that the main contribution of transitional justice to sustaining peace and to sustainable development lies in its potential to foster trust, empower people, enhance inclusion, increase gender equality, and address root causes of serious human rights violations, all of which have a preventive effect. The report identifies **five ways to maximize the positive impact of transitional justice** on sustaining peace and on sustainable development, namely:
(a) consistently adopting a “past-sensitive lens” in peace and development work;
(b) undertaking joint and integrated analyses, with a systematic focus on preconditions for a conducive environment for transitional justice;
(c) enhancing data collection to measure impact and progress, including by using the SDG framework;
(d) adopting a people-centred approach to transitional justice that seeks to make a tangible difference in people’s lives; and
(e) ensuring that participatory approaches and public consultation are construed as ongoing processes.

- Report of the High Commissioner on the human rights impact of the civilian acquisition, **possession and use of firearms by children and youth**, with a view to contributing to the strengthening or the development of comprehensive public policies based on socioeconomic interventions and services that address the factors driving firearms-related violence.

[A/HRC/49/41](#)⁶: the report highlights how availability of firearms in society influences their acquisition, possession and use by children and youth. In the report, the UN High Commissioner details the profound impacts that the use of firearms has on the enjoyment of human rights and calls for comprehensive measures to reduce the harm caused by firearms. The vast majority of firearms in the world are held by civilians, though estimates in rates of firearms possession vary between countries, from 120.5 firearms per 100 residents in the *United States of America*, to less than 1 for every 100 residents in *Japan*. The extent to which children and youth can lawfully acquire or come into possession of firearms depends on the applicable regulations in the relevant domestic legal system, and children and youth can also come into possession of firearms that are available in the home. The High Commissioner recommends reducing the availability of firearms in society

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and implementing measures designed to prevent and address the underlying causes of firearms-related deaths and injuries. The report stresses that States have a responsibility to act to protect their populations, particularly their children and youth, from the human rights impacts caused by the civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms.

- Report of the OHCHR on the **panel discussion** held during its forty-seventh session on the **adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by older persons** and best practices and lessons learned in the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

[A/HRC/49/61](#): The report summarizes the panel discussion on **the human rights of older persons in the context of climate change**, held on 30 June 2021 during the Council's 47th session. The panel discussion provided an opportunity for States, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the adverse impacts of climate change on the effective enjoyment of the rights of older persons, and the promotion and protection of their rights through age-inclusive climate action. Speakers made several recommendations during the discussion, and called for urgent climate action, end reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C. This was highlighted as the most efficient way of preventing the adverse impacts of climate change on the human rights of older persons. Speakers also called for an **age-inclusive, gender-responsive and human rights-based approach to climate action** that included the meaningful and informed participation of older persons in decision-making processes. *The report is also available in [Easy-to-read version](#) and [Plain language version](#).*

- Report of the OHCHR on the high-level **panel discussion** to mark the tenth anniversary of the **United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training**.

[A/HRC/49/62](#): the report provides a **summary** of the high-level panel discussion on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, highlighting the fundamental importance of human rights education and training for the promotion, protection and effective realization of all human rights, held on 29 September 2021 during the 48th session of the Council. During their opening statements, Member States had delivered a strong message that human rights education and training were a priority for the international community and for all States. Participatory, experiential, gender-sensitive and contextualized methodologies, with special attention paid to learners in situations of vulnerability and exclusion, were particularly encouraged during the discussion. The report contains **conclusions** drawn from the panel discussion in relation to strengthening human rights education and training for youth. It was also suggested that States could undertake national evidence-based studies on the best way to continue delivering effective human rights education within the constraints posed by the pandemic, with a view to supporting the design of activities that were inclusive, accessible and available to everyone.

General debates:

Item 3 (15-16 March): Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.

Item 4⁷: Country reports

17 March: Interactive dialogue on the OHCHR report on the Situation of human rights in **Belarus** in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and in its aftermath.

