

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 54th SESSION

Organizational Meeting

28 August 2023

The meeting was chaired by Ms Maira Mariela Macdonal Alvarez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) Vice-President of the Human Rights Council.

The last regular session of the year is scheduled to last for five weeks from **11 September – 13 October 2023**. The longest session of the year. In this session, no lunchtime meetings will be held.

During its 54th session, the Council will hold 5 panel debates (all times CET, UCT + 2):

- **Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights.** Theme: The impact of unilateral coercive measures and over-compliance on the right to development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. 14 September, 10:00 am. Introduced by Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM.
- **Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms.** Theme: Revisiting gender parity and its contributions to the integration of gender into the work of international human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. 25 September, 10:00 am. Introduced by Chile.
- **Biennial panel discussion on youth and human rights.** Theme: Young people’s engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes. 26 September, 10:00 am. Introduced by El Salvador.
- **Panel discussion on cyberbullying against children.** 27 September, 10:00 am. Introduced by Israel on behalf of the main sponsors.
- **Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.** Theme: The impact of certain development projects on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the impact on indigenous women. 27 September, 16:00 pm. Introduced by Mexico.

Overview of the Programme of Work

The session will **begin** with the presentation of the Annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. During the session, the Council will hold 40 Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteur and other mechanisms, 4 oral updates and presentations by the High Commissioner and the Groups of Experts concerning thematic and country reports, 1 Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the report of HC and experts on DRC, and 1 Enhanced Interactive Dialogue with the HC and International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement. There will be 9 General Debates during the 54th session.

12 Special Procedures mandate holders and Expert Mechanisms are expected to be appointed by the Council.

Deadlines:

- States: the online system for inscription in the list of speakers for all Interactive Dialogues and Panel Discussions will open on **Tuesday 5 September 2023. Video messages will be accepted until 24 hours before the start of the meeting.**
- The list of speakers will close approximately 15 minutes after the beginning of each debate.
- The deadline for the submission of draft proposals is **Wednesday 4 October, 1:00 pm 2023 (Geneva time).**
- NGOs: the list of speakers for all debates will open online on
- List of speakers for **Panel Discussions:** states will be asked to rank panels in order of priority when inscribing on the list of speakers. Slots will be allocated by the system taking these priorities into account.

Information Sharing on Initiatives

- **Cote d'Ivoire (on behalf of the African group)** draft resolutions on the renewal mandate of the SR on human rights and use of dangerous goods; renewal mandate of Expert Working Group of people of African Descent; renewal of the mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on surveillance and military activities.
- **Thailand (with cross-regional core group)** draft resolution on the **enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity building in the field of human rights**.
- **Philippines (on behalf of the group of countries)** draft resolution on the world program focusing on **education and training**.
- **Colombia** draft resolution **on maternal mobility and mortality**.
- **Finland (on behalf of the cross-regional core group: Australia, Chile, South Africa and Finland)** joint statement to combat racism, harmful practices, and discrimination on the basis of sex characteristics.
- **Switzerland (on behalf of the cross-regional core group):**
 - draft resolution on the **death penalty**.
 - draft resolution on **renewal of the SR on truth, justice, and reparation**.
- **United Arab Emirates:**
 - **(with UK)** draft resolution **on the education of girls and the impact of climate change**;
 - **(with UN WOMEN)** side event **on women and climate change**, 3 October 2023.
- **Honduras:**
 - draft resolution on capacity building for the protection of human rights of **persons deprived of liberties in penitentiary systems in Honduras**;
 - side event on **business and human rights** (date TBC); and
 - side event on the **contribution of indigenous peoples in Honduras**.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo** side event on **combatting impunity and transitional justice in DRC**, 11 October.
- **India** side event on implementing the **right of development** to realize human rights and the 2030 Agenda.
- **Azerbaijan** draft resolutions on **human rights and unilateral coercive measures** and on the **right to development**.
- **Guatemala** draft resolution on **human rights and indigenous peoples**.
- **Costa Rica** joint declaration and side event (20 September 2023) on **social integration of persons deprived of liberties**.
- **UK:**
 - draft resolution on the **human rights situation of the Syrian Arab Republic**;
 - draft resolution on **human rights in Sudan**;
- **Zimbabwe** side event on the **self-determination of the people of Western Sahara**, 13 September.
- **European Union:**
 - draft resolution **extending the mandate of the SR in Afghanistan**;
 - draft resolution **extending the mandate of the SR in Burundi**.
- **Cuba:**
 - draft resolution on the **use of mercenaries as a means of violation of human rights**;
 - draft resolution on renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of **democratic equitable world order**.

