

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 54th SESSION

Item 5¹: General debate

(29 September 2023)

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This is a Summary Records report of the General Debate under Item 5 that took place on 29 September 2023 at the 54th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The report includes the statements made by the Member States of the Human Rights Councils, Observer States, and other Observers. The statements are presented in the order of speaking and are not exhaustive.

The report considers the

. Please refer to the **recordings of the General Debates on the UN WebTV** for full statements:

- 29 September: [UN WEB TV](#)

¹ Human rights bodies and mechanisms.

Main Points Raised (thematic issues, country and/or territorial concerns)	
Member States: Joint Statements	
1. Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)	Underlined that in discharging their respective mandates, they must adhere to the principles enshrined in the Institution Building (IB) package and the Code of Conduct . The IB package and respective international human rights covenants have established mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of the core human rights norms. Human Rights bodies and mechanisms are therefore intended to advance the implementation of these human rights norms.
2. Portugal on behalf of a group of countries	Recalled the important role of NMIRFs as key instruments to support States' efforts in fulfilling their human rights obligations, including providing information and implementing the recommendations of human rights bodies and mechanisms. NMIRFs are flexible and versatile entities, assuming different structures to suit different national contexts.
3. Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU)	Stressed the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights , which remains a valid basis today to set a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. Expressed deep concern about the lack of adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding of the UN's human rights bodies and mechanisms, including the Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. Condemned any form of intimidation, harassment, and reprisals, both online and offline, by State and non-state actors, against those who seek to cooperate, cooperate, or have cooperated with the UN, its representatives, and mechanisms in the field of human rights.
4. Australia on behalf of a group of countries ²	Reiterated its long-held position that a new status, separate from civil society organizations, must be developed to ensure Indigenous Peoples can participate meaningfully at the UN . Indigenous Peoples bring unique perspectives, diversity, histories, interests, and solutions – whether it be on climate change, conservation, and biodiversity, land and water management, intellectual property, protection of groups in vulnerable situations, or protecting and upholding international human rights – Indigenous Peoples have a lot to contribute and should be heard.
5. Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)	Highlighted the necessity to promote the work of the HR Mechanisms. The SR should take into account challenges in the national context to exercise objectivity, independence, and impartiality, to avoid selectivity . Important is constructive dialogue.
6. Latvia on behalf of a group of countries ³	It noted with satisfaction that the number of States that have extended-standing invitations has continued to grow, reaching a total number of 130 UN Members and Observers. While commended considerable efforts by some States to

² Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Spain, Sweden, United States and Vanuatu.

³ Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, The Bahamas, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

	develop constructive cooperation with mandate holders, regretted that others have continued not to cooperate with them. Expressed profound concern about attacks and threats against mandate holders.
7. Egypt on behalf of a group of countries	Undertaking the role of the UN HRC to assist countries in implementing international human rights obligations. The diverse geographical distribution would certainly contribute to the effective function of the office, as well as the appropriate representation of the legal system. Importance of multilingualism, as a means of promoting, protecting, and preserving diverse cultures and languages. No politicization in the work of the HRC.
Statements made by Member States	
1. Ukraine	Affirmed that human rights mechanisms have a vital importance in advancing and upholding human rights worldwide. Their pivotal role in monitoring, investigating, and advocating for human rights makes them an indispensable pillar of the international human rights system and an embodiment of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 75th anniversary of which we commemorate this year. Russia's reluctance to cooperate with human rights mechanisms is a matter of concern. The country perpetrates gross and systematic violations of human rights and commits war crimes and crimes against humanity in another country and at home.
2. United States of America	Focused on the importance of rights and freedoms enshrined in the UDHR . The UDHR stresses that “a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge.” It is critical that the Council recommit to the UDHR and address directly and truthfully any threat to the rights and freedoms reflected therein.
3. Malaysia	Stressed that the uncertainties of the global political and socioeconomic landscape, such as armed conflict and climate change, pose different human rights implications for different countries. Constructive dialogue between States and SPMHs is essential to addressing any human rights issues.
4. Luxembourg	Affirmed that 18 years after the creation of the HRC, 30 years after the proclamation of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, and three-quarters of a century after the adoption of the Universal Declaration, it is clear, on the one hand, that all the member and observer countries of the HRC confirm their attachment to the universality and indivisibility of human rights, as well as to the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity ; but also, on the other hand, that our interpretations of these principles diverge.
5. China	Commended the positive role played by the Advisory Committee and the HCR. Dialogue and cooperation with the Mechanisms, based on equality, and mutual respect. Highlighted the abuse of the Council by some individuals/groups.
6. Bangladesh	Focused on national cooperation with the Special Procedures and UN Mechanisms and Bodies. Acknowledged the role of the HR Body in assisting States to implement international human rights obligations. The equitable geographical distribution within the Office is essential for the effective function. Underlined the current unbalance.
7. Cuba	Stressed the importance of dialogue and cooperation with HR Mechanisms and Procedures. Raised concerns over the proliferation of politicized procedures incompatible with the Code of Conduct of the Special Procedures Mandate Holders. It is based on biased selected statements and judgment value.