[A/HRC/49/71](#)⁸: the report provides an overview of the situation of human rights in Belarus with respect to the 9 August 2020 election. The High Commissioner established an **examination team** with a secretariat based in Geneva. On 19 May 2021, she appointed three experts to assist her in the discharge of the present mandate: Karinna Moskalenko (Russian Federation), Susan Bazilli (Canada) and Marko Milanović (Serbia). The mandate covered the period from 1 May 2020 to 31 December 2021. On 8 November 2021, OHCHR requested access to the territory of Belarus to facilitate its discharge of the examination. The Government did not recognize or engage with this examination, and refused to allow access to its territory. The report addresses the following **main issues of concern**: unnecessary and disproportionate use of force; arbitrary arrests and detention; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; failure to effectively investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment; rights to due process and to a fair trial. The report states that **sexual and gender-based violence**, including psychological violence, was regularly used against both women and men in detention to intimidate and punish protesters and those perceived as pro-opposition. The report also addresses the developments during the **post-election period**. OHCHR concludes that there are currently **no effective remedies available domestically** for Belarusians subjected to the unnecessary use of force carried out between 9 and 14 August 2020, nor for the tens of thousands arrested arbitrarily, subjected to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, and denied the rights to due process and a fair trial.

17 March: Interactive dialogue on the report of the Special Rapporteur on **the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, *Javaid Rehman*.

[A/HRC/49/75](#): The report provides an overview of some of the most pressing **human rights concerns in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, examines key obstacles to accountability for gross violations of human rights, and offers recommendations to the Government and to the international community. The Special Rapporteur **has not yet been granted access** to the country, despite repeated requests. He was however able to engage with victims, their families and members of civil society and collect information, most notably through submissions and interviews. The report emphasizes the work done by civil society actors and organizations despite harassment, intimidation and high risk of reprisals. The **main concerns** addressed are the imposition of the death penalty, arbitrary deprivation of life, arbitrary detention, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the right to an adequate standard of living, the Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the situation of women and minorities. The report recommends that reforms towards a **system of accountability, separation of powers, political pluralism and democratic participation** in governance and decision-making are taken, including reforms to ensure complete independence of the judiciary; urges to conduct an independent inquiry on the **use of force by security forces** during the November 2019 protests; **prohibit the execution of minors** and urgently amend legislation to commute all death sentences for child offenders on death row; **ensure prisoners and detainees are protected** from all forms of torture and other cruel treatment and ensure the right to a free trial; undertake concrete actions to **reduce existing economic inequalities** and ensure an adequate standard of living. The report urges States imposing sanctions to **ensure humanitarian exemptions** are given effect to minimize the consequences of the sanctions on human rights, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

18 March: Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on **the Syrian Arab Republic**.

[A/HRC/49/77](#): the report presents its findings based on investigations conducted between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2021. The report regrets there has been **little progress** for constructive international dialogue to achieve peace and calls for a nationwide ceasefire remain unheeded. The report documents **grave violations of fundamental human rights and humanitarian law**: in north-eastern Syria, nearly 60,000 individuals, including 40,000 children, remain unlawfully confined in camps in dire conditions; in northern Syria the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham seize and occupy displaced civilians' private property; and detention

⁷ Agenda Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention.

⁸ As of 13 March 2022, only Advance Edited Version in English is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

and/or disappearance of tens of thousands of Syrians and the Government's failure to inform families of their fate continue. **Throughout the country**, Syrians are at risk of being arbitrarily detained, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham is curtailing women's freedoms. The crisis is exacerbated by the presence of five foreign militaries, various non-State armed groups and terrorist entities. Syria's economy is in freefall: an estimated 90% of the population is living below the poverty line. Seven million are IDPs and seven million are refugees.

The Commission reiterates previous recommendations, including to cease all attacks on civilians and investigate violations; cease torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in places of detention; pursue a long-lasting ceasefire; and repatriate their nationals held in the north-east of the country for alleged association with Da'esh. The Commission calls on coalition States active in the country to review official protocols ensuring that officials tasked with targeting have a basic understanding of the local cultural context; and to strengthen the processes of investigation into civilian casualties.

18 March: Interactive dialogue with Commission on **South Sudan**.

A/HRC/49/78⁹

18 March: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on **Myanmar**.

A/HRC/49/73¹⁰ "*A brief and independent inquiry into the involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018*"

18 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **Myanmar**.

A/HRC/49/76¹¹

Oral updates:

17 March: Interactive Dialogue on the Oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**.

17 March: Interactive Dialogue on the Oral update of the independent international fact-finding mission on the situation of human rights in the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**.

⁹ As of 14 March 2022, this report is not yet available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

¹⁰ As of 14 March 2022, this report is not yet available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

¹¹ As of 14 March 2022, this report is not yet available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).