

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 53rd SESSION

Presentation of report on the Islamic Republic of Iran and oral updates on Sri Lanka and on Nicaragua.

21 June 2023

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, first presented the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the **Islamic Republic of Iran**. She remarked that the human rights situation in Iran has deteriorated against the backdrop of worsening socio-economic conditions, aggravated by sanctions and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report focused on developments since the onset of nationwide protests, including restrictions on civic and democratic space, disproportionate use of force on protestors, unlawful killings, torture and ill-treatment, gender-based violence and arbitrary detention. The Secretary-General was concerned about mass arrests including the detention of children. The report also emphasized that respect for the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and access to information has deteriorated. State policy has become more stringent in enforcing mandatory veiling, and imposing harsher penalties, with a significant impact on the daily lives of women and girls. The report also noted with concern the State's failure to protect the physical and mental well-being of female students. In addition, there is serious concern about the high number of death penalty sentences, including the execution of children. Finally, the report remarked that domestic avenues for accountability remain weak and ineffective, particularly in addressing violations in the context of recent protests.

Iran (Country Concerned) expressed the report is based on partial evidence and stated it is biased and one-sided. The UCMs imposed are not sectoral as the report notes but nationwide, targeting all areas of Iranian lives amounting to crimes against humanity. Iran considered that the claims about institutionalized discrimination against women and girls and minorities are false. Iran did not recognize the great human rights achievements of the country. Iran believed most of the sources and references used in the report are from dissidents and anti-Iranian media outlets. Iran considered the report an inaccurate collection of information from unreliable sources and fake news outlets owned by terrorists and hostile organizations.

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, then presented an oral update on the situation of human rights in **Nicaragua**. The Office documented cases of serious human rights violations committed by Nicaraguan State officials, including restrictions on civic space combined with the increasing erosion of the rule of law. She remarked there are new waves of arbitrary deprivations of liberty, including of human rights defenders, political opponents, journalists, members of the peasant movement, and persons linked to the Catholic church. She emphasized that a total of 119 civil society organizations and eight Universities have had their legal personality canceled. Multiple violations against religious freedom have also been recorded as well as attacks against indigenous peoples. The Office urges concerned authorities to take all necessary measures to investigate all attacks and killings in indigenous communities in the Caribbean. The Office also urged the Nicaraguan authorities to re-establish a dialogue with the United Nations' human rights mechanisms. In addition, the Office made a series of recommendations, including releasing all persons arbitrarily deprived of their liberty; ceasing the persecution against the Catholic church and civil society actors; and ensuring accountability for present and past violations. Finally, the Office invited Nicaragua to present pledges that signify a change of course toward overcoming the human rights crisis and called upon the authorities to ratify the human rights instruments to which Nicaragua is not yet a party.

Nicaragua (Country Concerned) did not take the floor after the presentation of the report by the Office but took the floor on the Right of the Reply section to respond to it. Nicaragua condemned the report by the Office since it disrespects the country's sovereignty by presenting distorting facts. Nicaragua stressed that the government was democratically elected and guarantees and fosters the

rights of vulnerable populations. The country also emphasized that the government champions national reconciliation and is developing public policies aimed to improve living standards in the country despite the sanctions imposed. Finally, Nicaragua condemned the politicization of human rights and considers this forum to be manipulated against the country.

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights finished by presenting the oral update on promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in **Sri Lanka**. The Office highlighted that the economic crisis continues to have a severe impact on the rights and well-being of many Sri Lankans. It also remarked that it is crucial to ensure the burden of reforms do not further compound inequalities and that robust safety nets and social protection measures are needed to protect the most vulnerable. It is also vital to address the underlying factors of the crisis, including corruption. The Office urged the Government and political parties in Sri Lanka to use their historic transformation as an opportunity for democratic renewal, deeper institutional reforms and to advance accountability and reconciliation as well as the promotion and protection of human rights. The Office commended the president's discussions with Tamil political parties and encourages the need to materialize these into laws, policies, and practices. Sri Lanka must redouble its efforts to ensure accountability through solid measures and reconciliation mechanisms. The Office is concerned about the latest attacks on the opposition, including the arrest of protest leaders and forceful crowd control measures. Finally, the Office encouraged the Government to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Sri Lanka (Country Concerned) stressed that political stability has been restored and the Government is continuing its focus on long-term measures to guarantee reconciliation and accountability. In addition, monetary and governance reforms are underway as well as social protection measures to mitigate the impact on the poor and vulnerable. Sri Lanka emphasized recent developments including the country's progress in legislative reforms, institutional activities, land issues, the release of prisoners and power decentralization. The Anti-Corruption Bill was passed, and the Government is engaging in further consultations with all stakeholders for the drafting of the Anti-Terrorism Bill. Sri Lanka is redoubling efforts to implement a truth and reconciliation mechanism and an advisory committee has been appointed to facilitate the drafting of the required legislation. The Office on Missing Persons (OMP) has made progress through digitization efforts and speeding up the issuance process of Certificates of Absence (CoA). The budget for the Office for Reparations has disbursed resources for cases related to death and injuries, missing persons, and damaged properties due to conflict in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) continues its reconciliation work. Sri Lanka advanced in its land ownership commitment through the restitution of land to legitimate civilian owners. Finally, Sri Lanka reiterates its rejection of the external evidence-gathering mechanism established following Resolution 46/1.

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).