

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 52nd SESSION

### WEEK 2: 6 – 10 March 2023

On the second week of the 52nd session, the Council will continue the consideration of country situations under Agenda Item 2, namely in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, South Sudan, as well as presentations of the OHCHR reports on Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Cyprus. The interactive dialogues will be followed by a General Debate on Item 2.



**Thematic interactive dialogues** will be held with the Special Procedures mandate holders **on sale of children, housing, food, albinism, environment, and freedom of religion**.

A full-day **Annual Discussion on the rights of the child** with the theme “rights of the child and the digital environment” will also be held.

#### Panel discussions



10 March (11am to 1pm and 3 to 5pm): **Annual full-day meeting on the Rights of the Child**. Theme: *Rights of the child and the digital environment*. The morning panel will address the “challenges and opportunities for the full exercise by children of their rights in the digital environment”; the afternoon panel will analyse “how legal and policy frameworks for upholding children’s rights in the digital environment can be strengthened”. The discussion will lead to an improved understanding of the barriers to realizing children’s rights in the digital environment, and the implications of applying child rights principles to ensure that children can be empowered and protected online, particularly with the support of strengthened legal and policy frameworks for accountability in this regard.

#### Agenda Item 2<sup>1</sup>: Country reports



6 March: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in **Eritrea** with participation of the Special Rapporteur, **Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker**, OHCHR, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

6 March: Interactive Dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice.<sup>2</sup>

6 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **Afghanistan**, **Richard Bennett**.

A/HRC/52/84<sup>3</sup>: The report covers developments in Afghanistan **from July to December 2022**. The report considers also the outcomes of the Special Rapporteur’s mission in Afghanistan in October 2022. The human rights crisis in Afghanistan has worsened since the first report of the Special Rapporteur. The **systematic violation of the human rights of women and girls** has deepened, and **fundamental freedoms**, including the rights of peaceful assembly and association, expression, and the rights to life and protection against ill-treatment have increasingly been flouted. Additionally, **religious minorities, internally displaced persons, children, and persons with disabilities** have been heavily affected by violence, threats, and changes in the regime. Afghanistan continues to suffer from a serious **economic and humanitarian crisis**, affecting almost the

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> Summary of the report can be found in our previous [Weekly overview](#).

<sup>3</sup> Advanced Edited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 1 March 2023 in English only.

entire population. The report contains a set of recommendations made to de facto authorities, the international community and member states. In particular, the de facto authorities should end gender persecution, recognize the equality of women, men, girls, and boys and **restore all fundamental human rights without discrimination**, including **equal access to quality education** at all levels, and representation of minority groups in all decision-making processes.

**6 March:** Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on **Myanmar**.

A/HRC/52/21<sup>4</sup>: The report identifies human rights violations that occurred in Myanmar **between 1 February 2022 and 31 January 2023**, analyzing verified patterns of human rights violations and of international crimes committed by the Myanmar military and other groups. Two years after the military coup, people in all parts of Myanmar remain exposed to daily human rights violations and violence, including killing, arbitrarily arresting, torturing, forcibly disappearing, prosecuting, and sentencing anti-coup opponents. Urgent, concrete actions are needed to ensure that all people in Myanmar enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. The High Commissioner recommended that the **military authorities** cease immediately all violence and attacks directed against the people; as well as immediately abstain from any action, including killings, displacement, and arrest, and harassment members of the Rohingya community. The High Commissioner further recommended the **all parties in Myanmar, Security Council, the Council, ASEAN and Member States** to apply international human rights and humanitarian laws, to refer the current situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court and to advocate for the rights of the Rohingya community.

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the **panel discussion on the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar**.

[A/HRC/52/22](#): The report contains a summary of the panel discussion which was held on 15 June 2022. The panellists identified as the **root causes of the crisis** the lack of accountability for the human rights violations against the Rohingya and other minorities and the continuing impunity enjoyed by the Myanmar military. Many speakers insisted that to achieve durable peace and to build a society on the basis of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, the country should address discrimination and human rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities; ensure accountability for serious crimes committed; and strengthen intercommunity and interreligious dialogues, addressing hate speech and providing human rights education to young people. The panel discussion addressed several **recommendations** to the military force, the Member States and other relevant stakeholders. In particular, the Myanmar military should refrain from further violence, release immediately and unconditionally all those arbitrarily detained and create conditions to allow the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of the Rohingya and other displaced persons, in particular women and girls. Member States and other relevant stakeholders should continue to ensure accountability for human rights violations.