<p>8. Algeria</p>	<p>Reiterated that the Special Procedures of the HRC are pillars of the HR System and play a key role in the protection and promotion of human rights. Urged the Special Procedures to pay attention to national efforts: constructive dialogue can fill any gaps between the two parties. Important the cooperation to implement recommendations. Affirmed the important role of technical assistance and capacity-building for more sustainable cooperation relations. Verify the report received, based on the motives of the countries.</p>
<p>9. Gambia</p>	<p>Highlighted the critical of human rights bodies and mechanisms, focusing on the Special Procedures of the HRC. These experts play a pivotal role in addressing human rights violations and providing recommendations to States. The mandate holders need continued support, financial and political. Constructive cooperation, dialogue, and mutual understanding between States and Special Procures are essential.</p>
<p>10. India</p>	<p>Highlighted the importance of the HRC Advisory Committee in providing expertise and advice to the Council. It reiterated that the Special Procedures are an important mechanism of the Council for a “genuine dialogue for strengthening the capacity of member States”. While issuing press releases and statements, the Special Procedures should take into account the perspectives of, and the information provided by member States.</p>
<p>11. Bolivia (Plurinational State of)</p>	<p>Reiterated its spirit of dialogue and interaction with the Special Procedures Mandate Holders. A balanced approach based on verified information and national efforts is important. Highlighted the role of Special Procedures in straightening the universality and independence of human rights. ECOSOC and CPC should have the same attention. Called for a continued focus on climate, economic, and food crises, which have negative impacts on countries.</p>
<p>12. Germany</p>	<p>Stressed the importance of closing the gap between the work in Geneva and in New York. Supported the multilateral human rights system. Independence of the OHCHR is vital, UPR, Special Producers, and other Mechanisms are key in defending human rights issues globally. Called for an end to reprisals and intimidations.</p>
<p>13. Costa Rica</p>	<p>It reiterated its position in favor of the important role that special procedures play and their valuable contribution to the implementation of international human rights obligations. The exchange between state actors, human rights mechanisms, and civil society, particularly with human rights defenders, is vital to promote the progressivity and implementation of human rights in the world. Mandate holders and States should generate synergies. Strengthening exchange and dialogue in order to address structural or emerging aspects, complements our work and nourishes it with the necessary elements to advance and expand the fight for the protection and promotion of human rights.</p>
<p>14. Pakistan</p>	<p>Recognized the valuable contribution of the Council, Mechanisms, and Bodies in advancing the human rights agenda. Underlined the National cooperation with the Office. Stressed the importance of an equitable graphical representation with the Special Procedures system, vital to a better understanding of different cultural, legal, and social perspectives. Stressed the critical situation within occupation territories.</p>
<p>15. Georgia</p>	<p>Committed to the work of Special Procedures, Mechanisms, Bodies, and the OHCHR. Raised concern on Russia’s occupation of the country. Called for accountability for grave human rights violations committed. The OHCHR’s immediate and impede access to countries is essential to prevent the deterioration of the human rights situation.</p>

