

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Overview of Week 3 (11 – 15 March 2024)

During the **third week** of the 55th session, the UN Human Rights Council will continue with the consideration of reports and oral updates under **Agenda Item 3**¹. It will conclude the consideration with the General Debate. Moreover, during this week the Council will hold interactive dialogues with the **Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, and with the **independent international fact-finding mission on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, under **Agenda Item 4**². The Council will hold two Panel discussions on the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and on the **Rights of the Child**.



Panel discussions



11 March: **Annual debate on the rights of Persons with Disabilities**. Theme: Good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities.

14 March: **Annual discussion on the Rights of the Child**. Theme: Rights of the child and inclusive social protection.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues



11 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of **persons with disabilities**, **Heba Hagrass**.

[A/HRC/55/34](#): The report, **good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities**, provided examples of good practices for gender-responsive and disability-inclusive support and care systems and identifies key policy areas enabling persons with disabilities to live independently in their communities. In the report, OHCHR reiterated the importance of adopting a disability rights-based approach to support and care. Including persons with disabilities and their human rights in **care economy policies** is fundamental for building robust, resilient and sustainable age, disability and gender-responsive care and support systems based on a sound human rights framework. **OHCHR recommended** that States establish governance structures for cross-sector coordination through appropriate legal, policy and institutional and administrative frameworks; ensure access to assistive technologies and products; and improve working conditions for support and care workers, predominantly women and girls, address gender disparities, expand individualized support services and strengthen community-based support networks and community resilience and sustainability to better distribute care and support work in community structures and to reduce costs; among others.

[A/HRC/55/56](#): The report provided an evaluation of the work of the SRs since 2014. The main scope of the mandate is to provide opportunities for engagement with relevant processes at the international, regional and national levels, and with United Nations entities and mechanisms. In November 2023, Ms Heba Hagrass started her mandate. **The Special Rapporteur is committed to “push forward”** for the full realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. She intends to strengthen connections with persons with disabilities, their

¹ Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

² Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention.

representative organizations and other stakeholders; promote the rights of persons with disabilities in key frameworks at different levels; consolidate and continue the work of her predecessors; and focus on thematic issues that are significantly influencing the ability of persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights. She wishes to have close interaction with persons with disabilities from all regions of the world and to make the mandate as reachable and accessible as possible, in order to maximize the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in her work. In doing so, she will closely connect and consult with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, States, United Nations entities, other human rights mechanisms, academia and other stakeholders.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of **persons with disabilities**, **Gerard Quinn**

[A/HRC/55/56/Add.1](#): **visit to Georgia, from 4 to 14 September 2023** to analyze legislative and policy reforms, particularly following the adoption of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2020. The SR noted the commitment to move away from the medical model of disability, the goal of deinstitutionalization, the will to apply relevant international standards and learn from existing best practice, a vibrant and vocal disability community, and the support of the international community. The **key challenge** now is how to practically reimagine social and economic policy to achieve tangible progress, so that persons with disabilities can exercise their rights, especially concerning legal capacity, access to justice, independent living, accessibility, education, health care and rehabilitation, and employment. In doing so, the Special Rapporteur **made recommendations** emphasizing the importance of an effective coordination mechanism to support rational reform and strong enforcement mechanisms, as well as ensuring that the least heard voices among persons with disabilities are included.

[A/HRC/55/56/Add.2](#): Comments by the State.

11 March: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert **on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights**, **Attiya Waris**; fiscal legitimacy through human rights: a principled approach to financial resource collection and allocation for the realization of human rights.

[A/HRC/55/54](#): The annual thematic report focused on **fiscal legitimacy and the import and requirements of a principle-based approach** to the use of financial resources in the realization of human rights. The IE explored the challenges faced globally, nationally, regionally and within institutions in the collection and use of financial resources for the raising of living standards. In conclusion, the IE set out **seven key principles** that should be taken into consideration in ensuring that financial decisions uphold and maintain standards of living, namely accountability, transparency, responsibility, efficiency, effectiveness, fairness and justice. The IE put forward **recommendations** aimed at accelerating decarbonization and detoxification strategies that are guided by human rights principles. In particular, States, international organizations and institutions should engage in international cooperation to share best practices in fiscal legitimacy and human rights. In doing so, Governments can contribute to building and maintaining fiscal legitimacy, fostering trust among citizens and promoting progressive realization of social and economic human rights, as well as sustainable economic development.