**6 March:** Interactive dialogue on the report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on **Nicaragua**.

A/HRC/52/63<sup>5</sup>: The report provides an overview of the Group's findings with regard to the serious human rights violations and abuses perpetrated in Nicaragua **since April 2018**, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, arbitrary deprivation of nationality, and violations of the right to remain in one's own country. The Group concluded that President Daniel Ortega, Vice President Rosario Murillo, agents and public officials of various agencies and structures of the Government, and non-State actors participated, and continue to participate, in a serious, widespread and systematic human rights violations and abuses against the Nicaraguan population. The report contains **recommendations on measures that the State of Nicaragua and the international community should take in order to address the documented violations, abuses, and crimes**. In particular, the Group recommended to the Government of Nicaragua to immediately release all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty and cease politically motivated persecution. The Group also recommended that the international community

<sup>4</sup> Advanced Edited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 1 March 2023 in English only.

<sup>5</sup> On 3 March 2023, Unofficial English version is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).



should initiate legal action against individuals responsible for the violations, abuses, and crimes documented, in accordance with domestic legislation.

7 March: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the report of the Commission of Human Rights on advancing the human rights in **South Sudan**.

[A/HRC/52/26](#): In the report, the Commission focuses on establishing the facts and circumstances of incidents occurring from **January to December 2022** in South Sudan. The country is at an important political transition. The **Revitalized Agreement** remains a critical framework for the country. The leaders of South Sudan, across the political spectrum, should reinvest political efforts into finding durable settlements to the conflicts involving the various groups outside the Revitalized Agreement. It is also critical to establish a credible force that will protect the human rights of the people, who have been subjected to **gross human rights violations and abuses**, including **killings, torture, conflict-related sexual violence**, and the **looting and destruction of homes and livelihoods**. To do so, the Commission listed **recommendations** to the Government in order to provide leadership and allocate the resources necessary to ensure the timely and credible implementation of the priority tasks of the Revitalized Agreement, as well as to take measures to reverse the culture of impunity by holding accountable public officials, security personnel and other individuals complicit in serious crimes. To all armed forces and non-state armed groups, the Special Rapporteur recommended to comply fully with international human rights law and international humanitarian law and hold violators accountable in line with international standards. The Special Rapporteur made recommendations also to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and regional governments, as well as to the UN system, its Member States, and international partners.

7 March: Presentation of the High Commissioner's reports on the activities of her Office in:

#### Colombia

[A/HRC/52/25](#): Situation of human rights in Colombia - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

#### Guatemala

[A/HRC/52/23](#): The report describes the human rights situation in Guatemala from **1 January to 31 December 2022**. Guatemala continues to face **systemic and structural challenges**. The High Commissioner highlights advances and persisting challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights, with a focus on issues related to equality and non-discrimination, inclusive and sustainable human development, justice, democratic space, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This context prevents significant progress in the exercise and enjoyment of human rights. The High Commissioner **recommends** that the State should guarantee the full application of **international standards on Indigenous Peoples' right** to consultation and participation; guarantee the **independence of the justice system**; as well as expand the investment in and coverage of **non-contributory social programs** to reach the poorest and most vulnerable people.

#### Honduras

[A/HRC/52/24<sup>6</sup>](#): The report describes the human rights situation and the activities of the High Commissioner's office in Honduras **from 1 January to 31 December 2022**, highlighting the main progress and challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights. The reports concludes with **recommendations** to the State. In particular, the High Commissioner urged authorities to adopt a comprehensive national human rights action plan; to address the challenge of insecurity and violence through a human rights approach; to adopt the policies and legal reforms necessary to guarantee the human rights of women; and Adopt the necessary measures, including legislative measures, to guarantee truth, justice, memory and reparation for the victims of human rights violations.

<sup>6</sup> On 6 March 2023, only Unofficial English version is available on the [OHCHR webpage](#).

## Cyprus

A/HRC/52/18<sup>7</sup>: The report provides an overview of human rights issues in Cyprus from **1 December 2021 to 30 November 2022**. The persisting division of Cyprus continues to hinder the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons. People are facing difficulties in enjoying their economic, social, and cultural rights, with those in vulnerable situations being disproportionately impacted. In particular, the main concerns are related to **respect to the right to life** and the question of **missing persons**, the principle of **non-discrimination**, **freedom of movement** and the **right to seek asylum**, property rights, freedom of religion or belief, and cultural rights, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to education; and the importance of adopting a **gender perspective in the peace process**. The **Covid-19 pandemic** continues to impact a range of human rights issues. The civil society, religious leaders, and faith-based actors continue to promote and protect human rights in Cyprus.

