

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

### Item 3<sup>1</sup>: General debate

(14 – 15 March 2024)

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**This is a Summary Records report of the General Debate under Item 3** that took place 14 – 15 March at the 55th 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.

<sup>1</sup> Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

## Opening remarks

**H.E. Mr. Cristian Espinosa Cañizares, Chair-Rapporteur of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights**, informed the Council about the 9th session of the Working Group. During the session, the working group was able to negotiate *the preamble and Articles 1 to 3* of the updated draft legally binding instrument with all delegations, international organizations, national human rights institutions, and a significant number of non-governmental organizations. That level of engagement in this negotiation phase should be seen as a sign of an increased commitment of several States and stakeholders to the concrete progress of this working group.

In conclusion, he mentioned next steps in this regard from a first consultation in April, to discuss a proposed “Roadmap” to comply with the recommendations and conclusions of the 9<sup>th</sup> session, to the 10th session in October, under the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and dialogue.

**Mr. Todd Howland, Chief of the Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**, begun by presenting the **annual thematic study on rights of persons with disabilities on good practices of support systems for enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities** (A/HRC/55/34). The report identifies measures States and other actors can take to move towards gender, age and disability-responsive support and care systems both in developing and developed countries.

**The annual report of the High Commissioner on rights of national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities** (A/HRC/55/35) underscores that despite considerable efforts to meet the goal of the full enjoyment of minority rights, serious challenges remain. Minorities continue to face multiple, aggravated, and intersecting forms of discrimination with negative impacts on the enjoyment of their rights. The report identifies measures that States, and other actors can take to secure the full enjoyment of minority rights.

The third report mentioned was the **comprehensive follow-up report of the High Commissioner on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief** (A/HRC/55/74), under item 9. It highlights that peaceful dialogue and coexistence are increasingly hindered around the globe, and religious differences have been weaponized and manipulated for political gain, feeding off the dangerous claim that one group is superior to another. The report outlines measures that should be taken to address discrimination against religious or belief minorities, for example in the job and housing markets, within criminal justice systems and in national security responses.

He further introduced the **comprehensive report in follow-up to the high-level panel on human rights mainstreaming held in 2020, with specific recommendations on how to strengthen a child rights-based approach in the work of the United Nations** (A/HRC/55/36). The report sets out how child rights are integrated in the delivery of the High Commissioner’s mandate to mainstream and coordinate a human rights-based approach in the UN system.

This year's report focusses on *promising practices of child rights mainstreaming in OHCHR and the UN human rights mechanisms and investigative and accountability mechanisms.*

In relation to the work on torture, he presented, firstly, **the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (A/HRC/55/32)** which describes the activities of the Fund in 2023. The report describes how torture continues to shatter the lives of people across the globe. A shrinking of civic space and the surge in reprisals is making it increasingly difficult for the Fund to deliver on its mandate. The report highlights the urgent need to increase the fund's resources. Secondly, **the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Special fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (A/HRC/55/33)**, focusses on the prevention of torture rather than on the work with victims of torture.

He shared with the Council the report of the **Secretary-General on measures taken to implement Human Rights Council resolution 9/8 and obstacles to its implementation, including recommendations for further improving the effectiveness of, harmonizing and reforming the treaty body system (A/HRC/55/24)**. Under item 2, the report highlights the launching of an online complaint submission portal in 2023 to facilitate the submission and processing of individual communications to the human rights treaty bodies for the benefit of all stakeholders. This initiative forms part of the broader digitalization project for the treaty bodies.

In closing, he noted the **report of the Secretary-General on terrorism and human rights (A/HRC/55/30)**, on persistent concerns, relating to national counter-terrorism legislation, due process and fair trial in terrorism related legal proceeding and the question of death penalty, as well as the impact counter-terrorism action on civic space. The report focuses on *(i) the use of new technologies in counterterrorism; and (ii) the situation of third country nationals with suspected ties to designated terrorist groups.*

The report of the Secretary-General on **the safety of journalists and media workers, with a special focus on the safety of women journalists, online and offline inclusion (A/HRC/55/31)**, describes the current situation in relation to the safety of journalists and media workers worldwide. It highlights the persistent killing of journalists, as well as increased physical violence, intimidation, legal harassment, and use of surveillance techniques against them. The report also focuses on the safety of women journalists, highlighting among other issues that women journalists are disproportionately affected by online violence and disinformation.