[A/HRC/55/54/Add.1](#)³: **visit to Liechtenstein from 19 to 26 June 2023**. The report contained her findings and recommendations to the Government of Liechtenstein. In particular, the Expert recommended that international human rights and standards be used and integrated in Liechtenstein. To achieve that end will require clear national human rights strategies with benchmarks and a dedicated budget. There is no specific human rights budget since a wide variety of ministries and offices are involved in the process of improving the human rights situation. Hence, the continuous furthering of human rights is integrated into the ordinary budget of the respective ministries and offices. Liechtenstein should join ILO. The Country could do more on human rights, financial issues and development.

[A/HRC/55/54/Add.2](#): visit to **Bahamas from 21 to 31 August 2023**, in order to collect and assess first-hand information related to issues falling under the scope of the mandate and to offer constructive recommendations to the Government and other stakeholders. The Government is implementing programmes

³ As of 09 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

for the poor and vulnerable segments of the population, including food and rent assistance; financial assistance; and temporary shelter and disability allowances. The Country is currently faced with **great challenges, in particular owing to its ranking as a high-income country, in the current climate change context**. These challenges greatly affect its capacity to maintain a stable economy, develop progressively and raise funds to provide for the basic needs of its population, while at the same time adapting to the increasing occurrence of natural disasters and rebuilding repeatedly. Climate change is a phenomenon for which all States are collectively responsible. Among the suggestions to the Bahamas authorities, the IE **recommended international financial institutions and States** to be cognizant of the many socioeconomic and environmental challenges; and to contribute substantially to the loss and damage fund.

A/HRC/55/54/Add.4: Comments by the State (Bahamas).

12 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul

[A/HRC/55/48](#): Since November 2023, Mr Ben Saul is the new Special Rapporteur. The report presented the state of human rights protection in global counter-terrorism efforts; it also outlined the work of the SR on counter-terrorism laws and practices, arbitrary detention in north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic, protection for detainees and transferees from the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, human rights in the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture and new technologies. In conclusion, in the report, the SR listed **a few recommendations**. In particular, States must ensure that their counter-terrorism laws and practices do not limit the activities of civil society organizations, civic space or humanitarian action in any manner that is unlawful, unnecessary, disproportionate or discriminatory; States whose nationals are detained in north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic must prioritize their urgent voluntary repatriation; and States must ensure that administrative measures to counter terrorism comply with international standards on due process, judicial safeguards and other relevant rights; among others.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

A/HRC/55/48/Add.1⁴: **visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 13 to 20 January 2023**, to assess its counter-terrorism laws and violent extremism policies, and practices, measured against its international human rights obligations. The SR assessed the legal framework related to terrorism, violent extremism and financing of terrorism, the prosecution of terrorism-related cases in this post conflict context and the repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of nationals from North-East Syria. The SR recommended the authorities at State and entity levels to enhance and continue implementation of the post-conflict and transitional measures essential for sustained peace in BiH; ensure that national counter-terrorism legislation is brought in line with international human rights law; engage all relevant parties in North-East Syria to ascertain the current health and welfare situation of citizens of BiH and their relatives; cooperate with all parties prepared to support repatriation; among others.

A/HRC/55/48/Add.2⁵: **visit to Germany and North Macedonia, from 3 to 12 July 2023**, in order to discuss the repatriation, return, integration and prosecution of persons returning from conflict zones, mainly Syria and Iraq. The SR positively recognized the efforts of both countries on repatriation, reintegration and prosecution. She urged the **German Government** to continue to repatriate all its nationals, including men, and to ensure that repatriation processes advance the best interest of the child. Germany also should engage all relevant parties in North-East Syria to ascertain the precise detention locations of citizens of Germany; and fully engage and support families of individuals detained in North-East Syria; among others. Commending the repatriation of women, children and men from Syria, the SR encouraged **North Macedonia** to expand the scope of these programmes and the return of all remaining nationals from conflict zones and the avoidance of stigmatization in countering violent extremism efforts. Likewise, North Macedonia should refine countering violent extremism programming, address the possible stigmatization of whole communities and reflect on the broader learning of conditions conducive to violent extremism, which applies equally to the challenge of right-wing violent extremism.

⁴ As of 08 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

⁵ As of 08 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

12 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of **human rights defenders**, **Mary Lawlor**, “We are not just the future”: challenges faced by child and youth human rights defenders.