### Item 3<sup>8</sup>: Thematic reports



**8 March:** Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography, and other child sexual abuse material**, *Mama Fatima Singhateh*.

[A/HRC/52/31](#): In the report, the Special Rapporteur provides an overview of the activities undertaken since her previous report and presents a thematic study on reparation for child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation. The thematic study contains an analysis of the overall issue of children's right to reparation and access to justice, current gaps and challenges, and the good practices and experiences of various stakeholders on this issue. The Special Rapporteur formulates a set of **recommendations** for States and other stakeholders in order to introduce comprehensive legislation on reparation for child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation, with accountability measures; to provide and finance urgent interim reparation; and to provide comprehensive training to social workers, teachers, and health professionals to positively employ its potential to reach child victims and survivors and inform them about their rights. The Special Rapporteur conducted official visits to Mauritius from 21 to 30 June 2022, and to the **Philippines from 28 November to 8 December 2022**<sup>9</sup>.

[A/HRC/52/31/Add.1](#), *visit to Mauritius*: The Special Rapporteur conducted official visit **from 21 to 30 June 2022**. She highlighted legislative initiatives, institutional framework and child protection policies implemented to combat and prevent the phenomena, as well as the measures taken to provide care for and ensure the recovery and reintegration of child victims. The Special Rapporteur made **recommendations** to the Government of Mauritius to strengthen efforts to prevent and eradicate the sale and sexual exploitation of children. In particular, the Government should formulate a comprehensive child protection strategy for the effective implementation of the Children's Act; take measures to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children; as well as, establish trainings to prevent and eradicate the sale and sexual exploitation of children.

**8 March:** Interactive Dialogue with 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**, *Balakrishnan Rajagopal* with a focus on the climate crisis and the right to housing.

[A/HRC/52/28](#): **The report acknowledges that the climate crisis is also a housing crisis**. The climate crisis is severely threatening the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing around the world. Climate change requires unprecedented levels of investment in mitigation and adaptation, as well as in the reconstruction of housing following extreme events if the universal standard of adequate housing is to be achieved and

<sup>7</sup> Advanced Edited Version published on the [OHCHR webpage](#) on 1 March 2023 in English only.

<sup>8</sup> Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to development.

<sup>9</sup> No report has been made yet.



maintained. Under the framework of the right to adequate housing, **States should use the maximum of their available resources to address the impacts of climate change** on housing, mitigate it, and avoid foreseeable harm. In particular, States should include informal settlements and their residents in any climate adaptation planning; to provide safe and adequate shelter and reconstruction assistance after climate events. The Special Rapporteur called on the **international community** to create efficient mechanisms for the provision of international financial assistance for mitigation and adaptation interventions in the housing sector for developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

8-9 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to **food**, **Michael Fakhri**, with a focus on conflict and the right to food.

[A/HRC/52/40](#): In the report, the Special Rapporteur shows how different interests and identities experience shared forms of violence and how food systems not only produce food but also amplify and produce violence that makes people poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. The Special Rapporteur describes **four forms of violence**: discrimination and inequality; bodily harm or assault against a person's physical and mental integrity; ecological violence; and erasure. He recommended that Member States should eliminate violence in all its forms in all aspects of food systems and change from an economy reliant on relationships of dependency and extractives towards agroecology. The Special Rapporteur provided also a set of **recommendations for each forms of violence in the food systems**. In particular, the Special Rapporteur recommended that Member States should minimize any unilateral coercive measures and prevent any adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to food; protect land and environment defenders, and eliminate the killing, criminalization and acts of harassment of, and discrimination against, such defenders; as well as, support meaningful and facilitated participation in national and international forums relevant to the governance of food systems.

9 March: Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with **albinism**, **Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond**.

[A/HRC/52/36](#): The report provides a summary of the Independent Expert's activities, focusing on human rights defenders with albinism and human rights defenders protecting and promoting the rights of persons with albinism. Although there is extensive literature and research on the situation of human rights defenders, there is little information about human rights defenders with albinism and human rights defenders promoting and protecting the rights of persons with albinism. The present report is aimed at providing a better understanding of the specific challenges that they face and at identifying best practices. The Independent Expert **shares good practices and makes recommendations** to States to guarantee national legislation and policies that protect and promote the work of human rights defenders; as well as, to develop well-funded national protection programmes for human rights defenders. Additionally, to other relevant stakeholders, the Independent Expert urges to develop and strengthen relationships and collaborations between human rights defenders with albinism and human rights defenders, to promote and protect the rights of persons with albinism.