- **France** (Argentina, Japan, Morocco, and France) draft resolution on **enforcement disappearance**.
- **Bolivia:**
- draft resolution on **implementation of the UN Declaration on the right of rural workers**;
- side event on the same topic, (date TBC).
- **Lebanon (on behalf of the Arab group)** draft resolution on **technical assistance and building capacity in the field of human rights in Yemen**.
- **Mexico (with Colombia and University of Geneva)** side event on **technology innovation to promote the right to health of persons with disabilities in developing countries**.
- **Ukraine** draft resolution **on the protection of the rights of prisoners of war and arbitrary detention of innocent civilians**; and two side events on **restoration of justice and ensuring reparation**.
- **Argentina** draft resolution on the **centrality of care activity under the human rights perspectives**; draft resolution on **older persons**; and a side event on **violation against older persons**, 15 September.
- **Qatar** side event on protection of **education** from attacks, 11 September 2023.
- **Algeria** side event on the **impact of repatriation of funds** on enjoyment of human rights, 6 October.
- **Luxembourg** draft resolution on the **establishment of the SR on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation**.
- **Brazil:**
 - draft resolution on the **right to privacy in the digital age**;
 - draft resolution under item 9 on **sports and racial discrimination**;
 - side event on **participation of black women in politics in the fight against political discrimination**, 5 October.
- **Morocco** side event on **children and climate change**, 20 September.
- **South Africa** joint statement on the UN Declaration and Vienna Declaration.
- **US** side event aimed to **strengthen the global efforts to combat antisemitism**, 13 September; joint statement on the use the digital technologies.
- **Denmark** side event on **the UN Convention against Torture** with a focus on methods and trainings, 12 September.
- **Hungary (with Fiji, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Uruguay)** draft resolution on **cooperation with UN in the field of human rights**.
- **Sovereign Order of Maita** side event on raising awareness on **contemporary forms of slavery**, 20 September.

Other matters:

The 3-year program of work for 2023 to 2025 is being updated and will be posted on the Extranet. The voluntary yearly calendar for thematic resolutions is being updated and will be circulated prior to the start of the session.

Draft resolutions: at least one informal open-ended consultation should be held on each draft resolution and/or decision before the Council can take action on it. These consultations should be scheduled in a timely, transparent, and inclusive manner.

Modalities:

- The 54th session will be held in Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva and on online platform (Zoom). State delegations can participate in person, via pre-recorded video statements, or via Zoom. The capacity of Room XX is no longer restricted. Point of order can be raised via Zoom by using the raise hand function. The delegations can exercise their right of reply remotely in the same manner as during the 53rd regular session, by sending an email to: OHCHR-hrclistofspeakers@un.org
- Special Procedures mandate holders, Investigative Mechanisms and Panelists unable to travel to Geneva are able to send pre-recorded video messages for their initial presentations and participate in interactive dialogues or panel discussions via Zoom.
- **NGOs with ECOSOC status and NHRIs with “A” status** have the possibility of delivering their statements in person from Room XX or via pre-recorded video statements. The list of speakers for NGOs for each of the General Debates will be set in line with the average number of NGOs that participated in each of the General Debates in the previous three September sessions.
- All oral statements should be electronically submitted to the interpreters at least 1h00 prior the estimated time of delivery, to ensure the quality of the interpretation. Submission of transcript is mandatory for all online statements.

Accessibility: a Task Force on enhancing accessibility has been established, and the focal point for accessibility in the Secretariat can be contacted. Oral statements are to be uploaded in Word format on the online system for lists of speakers, and delegations encouraged to ensure live captioning and sign interpretation during their panels.

Reprisals: a climate of trust and safety within the Council is essential, where states prevent and ensure adequate protection from any act of intimidation or reprisals. A constructive, safe, and respectful atmosphere is essential. Intimidation and reprisals can take many forms, and our common duty is to ensure intimidation or reprisals will not happen in any circumstances.

Documentation: out of 87 reports for the 54th session, 59 reports are already available in all UN languages.

Watch the full recording here: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1d/k1dk6e1sgp>