[A/HRC/55/50](#): The report analyzed the situation of child and youth human rights defenders, with a particular focus on structural and societal barriers to their activism, legal restrictions on their participation in civic space and the human rights violations that they face as a result of their peaceful activities in promoting and protecting human rights. Child and youth human rights defenders are mobilizing worldwide to demand change on a broad spectrum of issues concerning humanity today. Their activism and mobilization are at the forefront, and often the main driving force, of societal, economic and political change. There has been a perceptible shift in civil society in recent years, with new tactics and innovative campaigning reinvigorating old social movements and kickstarting new ones, including on climate action, racial justice and gender equality. In conclusion, **the Special Rapporteur listed several recommendations to States and other relevant stakeholders**. Among others, States, international organizations, and other relevant stakeholders should adopt specific laws and policies enhancing protection for child and youth human rights defenders at the national and international levels; create specific national policies for systematically and meaningfully involving child and youth human rights defenders in decision-making processes; and raise awareness among child and youth human rights defenders of existing practices, platforms, and protection mechanisms for reporting human rights violations and for seeking support.

[A/HRC/55/50/Add.1](#): visit to **Tajikistan from 28 November to 9 December 2022**, to assess the situation of human rights defenders in the country, including members of non-governmental organizations, lawyers, journalists, and other members of civil society. In the report, the Special Rapporteur presented an analysis of the context in which human rights defenders operate in the country, including consideration of the relevant legal framework and whether the environment in which they work is safe and enabling. In conclusion, **the SR made recommendations for the Government, the donors, civil society organizations, and the international community**. Among all these, the Government should engage in a constructive dialogue with all segments of society in order to ensure the protection of human rights; adopt a zero-tolerance policy in cases of intimidation and stigmatization of human rights defenders, journalists and lawyers; and put an end to the misuse of criminal law in the context of the peaceful and legitimate activities of human rights defenders.

[A/HRC/55/50/Add.2](#)⁶: **visit to Georgia, from 30 October to 7 November 2023**, assessing the situation for human rights defenders in the country. The SR highlighted some positive action taken by the Government to improve the environment for promoting and protecting human rights, as well as several areas of serious concern. She made **recommendations to State actors** on how improve the situation. For instance, the Government should cease all stigmatisation of human rights defenders and the delegitimization of their work through public statements; amend national legislation concerning surveillance in order to increase oversight over such restrictions on the rights to privacy and freedom of expression; and put in place an action plan to guarantee the meaningful participation of human rights defenders from ethnic and religious minorities in all decision-making processes.

[A/HRC/55/50/Add.3](#): Comments by the State (Georgia).

12 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the **right to privacy**, **Ana Brian Nougères**, legal safeguards for personal data protection and privacy in the digital age.

[A/HRC/55/46](#): The report examined personal data protection and privacy laws from five continents with the aim of providing States with a comparative study of the different mechanisms that have been established so that data subjects can exercise control over the use of their personal data. Such countries have expressly **recognized in their legislation the different rights that data subjects enjoy and that allow them to control their personal information**. Moreover, some countries are moving forward by legislating to **recognize new rights**, including those that are linked to automated and digitalized data processing or are exercised in the context of the Internet or of social media and similar services. The five countries covered by the analysis regulate aspects of the redress that may be sought by data subjects who have suffered damage or loss as a result of a breach of data protection and privacy legislation. However, only one country provides for the joint

⁶ As of 08 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available

and several liabilities of data controllers, processors, and representatives. The SR drafted **recommendations to States** in order to establish and bring up-to-date appropriate legal frameworks, on a multidisciplinary basis and with the support of all stakeholders, in particular through the adoption of laws and regulations that provide accessible and appropriate remedies for effective protection, reparation, and restitution of the right to personal data protection, including compensation for damage caused by violations of the relevant laws and regulations; and to promote and foster human rights information and education, particularly in the area of personal data protection and privacy at all levels and in all fields.

[A/HRC/55/46/Add.1](#): visit to **Lithuania, from 12 to 16 December 2022**. The Special Rapporteur observed that Lithuanian society places a high value on privacy, no doubt reinforced by the collective memory of the extensive State surveillance and invasion of privacy endured by its citizens during the Soviet occupation, and thus the oversight of the powers of surveillance is robust. However, additional measures to balance the right to privacy are needed and oversight powers must be further strengthened and coordinated. The Special Rapporteur noted that the legislative framework on privacy and personal data is strict. However, violations of personal data protection occur due to inadequate implementation of data security measures in the information systems of both the private and public sectors, in particular regarding sensitive health data. In conclusion, the SR provided **recommendations** on data protection; intelligence oversight, security and surveillance; privacy and health-related data; gender identity and LGBTIQ+ and reproductive rights; older persons; children and privacy; and on migrants' and refugees' cross-border privacy of information.