## Main Points Raised (thematic issues, country and/or territorial concerns)

### Member States: Joint Statements

<p>1. <b>Costa Rica on behalf of a group of countries<sup>2</sup>.</b></p>	<p>Supported a precautionary pause or <b>ban of deep-sea mining in the area</b>. On deep sea ecosystems require states apply precautionary principles and not begin exploitation activities until evidence-based decisions can be made. Impact on human rights specifically, right to health, food, and clean and sustainable environment. Decisions on commercial mining of the seabed should be informed by a human rights approach. Called on states and the private sector to acknowledge impact human rights and consideration should be at the forefront of their actions.</p>
<p>2. <b>Qatar on behalf of GCC and 66 states.</b></p>	<p>Special protection should be given to the <b>role of mothers</b> and their role in society. Procreation should not be a basis for discrimination, nor should they not be given equal opportunity to participate in society. Mothers' contribution to the home (domestic care) is not adequately recognized or valued and thus the totality of women lives in the workplace and at the home is critical. This should be considered as labour. States are obligated under International Human Rights Law to recognize the <b>rights of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard</b>. Sharing of responsibility between man, women, and society. It is necessary that measures are taken for pre and postnatal care to consider the overall health of women. Aim to ensure measures are taken to make sure that women are put at the forefront of development and to ensure they can reach their full potential.</p>
<p>3. <b>Qatar on behalf of Cooperation council for the Arab of the Gulf.</b></p>	<p>International cooperation as capacity building is crucial to make sure progress is made towards <b>development</b>. Exacerbation of conflict and human rights correlation. Must promote programs to <b>combat poverty</b>. Base work on values and principles keeping in mind religious, cultural, and other specificities that exist. Ensure no hierarchy to ensure the ability to move forward.</p>
<p>4. <b>Ghana behalf of Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Morocco, Indonesia.</b></p>	<p>Promoting the ratification and improved implementation of the <b>UN convention against torture (CTI)</b>. 173 states have participated in their initiatives over the last decade. Further, <b>19 new states have joined the initiative</b>. Celebrating progress but recognizing the fight is not over. Absolute prohibition of torture is critical. The convention can support states to put in place measures to prevent, protect, and prohibit the practice. <b>22 states worldwide have not joined the UNCAT</b>, called on these states to join UNCAT and to seek CTI's to support the ratification journey.</p>
<p>5. <b>Gambia on behalf of African States.</b></p>	<p>Recognized the <b>right to development</b> as an integral component of human rights. The responsibility to provide equal opportunity for individuals to reach their full potential. Remained witness to the <b>humanitarian crisis and human rights</b>, deep concerned for the <b>violence</b> that is still experiences across regions. Called for depend on commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and solidarity to effectively address these challenges. Emphasized the council to continue efforts to address human rights violations keeping in mind impartiality, transparency, while respecting sovereignty and non-interference in states.</p>
<p>6. <b>Kirghizstan<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<p>Importance of <b>promotion and protection of human rights of women and girls</b>. 45 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and 25 years after the adoption of its optional protocol, <b>no country in the world</b> has successfully eliminated discrimination against women or achieved full equality. Key role in the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and should be at the forefront of any future actions. <b>189 states have ratified CEDAW</b>,</p>

<sup>2</sup> Samoa, China, Dominican Republic, Marshal Islands, Switzerland, Mexico, Fiji, Ecuador, Chile, and Panama.

<sup>3</sup> Co-presented by Belgium, Albania. Dominican Republic, Ivory Coast on behalf of 66 states.