[A/HRC/52/36/Add.1](#), *visit to Madagascar*: The Independent Expert conducted official visit **from 20 to 30 September 2022**. She covers positive initiatives taken by the authorities concerning persons with albinism, while addressing various challenges, including attacks, ongoing fear and insecurity, and the need for data and statistics. Persons with albinism remain some of the most marginalized persons, particularly in the south of the country. Finally, the Independent Expert made a series of **recommendations** to address these issues. Among others, authorities should collaborate with persons with albinism and organizations to ensure their inclusion and consultation in public debates, as well as in the development of legislation, policy, programmes and services for them in order to combat myths and for the full implementation and enjoyment of their rights.

9 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the **enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment**, **David R. Boyd** with a focus on women, girls, and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

[A/HRC/52/33](#): The report contains State obligations, business responsibilities, and the potential benefits of achieving **gender equality and ecological sustainability**. The planetary environmental crisis affects everyone, everywhere, but not equally. Harmful gender norms, stereotypes, biases, and discrimination exclude women and girls from participating in environmental decision-making and enjoying a fair share of nature's benefits, while imposing disproportionate impacts related to the climate emergency, biodiversity collapse, and pervasive pollution. It also provides **recommendations** related to dismantling systemic discrimination,

empowering women and girls as climate and environmental leaders and ensuring that women and girls can fully enjoy their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; as well as increasing information and resources for women and girls. **The report encloses a specific recommendation for men**, who should acknowledge their privilege and power, become advocates for the empowerment of women and girls as agents of change and environmental leaders, and take tangible actions to support women and girls in realizing their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Finally, the report analyses in a separate annex good practices that recognize and implement the right of women and girls to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

[A/HRC/52/33 Add.1](#): The Special Rapporteur **visited Portugal from 19 to 27 September 2022**, to verify the implementation of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, to identify good practices, and to investigate the environmental challenges that the country faces, including air pollution, waste management, adapting to the climate crisis and effectively implementing environmental laws and policies. To overcome such challenges, the Special Rapporteur listed a set of recommendations.

[A/HRC/52/33 Add.2](#): The Special Rapporteur **visited Slovenia from 29 September to 6 October 2022**. The Special Rapporteur learned about **inspiring examples** of Slovenian leadership and good practices in the field of human rights and the environment, related to nature conservation, solid waste management, environmental taxation, and environmentally friendly initiatives in the sparkling green capital. However, the report contains also **challenging issues where the right to a healthy environment is not being respected**, such as pollution hotspots, inadequate air quality, Roma communities without access to safe drinking water or sanitation, and a lack of urgency in addressing the climate emergency.

[A/HRC/52/44](#): The summary of the **expert seminar on human rights and environmental conservation in the prevention of future pandemics** focuses on lessons learned from the coronavirus disease pandemic, challenges, good practices, and opportunities related to human rights, pandemic prevention and addressing the environmental drivers causing a surge in zoonotic diseases.

**Participants agreed on five key points:**

1. The likelihood of future pandemics depends on interconnected factors;
2. addressing the environmental drivers of pandemic risk is critical to pandemic prevention efforts;
3. human rights-based approaches to pandemic prevention are the most effective, efficient and equitable approach;
4. strategies to reduce spill over must be tailored to the realities of individual communities where they are implemented, which requires strong Indigenous and community participation throughout the process, from design to implementation and monitoring; and
5. reducing the risk of future pandemics in an effective and equitable way requires international cooperation, and a holistic, collaborative, multisectoral approach.

The report also contains key recommendations for human rights-based actions to reduce the risk of future pandemics, including accelerate efforts to address and combat the major environmental drivers of zoonotic spill over; increase efforts to provide funding, resources and capacity-building to States; and consider establishing an inclusive, high- level task force on primary pandemic prevention.

**10 March: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on [freedom of religion or belief](#), Nazila Ghanea.**

[A/HRC/52/38](#): The report sets out the vision of the Special Rapporteur of how she plans to carry out the mandate, undertakes freedom of religion or belief activities, and draws out her work and her approach. The **mandate's focus** is on freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief, as upheld in international human rights instruments. The Special Rapporteur provided also **recommendations** to States, international organizations, and multilateral institutions, as well as regional institutions, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based actors. In particular, States should ensure a good understanding of freedom of religion or belief among different authorities working in a variety of fields; and international organizations should collaborate with States and civil society organizations in supporting the positive human rights contributions of faith-based actors, where appropriate.



## General Debates



**7-8 March: General Debate on 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.

*The Geneva Centre's summaries of selected meetings are available [here](#).*