12 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Najat Maalla M'jid

[A/HRC/55/58](#): The report focused on the need to protect all children on the move in times of crisis, independently of their status. The Special Representative continues to use her mandate to advance children's protection from violence through her advocacy, advisory and bridge-building roles. The Special Representative identified global challenges that are increasing children's exposure and vulnerability to violence, with a focus on the protection of children on the move in times of crisis. She stressed that with an unprecedented number of children being uprooted and displaced, the **need to ensure the protection and well-being** of all children on the move is more pressing than ever. The data on violence against children are alarming. In conclusion, the report considered that while important steps to ensure the protection of children on the move around the world have been taken by **States, the United Nations, civil society and other stakeholders**, measures to date are not sufficient and or at the scale needed at this critical juncture.

13 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, Virginia Gamba

[A/HRC/55/57](#): In the report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General explored challenges in ending and preventing grave violations against children and in strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict. She outlined **priorities** and **made recommendations** to enhance the protection of children affected by conflict. In particular, remaining deeply concerned by the scale and severity of grave violations committed against children in armed conflict, she called upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law and to immediately end and prevent grave violations. Member States must respect and ensure the rights of children, in line with obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

13 March: Interactive dialogue on a report of the High Commissioner on minimising the adverse impact of climate change on the full realisation of the right to food.

[A/HRC/55/37](#): The report identified measures for **minimizing the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food**. The High Commissioner focusing on socioeconomic systems, presented **five** pathways that illustrate how human rights-grounded measures can minimize the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food and how a transformation of food systems can, at the same time, help mitigate climate change. In particular, to address the impacts of climate change on the full realization of the right to food, **States and other key actors** should adopt mitigation measures that address entrenched injustices, inequalities, and discrimination. States should also effectively safeguard against human

rights risks from climate change mitigation measures, including when dedicating land for energy transition measures, which can put the right to food at risk. The **Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** should be applied to efforts to address climate change and its impacts on the right to food. States should set out clear expectations that all business enterprises domiciled in their territory and/or jurisdiction respect human rights throughout their operations. Finally, States should cooperate internationally to realize all human rights and take measures with respect to national and international economic and trade policies to protect the right to food from the adverse effects of climate change.



Agenda Item 4: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues

15 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Javaid Rehman**.

[A/HRC/55/62](#): The report provided an overview of current human rights concerns in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this, the SR detailed observations regarding trends, concerns and progress made in the protection of human rights and included recommendations to improve the human rights situation. The Special Rapporteur regretted that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran denied him entry to the country. The SR called on the authorities to **immediately abolish, through legislation, the death penalty** for all offences. Moreover, national authorities should impose an immediate moratorium on executions and commute all death sentences, and on all drug-related executions; end the disproportionate executions of ethnic minorities; ensure that human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and dual and foreign nationals, as well as their families, are not threatened with or subjected to intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, deprivation of liberty or life, or other arbitrary sanctions, and release all those detained; and end child marriage, including by raising the minimum age of marriage to 18; among others.

15 March: Interactive dialogue with the independent international fact-finding mission on the situation of human rights in the **Islamic Republic of Iran**.

[A/HRC/55/67](#)⁷: The report contained the findings of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran under international human rights law and on crimes under international law. It included findings on the **death in custody of Jina Mahsa Amini and on other serious human rights violations** committed against protesters and others, including on the use of force, arrests and detentions, treatment in detention, digital space and legal proceedings related to the protests. Aspects of intersectional discrimination, based on ethnic and religious grounds, shaped the experience of violence and injustice suffered by many in the context of the protests and their aftermath. The report concluded with an assessment of State responsibility for the violations found and recommendations, including on accountability and reparations. The Mission urged the Iranian authorities to halt all executions and immediately and unconditionally release all persons arbitrarily arrested and detained in the context of the protests or for non-compliance with or advocacy against the mandatory hijab; cease the judicial harassment of protesters, victims and their families; repeal or amend laws that discriminate against women and girls, as well as men and boys, in particular those on the mandatory hijab; and disband the persecutory system of its enforcement. Moreover, it called on the Iranian authorities to provide justice, truth and reparations to victims of human rights violations in connection with the protests that started on 16 September 2022, survivors and their families, in accordance with international human rights standards.

⁷ As of 09 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

General Debate

14-15 March: General Debate under Agenda Item 3.

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