	<p><b>but many states have made reservations</b> on provisions concerning eliminating discrimination at work, home and family. These reservations limit the obligations taken by states, undermining the objectives of the conventions. Encourages states to withdraw reservations, once ratified the implantation of CEDAW is important. <b>115 of 189 states have ratified the optional protocol</b> and encouraged the ratification of the protocol.</p>
<p><b>7. Malaysia on behalf of group of countries.</b></p>	<p>Highlighted the humanitarian crisis occurring in <b>occupied Palestine, specifically, Gaza</b>. Civilian housing and other civilian infrastructure are ruthlessly targeted and destroyed. Damage to essential facilities and homes, exacerbating an already fragile humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israel forces violate International Humanitarian Law, including forcible transfer and collective punishment. <b>1.9 million people</b> no longer have a home to go to, depriving them of their basic human rights to housing and heightening their vulnerability. Article 11 of the ICESCR imposes obligation on Israel to refrain from taking action to contravene the right to adequate housing of the Palestinian people in the Gaza strip. Urgent need for a ceasefire in Gaza.</p>
<p><b>8. Romania on behalf of 59 countries.</b></p>	<p>Focused on <b>Article 21 of Universal declaration of human rights</b>: Will of the people shall be the authority of the government. This will be demonstrated through elections with more than half of the world’s population participating. Effective participation by countries contributes to the attainment of the SDG targets. Rules of law should be respected; everyone should be able to exercise their rights and freedoms without discrimination, without unlawful or arbitrary restrictions. Ensure freedom expression, peaceful assembly, free movement, association, and right to participate in public affairs is respected. Called on states to encourage youth, women, people with disabilities, and minorities to <b>vote in elections</b>. Encouraged the office of high commissioner to ensure elections meet human rights standards.</p>
<p><b>9. Germany on behalf the group of friends of the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.</b></p>	<p>Stressed that after the 40 years of the <b>UN convention against torture</b>, 173 States have ratified it. However, many people are still being subjected to torture. Prohibition against torture must be respected in all circumstances. Victims must have the right to fair and adequate compensation. More effort to help victims, survivors, and families overcome trauma and rebuild their lives. 2024 the fund will provide support to 50,000 victims in 93 states. Encouraged all states to ratify the convention and to make a larger effort to eliminate torture and similar practices and to contribute to the fund to help victims and survivors to regain their lives.</p>
<p><b>10. Cuba on behalf of 24 Land minded countries.</b></p>	<p>Core international crisis and unjust democratic international order, and rational on sustainable patterns of production and consumption perpetuate inequalities within countries, hinder efforts to achieve sustainable development and achieve human rights. <b>Unilateral cohesive measures</b> have negative impacts on human rights including the right to development. Rejected the drawing of a list of states that are sponsoring terrorism and violating freedom of religion. All <b>human rights are universal, interdependent, indivisible, interrelated</b>. The <b>OHCHR</b> should be guided by <b>principles of universality, impartiality, non-selectivity, and objectivity to promote the protection of all human rights</b>.</p>
<p><b>11. European Union</b></p>	<p>Reported that half of the world’s population will participate in <b>elections</b> this year. The EU is convinced that efforts to combat disinformation should be grounded in human rights and the rule of law. Fight against disinformation should be a pretext to restrict human rights or justify censorship laws. Promoting access to reliable information is key to countering disinformation. <b>A safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders</b> is critical. The EU remained committed to protection and promotion of human rights defenders and an open civic space. Called on all states to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions, rule of law, and principles of good governance and inclusive societies. Promotion of civil, political, social, economic, cultural rights brings benefits to everyone.</p>