Statements made by the Observers	
1. Iraq	Affirmed that the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action represent an important opportunity to renew our commitments to respect, protect, and fulfill all human rights, and to enhance the effectiveness of human rights bodies and mechanisms, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures . Stressed the importance of a cooperative relationship between states and mandate holders, respecting principles of sovereignty of states and independence of mandate holders.
2. Bahrain	Stressed the importance of strengthening and improving the work of mechanisms and mechanisms through constructive dialogue with member states. Emphasized the importance of the Council's role in maintaining the credibility of these mechanisms and bodies by working in an objective, transparent, fair, and free-of-bias manner .
3. Armenia	Affirmed that Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures are indispensable instruments of the UN Human Rights system's early warning capacity . It is truly unfortunate when their findings, conclusions, and recommendations do not receive the required attention and follow-up actions, including in the cases of recorded patterns of human rights violations. Early warning without early action and prevention may only perpetuate the cycle of impunity risking further abuses of international law.
4. Russian Federation	Affirmed that Human Rights Bodies in carrying out the mandate must abide by principles of objectivity, impartiality, and independence. However, within the Council double standards and selectivity are in place . This is obvious in the context of Ukraine.
5. Tunisia	Emphasized the important role of special procedures mechanisms in providing advice to Member States and supporting their efforts to develop the human rights system. It stressed the importance of the principles of neutrality, independence, objectivity, avoiding politicization , and coordination with the governments of the countries concerned, as the main conditions for achieving the desired goals of these mechanisms and building a climate of trust.
6. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Reiterated its support for the work of the mechanisms of this Council, which are important spaces for the exchange of experiences on relevant human rights issues, based on genuine dialogue and cooperation, the cornerstone of our work. Believed that actions outside the Code of Conduct weaken the credibility of the Special Procedures of this Council , undermining the confidence of States and other relevant actors.
7. Afghanistan	Stressed that the rule of law, the domestic legal system, and the international human rights body and systems are only the options for the people of Afghanistan to seek redress for systematic and widespread violations of human rights. Stressed the need for great and more proactive cooperation between civil society and international human rights mechanisms. Urged the need to establish an independent mechanism for the country.
8. Uganda	Human rights bodies and Mechanisms should be able to foster human rights laws, including the respective declarations. Stressed the importance of the Council and the Mechanisms to endorse the targeted role that the international

	community creates. Human Rights Mechanisms should respect principles of sovereignty of states and non-interference.
9. Libya	Reaffirmed its support to the mechanisms and bodies of the Human Rights Council. It urged them to adhere to the decisions that define their mandate and the recommendations contained in their reports in line with the lofty goals of the Council's work, in addition to creating a clear vision based on open dialogue and constructive cooperation with all parties concerned in the field of human rights.
10. Ghana	Affirmed that trust, cooperation, and constructive dialogue between member states and UN Mechanisms , Special Procedures Mandate Holders would improve human rights situations around the world. In order to achieve this, Special Procedure should carry out its duty in conformity with the Code of Contact, as well as principles of constructive cooperation, and dialogue.
11. Azerbaijan	Expressed its active engagement in constructive dialogue with UN Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms. National Report. Stressed the importance of the Special Procedures Mandate Holders to conduct their activities in line with the mandate and in respect of principles of international law, the UN Charter, the Code of Conduct, and relevant resolutions. Genuine and constructive dialogue can serve to better understand, identify gaps, and contribute effectiveness of the Mechanism.
12. Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Stressed the increasing number of country-specific mandate holders and mechanisms that are mainly created or extended because of the political will of some Western countries. Most of these mandates benefit from the unlimited support of their founders even for the out-of-context activities of Mandate-holders.
13. Angola	Recognized the important role of the OHCHR in straightening national capacity, respecting human rights, and harmonizing guidance and obligations. Shared the robust national mechanism. The important element is the cooperation with the OHCHR.
Right to reply	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Armenia in reply to the statements made by Azerbaijan. - Azerbaijan in reply to the statements made by Armenia. - China in reply to the statements made by the UK, the USA, Germany, and a few other countries and NGOs. - Cuba in reply to the statements made by Amnesty International. - Sudan in reply to the statements made by some NGOs. - Armenia (second) in reply to the statements made by Azerbaijan. - Azerbaijan (second) in reply to the statements made by Armenia. 	

List of NGOs that took the floor:

Conectas Direitos Humanos, Institute for NGO Research, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, United Nations Association of China, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Beijing NGO Association for International Exchanges, Elizka Relief Foundation, International Humanitarian Society for Development Without Borders, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group, Alliance Defending Freedom, American Association of Jurists, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc., Africa Culture Internationale, Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples, Global Appreciation and Skills Training Network, Le conseil universel des droits de l'homme, Platform for Youth Integration and Volunteerism, Sikh Human Rights Group, Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Cooperation Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE Internationale, International Muslim Women's Union, International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, Al Baraem Association for Charitable Work, Integrated Youth Empowerment - Common Initiative Group (I.Y.E. – C.I.G.), International Service for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development.