

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Overview of Week 4 (18 - 22 March 2024)

During the **fourth week** of the 55th session, the UN Human Rights Council will continue with the consideration of reports and oral updates under **Agenda Item 4¹**. It will also hold the General Debate on **Agenda Item 5²**, **following the presentation of reports**. The Council will hold interactive dialogues on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic, Myanmar, and Belarus. In conclusion, the Council will start the **Adoption of the Universal Periodic Review Outcomes of Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu, Germany, Djibouti, Canada, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Cuba, and Turkmenistan**.



Agenda Item 4: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues



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

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

[A/HRC/55/67³](#): 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

¹ Human rights situations that require the Council's attention.

² Human rights bodies and mechanisms.

³ As of 13 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

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.

18 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, [Elizabeth Salmon](#).

A/HRC/55/63⁴: The report presented the **situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**. The SR provided a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives to advance accountability for human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, in the DPRK in the last 10 years. The report examined what measures need to be taken to further **advance accountability for human rights violations committed** by the Country. The SR expressed concern that developments will contribute to escalating tensions on the Peninsula. The DRK has the duty to investigate and prosecute crimes against humanity, under customary law and *ius cogens* norms. However, the **country is unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute such crimes**. In the last decade, efforts have been made by victims, civil society organizations, States, the United Nations and the international community as a whole to ensure accountability. In conclusion, **the SR recommended State, the Republic of Korea, China, and UN and UN Member States** to recognize the fundamental right to leave and enter the country, both in law and in practice; ratify the Convention against Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol; consider a mechanism to provide reparations including compensation and psychological support to victims of human rights violations; and adopt legislation enabling the exercise of universal and/or extraterritorial jurisdiction, in full regard of human rights standards, including fair trial guarantees; among others.

18 March: Interactive dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

A/HRC/55/64: The report presented the Independent International COI's findings on the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic continues to be affected by **broader regional conflict dynamics** that have amplified since the 7 October attack in Israel and the subsequent intensification of the conflict in Gaza. In another manifestation of **cross-border violence** on the Syrian-Jordanian border between Jordanian forces and alleged drug smuggling groups. The fragmentation of authority in government-controlled areas further eroded rule of law for civilians, with multiple reports of pro-government leaders using their position to participate in lucrative illegal activities, including kidnapping, extortion and drug smuggling. Reports **continued of killings and violence** in Dar'a Governorate targeting Syrian security officials, pro-government public figures, "reconciled" opposition fighters and civilians. Finally, **the Commission, along with its previous recommendations, called on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and all other parties to the conflict** to immediately cease all indiscriminate and direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects and take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to the civilian population; to conduct independent, impartial and credible investigations into incidents entailing civilian casualties to ensure that those responsible for violations are held accountable, ensure non-repetition and make their findings public; to immediately cease torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, in all places of detention; and to respect and protect freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, association and movement, among others.

19 March: Interactive dialogue with the independent international commission of inquiry on **Ukraine**.

A/HRC/55/66⁵: The report documented **Russian authorities violations** of international human rights and international humanitarian law, and corresponding war crimes, in areas that came under their control in Ukraine. Two years after the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, civilian suffering from the

⁴ As of 14 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

⁵ As of 17 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

hardships of the armed conflict continues to mount, notably resulting from the disregard for basic principles of humanitarian laws and of human rights obligations. The report also **mentioned incidents of rape and other sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces** against women in circumstances which also amount to torture. In conclusion, it reported a **few violations of human rights by Ukrainian authorities** against persons suspected of collaboration with Russian authorities. The Commission abides by the principles of **independence, impartiality, objectivity, and integrity**. It adopts a **victim-centred approach**, placing victims' safety and security at the forefront of its work. The Commission applies the standard of **proof of "reasonable grounds to conclude"** and reaches determinations when an objective and ordinary prudent observer would conclude that the facts took place as described. **The Commission recommended that parties to the armed conflict, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and other States and regional and international organizations** should cease aggression and all acts of violence committed against civilians and prisoners of war in violation of applicable international human rights and international humanitarian law; ensure the timely, effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigation and prosecution of all allegations of international crimes, violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law; and refrain from placing any impediment to humanitarian assistance in occupied territories; among others.