<p><b>12. Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.</b></p>	<p>Foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world rests in upholding all human rights, pursuit of selective approaches and double standards undermines the human rights council. Denial of the right of determination results in denial of other rights, holds true in occupies Palestinian territory. The current situation has undermined the credibility of the <b>human rights mechanisms</b> in preventing these atrocities. Economic, social, and cultural rights of Palestinians is linked to <b>ending the illegal occupation</b>. Demanded of ICGs and immediate ceasefire and aggression against Palestinian people. Effects of <b>underdevelopment, rising debt, geopolitical conflicts and climate disasters have hindered ability to achieve SDGs</b>. Called for fulfillment of commitments of financing of development, climate adaptation and revisiting international financial and taxation regime. Shared <b>efforts for xenophobia, racial discrimination, and islamophobia</b>.</p>
<p><b>13. Venezuela on behalf of group of friends in defense of the UN charter.</b></p>	<p>Protection and promotion of all human rights without any distinction of any levels or categories. <b>Objection</b> to double standards in the field of human rights. The importance of achieving a legal framework that <b>does not replicate the politicization</b> of human rights must be done to prevent the Human Rights Council from facing the same fate as their predecessor.</p>
<p><b>14. Switzerland on behalf of Chile, Egypt, Romania, Republic of Korea, and 47 other states.</b></p>	<p>Local governments play a <b>key role</b> in human rights as they have competencies in housing, water, land management, health, and education. The council explores local government's role in achieving and promoting human rights. Need to provide more space to local governments for more inclusive multilateralism and fulfillment of human rights at all levels. Welcome references on how the UN can strengthen engagement with local governments in the pact for the future. It reaffirmed interest in <b>engaging more with local governments</b>. Importance of capacity building to support local governments to understand the human rights system and internal human rights law.</p>
<p><b>15. Uganda on behalf of Non-Align Movement.</b></p>	<p>It reaffirmed that all human rights including the right to development is <b>universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated</b>; the HRC should provide equal treatment to both civil and political rights, and economic and social rights, along with the right to development. There can be <b>no sustainable development without peace</b> and <b>no peace without sustainable development</b>.</p>
<p><b>16. Egypt<sup>4</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Women</b> are among the first victims of violence in conflict. Women and children make up 70% of the dead, and more than 1 million women and girls have been displaced in Gaza multiple times. Women and girls have to content with private struggles such as menstruation while also dealing with constant bombardment. The entire population is at risk of <b>famine</b>. The principles of the CEDAW are challenged in Gaza. Immediate intervention by international institutions and that those who are responsible for the crimes are held to account. Called on the HC to collect evidence to investigate to bring those responsible to account.</p>
<p><b>17. Republic of Korea: Judicial on new and emerging digital technology. Morocco, Austria, Denmark, Brazil.</b></p>	<p>Provide better <b>internet access</b> to people but also empower individuals to make effective use of technology. <b>Digital divides</b> have an impact on human rights, on people's ability to freely express opinions but also economic, cultural, and social rights. Disinformation and hate speech. Urged states to take measure to ensure meaningful connectivity to the internet, education on digital literacy, and participation of women and those in vulnerable situations in various sectors. Should also protect women, girls, and children from cyberbullying and violence.</p>
<p><b>18. Singapore on behalf of 40 States.</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive and balanced approach is required to tackle the <b>world drug problem</b>. Focusing solely on the human rights of drug abusers oversimplifies the drug problem, ignored the damage drug abuse has on society, the economy, and the environment. Urged stakeholders to be more responsible on how they approach these issues, tailor responses to its diverse contexts.</p>

<sup>4</sup> On behalf of 120 countries on situation of women and girls in Occupied Palestinian territory.

