

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 53rd SESSION

### Overview of Week 4 (10 – 14 July 2023)

During the **fourth and final week of the 53rd session**, the UN Human Rights Council will finalize the adoption of the **Universal Periodic Review** outcomes of **Pakistan, Japan, and Sri Lanka**. On 11 July, the Council will hold an **Urgent Debate** under Agenda Item 1<sup>1</sup> to discuss the alarming rise in premeditated and public acts of religious hatred as manifested by the recurrent desecration of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries. The urgent debate will follow the format of general debates. Finally, during the last days (12, 13, and 14 July 2023) of the session, the Council will take action on 30 draft proposals.



#### Agenda item 1: Organizational and procedural matters



11 July: **Urgent Debate** to discuss the alarming rise in premeditated and public acts of religious hatred as manifested by the recurrent desecration of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries.

#### Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review



10 July: Presentation of the reports on the operations of the **Voluntary Fund** for Participation in the **Universal Periodic Review** and the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review ([A/HRC/53/56](#), [A/HRC/53/57](#), [A/HRC/53/58](#)).

#### Agenda item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

10 July: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the **Palestinian territories occupied** since 1967, **Francesca Albanese**.

[A/HRC/53/59](#): The report, while considering the situation of human rights in the OPT since 1967, presented the **SR's concerns related to the widespread and systematic arbitrary deprivation of liberty in the country**. Due to Israel's continued refusal of the SR entry, she conducted a remote investigation and virtual meetings over six months. Arbitrary and deliberate ill-treatment is inflicted upon the Palestinians not only through unlawful practices in detention but also as a **carceral continuum comprised of techniques of large-scale confinement -physical, bureaucratic, digital- beyond detention**. These violations may amount to international crimes prosecutable under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and universal jurisdiction. Israel's occupation has been a tool of settler colonial conquest also through intensifying methods of **confinement** against an entire people who continuously rebel against their prison wardens. In conclusion, the SR provided **recommendations to third states, the Israeli Government, the Prosecutor of the ICC, and the State of Palestine** in order to abolish the arbitrary system and restore fundamental liberties and human rights.

<sup>1</sup> Agenda Item 1: Organizational and procedural matters.

## Agenda Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

11 July: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance**, **Ashwini K.P.**, focusing on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

[A/HRC/53/60](#): The report outlined the strategic vision and initial priorities of Ashwini K.P., who was appointed by the HRC in October 2022. It provided a summary of the **activities** undertaken by the mandate holders to date, a description of the **scope of the mandate**, and an analysis of the **provisions** within international law upon which the Special Rapporteur intends to ground the fulfillment of her mandate. The SR highlighted the **importance** of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, other human rights treaties, and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to the scope and implementation of her mandate. She also underscored the **cross-cutting importance of cooperation** with other mechanisms and organizations addressing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance at the international, regional, national, and local levels. **Among thematic priorities, the SR stressed online hate speech** as an important vector for the relationship between digital technologies and contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the relationship between gender discrimination and racism. Finally, the Special Rapporteur offered **targeted recommendations** on the ways in which the States Members of the United Nations and other stakeholders can cooperate in the fulfillment of her mandate.

[A/HRC/53/62](#): The report summarized the submissions of States regarding the actions they have taken to combat the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and outlines relevant information submitted by non-governmental organizations. The Special Rapporteur also provided information about the relevant international legal framework and **recommendations** for Member States, stakeholders and civil society organizations. States should include targeted steps to prevent and address the proliferation of online hate speech in such measures; adopt comprehensive measures to combat racist hate speech and xenophobic political discourse; and adopt national action plans against racism and the resurgence of neo Nazism and take all necessary steps to ensure their effective implementation. Stakeholders and civil society organizations should facilitate enhanced collaboration among representatives of different racial, ethnic and religious communities to combat all forms of intolerance and discrimination; contribute to the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data on hate crime and hate speech and continue and strengthen work to provide support to victims of hate crimes and hate speech.

11 July: Presentation of the OHCHR report on **DDPA**. From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. OHCHR report on the progress made on the two-year comprehensive communications strategy, inclusive of an outreach program to raise awareness about and mobilize global public support for racial equality, including the content and contribution of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

[A/HRC/53/61<sup>2</sup>](#): The report provided an overview of the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' actions in the context of the two-year comprehensive communication strategy**, inclusive of an outreach program to raise awareness about and mobilize global public support for racial equality. The OHCHR

<sup>2</sup> As of 10 July, only English advance united version is available.

developed and launched a communication strategy and campaign called **Learn, Speak Up, and Act! (LSA)**, to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The report provided an analysis of the activities, products, and services developed for such a campaign, including publications, videos, a landing page, social media content, partnerships, and more. Based on the progress made and lessons learned, the report also illustrated suggestions for raising awareness and garnering public support.

## Agenda item 10: Technical assistance and capacity-building

**11 July:** Enhanced interactive dialogue with the **High Commissioner** on a report recommending the way forward to improve **technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights**, taking into account the outcomes of the discussions held during the inter-sessional meeting on the theme, “Technical cooperation and capacity-building in the Human Rights Council: taking stock of the past for a better discharge of this mission in the future”.

A/HRC/53/63<sup>3</sup>: The report provided outcomes of the **inter-sessional meeting held in April 2023**. Technical cooperation in the field of human rights plays a critical role in renewing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, in preventing a crisis, in building more resilient societies, and in sustaining peace, as well as supporting efforts by the United Nations to reflect this understanding throughout its partnerships and joint programming. In this regard, it is critical to support efforts by OHCHR to expand and strengthen its capacities to deliver technical cooperation on the ground and meet the range of demands for assistance. Based on findings, the Office **recommended** Member States to support a holistic approach to technical cooperation; promote the adoption of a human rights-based approach to development, peace, security, and humanitarian programming; and increase funds and budget.

**11 July:** Interactive Dialogue on the oral update of the Independent Expert, **Yao Agetse**, on the technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the **Central African Republic**.

**12 July:** Interactive Dialogue on the oral presentation of the High Commissioner of the findings of the periodic report of **OHCHR** and on the report of the **Secretary-General** on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous **Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine**.

[A/HRC/53/64](#): In the report, the Secretary-General described the progress made in the implementation of the resolution, as well as further recommendations to improve its implementation. The report provided an analysis of the **situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine**, covering the period from 1 July to 31 December 2022, in which the human rights situation in Ukraine deteriorated considerably, as a result of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the subsequent occupation of additional parts of Ukrainian territory. The SG called upon the Russian Federation to uphold its obligations under international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The Russian authorities should comply fully with the absolute prohibition of torture and ensure the independent, impartial, and effective investigation of all allegations of ill-treatment, torture, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest, and detention in Crimea. The SG urged the Russian Federation to ensure that the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and opinion, association, thought, conscience, and religion can be exercised by all individuals and groups in Crimea, without discrimination on any grounds or unjustified interference.

**12 July:** Presentation of the oral update of the High Commissioner on cooperation with **Georgia**.

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

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