<p><b>19. Afghanistan on behalf of 40 States.</b></p>	<p><b>Women and girls</b> in Afghanistan called for a response from the entire international community. Taliban’s promises to respect human rights remain unfulfilled. Women and girls cannot exercise their basic rights. Situations demand full accountability. First, urged human rights mechanisms to <b>monitor</b> the situation; second, called on parties to <b>ensure</b> full and effective cooperation of ICC office of prosecutor on their investigation; third, called on states to <b>ensure</b> the emphasis on Afghanistan’s obligation to respect human rights and ensure active involvement of women concerning the future of the country; fourth, urged states to <b>support</b> the decision on negotiations on the crime against humanity convention to work towards an adequate reflection of gender persecution; and fifth, called for an immediate <b>accountability</b> of human rights abusers.</p>
<p><b>20. Gambia on behalf of the USA and Gambia.</b></p>	<p>Importance of <b>mental health care</b>. Evidence based policies and practices for mental health care are crucial. Seek ways to expand and enlighten mental health access for women, young people, or other marginalized groups who experience the most stress or trauma but have the least access to care.</p>
<p><b>21. Cape Verde on behalf of small island development states.</b></p>	<p>The protection of human rights is challenging for states facing <b>high rates of poverty</b> and <b>high effects of climate change</b>. <b>Development</b> is a right that must benefit everyone, creating equal opportunities for everyone in all communities. Transfer of technology and development of <b>just solutions</b> with the support of the UN and international financial institutions and all member states.</p>
<p><b>22. Bangladesh on behalf of 77 States.</b></p>	<p>Urgent action on the implementation of <b>SDG 13</b>, essential to combat climate change. Developed countries must boost efforts to fulfill financial commitments, increase international cooperation to provide financial, technological, and capacity building support in climate action in just transition in developing countries. <b>Loss and Damaged Fund</b> to be guided under the principles of the Paris Agreement.</p>

### Statements made by Member States

<p><b>1. Costa Rica</b></p>	<p>Efforts made to close the <b>gender gap</b> are not sufficient, abides by commitment to promote and defend the human rights of women and girls. Reported Barbuda, Antigua, Sierra Leon, DRC’s initiatives to explore possibility of working on <b>additional protocol to the CEDAW convention</b>. Inclusive gender perspective is critical. Investing in women and girls to achieve sustainable development.</p>
<p><b>2. Luxembourg</b></p>	<p><b>Elections</b> bring risk of manipulation, erosion of democracy, or violent confrontation. It worked to strengthen democratic institutions. <b>New technology (Artificial Intelligence)</b> or those to limit the digital divide, a human rights approach is critical.</p>
<p><b>3. France</b></p>	<p>55% of French GDP is distributed to <b>social and public politics</b>. Must redouble efforts to <b>ensure everyone has access to economic, social, and cultural rights</b>. Must renew the <b>Paris Compact for People and the Planet</b>, bringing together 48 states and putting in place conditions so no country must choose between indispensable poverty reduction and combating climate change. <b>Women and girls</b> must be at the center, including being able to make their own decisions, such as their <b>right to abortion</b>.</p>
<p><b>4. Georgia</b></p>	<p><b>Good governance is the foundation for human rights</b>. Committed to republished administration reform aims to establish a transparent and accountable public administration. Due to Russia’s occupation of certain regions in Georgia, people are deprived of the ability to benefit from the progress being made, <b>discrimination against ethnically, restricted on movement, and education</b>.</p>
<p><b>5. United States of America</b></p>	<p><b>ESC Rights</b> are vital for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, enhancing inclusive and sustainable growth, and ensuring the wellbeing of all. It launched a <b>Strategy on Women’s Economic Security</b>, where all women can contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity, reduce the wage gap, value domestic work, promote entrepreneurship, and dismantle systemic barriers of women’s participation in the economy.</p>

<p><b>6. Cuba</b></p>	<p>Human rights are under threat due to global situations and the undemocratic financial structure are fostering poverty and hunger and imposing numerous other challenges to developing countries. <b>Palestinian people in the Gaza strip</b> are facing attacks by Israel which has caused the death of 30,000 people and more than 1.7 million are displaced. Cuba continued to face an <b>illegal blockade by the United States of America</b>, violation of political, social, economic, cultural rights of the Cuban peoples including their right to development but they continue to work to development for their people.</p>
<p><b>7. South Africa</b></p>	<p>Due to the <b>apartheid and racial discrimination</b>, it continued to advocate for a world that is free of discrimination. Advocate for <b>gender equality and women empowerment</b>. Concerned by linking the oppression of women to the concept of the apartheid. Part of a core group presenting an initiative to combat discrimination, violence, and harmful practices against intersex persons, aimed at bringing awareness to them, share best practices, and limit discrimination against them.</p>
<p><b>8. Chile</b></p>	<p>Structural reform <b>of financial systems</b> which governs the exchange between their countries. Opportunity to build societies that are more resilient and build systems that build and protect human rights while correcting deep barriers to equality, justice, and sustainability. Make progress to change the global economic sector ensuring it is grounded in human rights and respect.</p>
<p><b>9. Malaysia</b></p>	<p>The government allocated 393.8bn for <b>good governance, economic restructuring, and improving standard of living</b>, ensuring a fairer distribution of aid to ensure enjoyment by all. The OHCHR should support through capacity building programs and the HC should ensure a balanced <b>geographical representation in senior level positions</b>. Concept of right to development and the right of economic, political, social, and cultural rights but this hold little meaning for <b>Palestinians during the Israel occupation</b>. Palestinians are fighting for their basic rights and are not provided the right to self-determination. Called for <b>a ceasefire</b> immediately. Important to eliminate <b>double standards and prevent polarization</b>.</p>
<p><b>10. Brazil</b></p>	<p>Established a working group for policy on <b>human rights and business</b>. It includes incentives for implementation and prevention of human rights violations, monitoring of business obligations, alignment with UN SDGs. Work with the council's intergovernmental working group to achieve consensus on tax of multilateral instrument. Engage developed and developing countries to agree on a tax that is workable and effective and that regulates and guides businesses on human rights negotiations.</p>
<p><b>11. United Arab Emirates</b></p>	<p>Played an effective role on the international stage considering human rights including fighting against <b>terrorism, women empowerment, climate change, health care, and renewable energy</b>. Worked on multilateral projects on <b>economic prosperity</b>. Made efforts to strengthen <b>families</b>, increase the social welfare system to protect families and their rights. Rejected all forms of extremist and violence, in favor of peace, and mutual respect. <b>Foreign aid</b> is a key part of their policy and provides aid to countries in need, including energy and food to protect their fundamental rights. Necessary to build bridges for partnerships and cooperation for dialogue.</p>
<p><b>12. China</b></p>	<p><b>People orientation approach</b>. Solved the historical problem of <b>poverty</b>. Rural income has increased, limiting poverty in these regions. All <b>religions</b> coexist, compulsory <b>education, healthcare, and subsidized housing</b> are all important in their government policies. <b>The right to peace</b> is fundamental to achieve other human rights.</p>
<p><b>13. Algeria</b></p>	<p>Raised attention to those suffering from occupation and those whose right to self-determination is not respected. <b>Liberty and freedom</b> are mottos to ensure that all human rights are protected in keeping with UN principles. Adopted measures to enforce the rule of law, bolster the role of civil society, and the engagement of young people in the public sphere, and to protect human rights of all to take part and benefit from the countries social, cultural, economic, political advancements. Worked to improve the <b>business climate</b> and increase business recovery to <b>fight against unemployment</b> and protect those who are most vulnerable.</p>

14. Honduras	Focused on <b>economic and fiscal policy</b> and the <b>protection and promotion of human rights</b> . Strengthen states capacity through progressive tax policies, international cooperation, and participatory budgetary design to promote human rights. Took measures to <b>rekindle public investment</b> and <b>eliminate trust funds</b> , and a <b>tax reform to combat corruption</b> . Reaffirmed principles of <b>solidarity, mutual respect, and non-interference</b> as critical for conduct of the HRC's affairs.
15. Kazakhstan	Protection of human rights is critical. It remained committed to upholding values both at home and abroad. Committed to contributing to collective efforts in sharing national experiences and best practices in peace building, religious tolerance, digitalization, food security, and gender equality.
16. Qatar	Protection and promotion of the <b>rights of journalists</b> . Must be addressed the increasing violations against them including lack of transparency. Condemned targeting media outlets and those in <b>Palestinian</b> media who themselves and their families were attacked and killed despite wearing press helmets and jackets demonstrating an attack against journalists by Israeli forces. Called for <b>independent and fair investigations into these incidences and to combat impunity</b> .
17. India	Sustainable and equity-based solutions are core principles to <b>development</b> . Importance of <b>avoiding double standards and avoiding polarization</b> , urged the council to emphasize constructive <b>dialogue and cooperation</b> to protect and enhance human rights without any distinction. The council should promote <b>the right to education</b> . Achieving the SDGs will ensure an achievement of human rights.
<b>Statements made by the Observers</b>	
1. Sweden	Committed to the respect of the <b>rule of law</b> . <b>Free, fair, and transparent elections</b> are critical for democracy and critical aspects of international law. Elections this year are critical. Supported <b>human rights defenders</b> to ensure individuals have the right to civil, social, economic, political, and cultural rights.
2. Armenia	<b>Azerbaijan</b> has continued to violate rights of the Armenian population. Maintained a large blockage and enforceable displaced populations including women, children, elderly, and minorities. Ethnically cleansing. Nobody has been held accountable for the crimes. Distorted historical narratives from Azerbaijan.
3. Egypt	<b>Quran burnings</b> in EU countries encourage the EU to strengthen strategies to address discrimination and hate speech. Called the EU to pay more attention to economic, social, and cultural rights and to condemn <b>occupied Palestinian territory</b> . Egypt will continue to respond with the help of the OHCHR.
4. Iran	Urgent need for statewide to establish a <b>legal deterrence against any form of desecration of religious books (Quran)</b> . Freedom of expression should be exercised responsibly without infringing on religious sentiments of communities. Immediate attention from the international community for the current situation in <b>Palestine</b> .
5. Pakistan	The <b>right to self-determination</b> is at the center of achieving global peace. Situation in <b>occupied Palestine territory</b> demonstrates how a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question should flow directly from the people. <b>The people of Kashmir</b> remain under occupation. Call on the council to act to uphold their right to self-determination.
6. Austria	Presenting on behalf of the core group on the <b>resolution of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic or linguistic minorities</b> (Mexico, Slovenia, and Austria). Raised awareness on the benefits of ensuring the rights of minorities. It is essential to build strong and cohesive societies and will ensure peace for all.
7. Russian Federation	Russian citizens have the <b>right to vote and be elected</b> in government bodies, take part in presidential elections unlike some leading democracies. Encouraged Russian citizens to vote. Collective West is impeding Russians from exercising their right to vote abroad.

	Western officials demonstrate <b>double standards</b> . <b>Latvia</b> uses threat of criminal charges to intimidate Russian citizens from participating in voting. Interfering in Russian elections are violations of principles of the UN charter and International Law and deserve public response.
<b>8. Philippines</b>	<b>Double standards</b> mean the loss of meaning in international law and undermines the entire system. Fully functioning sovereign states are fundamental to promotion and protection of all human rights.
<b>9. Zimbabwe</b>	Important to respect <b>principles of noninterference in internal affairs of states, impartiality, non-selectivity, and transparency</b> . It condemned the imposition of <b>unilateral cohesive measures</b> and called for their immediate removal.
<b>10. Belarus</b>	Raised attention to <b>unilateral cohesive measures</b> that have impact on human rights at all levels; they contradict the UN charter and international trade law. Western efforts to criminalize noncompliance with sanctioned regimes worsen trust and undermines international cooperation. Companies and NGOs are refusing to cooperate with countries under sanction due to fear of retribution.
<b>11. Iraq</b>	Condemned genocide committed by the occupying power in <b>occupied Palestinian territory</b> . Violation of many rights including self-determination, housing, and health. Urged all countries to shoulder responsibilities and asked for accountability to prevent the transfer of weapons and abide UN resolutions.
<b>12. Venezuela</b>	Achieving <b>SDG 1</b> is a major challenge to overcome to achieve sustainable development for all. Necessary for review of <b>foreign debt</b> in the south, as it undermines countries' economy's ability to recover and develop. Government is reinforcing social programs, fostering wellbeing for peoples, and bringing their rights for health, food, housing, and education. Always bear in mind the respect for <b>sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs</b> of states as outlined in the UN Charter.
<b>13. Ukraine</b>	<b>Russian</b> aggression against their country has limited their human rights for Ukrainians. Millions of citizens who are living in occupied territories or deported to Russia to participate in elections which is also illegal. Combined with absence of democratic principles, election standards, elimination of opponents called into question the legitimacy of Russian elections. Urged the international community to reaffirm respect for human rights, human rights, and the principles of the UN Charter through unwavering nonrecognition of Russia occupation of Ukraine.

List of NGOs that took the floor (110):

*"ECO-FAWN" (Environment Conservation Organization - Foundation for Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), Action Internationale pour la Paix et le Développement dans la région des Grands Lacs, Advocates for Human Rights, African Green Foundation International, AKAHATÁ Equipo de Trabajo en Sexualidad y Géneros Asociación Civil, Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation, Al-Basher Foundation for Development, Alsalam Foundation, American Association of Jurists, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, Arab European Forum for Dialogue and Human Rights, Association HazteOir.org, Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism, Association Internationale pour l'égalité des femmes, Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration, Association MIMAN, Association of Iranian Jurists Defending Human Rights, Association of Iranian Short Statured Adults, Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/culturelles du peuple, Azerbaïdjanais-Iran - « ARC », Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Bachehaye Asemame Kamran Rehabilitation Institute, BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Beijing Guangming Charity Foundation, Beijing NGO Association for International Exchanges, British Humanist Association, Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement, Centre Europe - tiers monde, Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, Centre for Human rights and peace*

*advocacy, Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme, China Foundation for Human Rights Development, Christian Solidarity International (CSI), Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Chunhui Children's Foundation, CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Initiatives pour le Dialogue), Citoyens en action pour la Démocratie et le Développement, Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (CIRAC), Commission africaine des promoteurs de la santé et des droits de l'homme, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Community Human Rights and Advocacy Centre (CHRAC), Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI), Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, Dialogue & Development Forum, ECUMENICAL FEDERATION OF CONSTANTINOPOLITANS, Edmund Rice International Limited, Eye Care Foundation, Family for Every Child, Family Health Association of Iran, Franciscans International, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Fundacion de Ayuda y Promocion de las Culturas Indigenas Rosa Colleldevall, Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health, Guinee Humanitaire, Human Is Right, Human Rights & Democratic Participation Center "SHAMS", Humanists International, il cenacolo, Indigenous People of Africa Coordinating Committee, Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement, Institute for Human Rights, Institute of Sustainable Development, Integrated Youth Empowerment - Common Initiative Group (I.Y.E. – C.I.G.), Interfaith International, International Action for Peace & Sustainable Development, International Career Support Association, International Committee for the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, International Muslim Women's Union, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL) International Probono Legal Services Association Limited, International Yazidis Foundation for the Prevention of Genocide, Iranian Thalassemia Society, Iraqi Development Organization, Jameh Ehyagaran Teb Sonnati Va Salamat Iranian, Japan Society for History Textbook, Justiça Global, Law Council of Australia, Le conseil universel des droits de l'homme, Legal Analysis and Research Public Union, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights association, Medical Support Association for Underprivileged Iranian Patients, Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group, Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Cooperation Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE Internationale, organization for defending victims of violence, Payamavaran hamyari (chatra), Platform for Youth Integration and volunteerism, Prahar, Promotion du Développement Economique et Social – PDES, Rahbord Peimayesh Research & Educational Services Cooperative, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, Rawsam Human Development Center, Rencontre Africaine pour la defense des droits de l'homme, Réseau Africain pour le Développement, la Gouvernance et les Droits Humains (RADHEG), Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victims, Right Livelihood Award Foundation, Rochun, SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, The Institute for Protection of Women's Rights (IPWR), The Regional Center for the Welfare of Ageing Persons in Cameroon, TUMUKU Development and Cultural Union (TACUDU), UNITED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, United Nations Watch, VILLAGES UNIS (UNITED VILLAGES), VIVAT International, Women's Human Rights International Association, World Barua Organization (WBO), World Muslim Congress, World Organization of the Scout Movement, YouChange China Social Entrepreneur Foundation.*

**Recording of the General Debate on Item 3 is available on the UN WebTV: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#).**