19 March: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** 51/29.

19 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Myanmar**, **Thomas Andrews**.

A/HRC/55/65⁶: The report identified opportunities for the international community to support the people of Myanmar. Since the 2021 military coup the human rights and humanitarian crisis has worsened. The military junta has responded to mounting losses of troops and territory by escalating its aerial attacks on villages, blocking humanitarian aid, and announcing plans to draft thousands of young people into the military. The people of Myanmar have responded with courage, resolve, and defiance. Armed resistance forces are steadily gaining ground, securing territory as they hand junta forces stunning losses. In conclusion, the **SR recommended all parties to armed conflict, Member States and the international community** to strengthen coordinated action to deprive a weakened junta of weapons, money, and legitimacy; to end impunity and ensure accountability for the perpetrators of atrocity crimes; and called on the military junta to immediately end attacks on civilians and other human rights violations, halt the use of cluster munitions, release all political prisoners; among others.

19 March: Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on the report on the situation of human rights in **Belarus** in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and in its aftermath.

20 March: Interactive dialogue with the independent international fact-finding mission on the situation of human rights in the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (oral update).

21 March: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **minority issues**, **Nicolas Levrat**, on promoting diversity on minority issues to strengthen the universal dimension of human rights.

[A/HRC/55/51](#): The report provided vision and understanding of minority issues, as well as the priority of the SR. The vision for the mandate is articulated around **three main issues**: first, how the requirement for specific and differentiated treatment due to persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contributes to the universal character of the protection of human rights through the equal and non-discriminatory enjoyment of human rights by all persons. Second, how the protection of minority rights interacts with the individual human rights of persons belonging to a minority group. Third, how minorities' identities contribute to each national identity. In conclusion, he affirmed that in most cases, seeking simple and uniform solutions will not do justice to the specific situations and needs of persons belonging to a minority. That acknowledgment will lead to **nuanced appreciation and small-step approaches**, instead of an

⁶ As of 17 March, only the English Advance unedited version is available.

attempt to broadly tackle minority issues at a global level. Moreover, during the mandate, he would address the **views of majoritarian populations with regard to minority issues**. The SR invited States to exchange and cooperate with him on devising ways to make sure that minority issues will be properly integrated into the post-2030 agenda; as well as called upon OHCHR to help strengthen the links between his mandate and the network of minority fellows with the purpose of improving the implementation of minority rights everywhere.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on **minority issues**, [Fernand de Varennes](#).

[A/HRC/55/51/Add.1](#): visit to **Paraguay, from 14 to 25 November 2022**, to evaluate the situation of minorities in the country. The report commended the Government of Paraguay for all its efforts and encouraged it to pursue these paths. It must be supported in addressing the many remaining economic, social, and development challenges that it faces. It needs to transform its legal and political commitments and social empathy for people of all backgrounds into even stronger and more concrete actions and mechanisms to address any obstacle to the full protection of human rights. Indeed, the SR recommended that the Government adopt comprehensive national human rights legislation; ratify the option protocol of ICESCR, and at the regional level, the Inter-America Convention against Racism; and make efforts towards the implementation and the allocation of financial and human resources; among others.

[A/HRC/55/51/Add.2](#): visit to **Tajikistan**.

[A/HRC/55/51/Add.3](#): Comment by the State (Paraguay).

21 March: Presentation of reports under Agenda Item 5

- Recommendations made by the Forum on Minority Issues at its sixteenth session, on the theme “Minorities and cohesive societies: equality, social inclusion and socioeconomic participation” - Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.
- Report of the 2023 Social Forum.
- Activities of the special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council undertaken in 2023
- Communications sent by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council from 1 June to 30 November 2023 and replies received from 1 August to 31 January 2024

General Debate

20-21 March: General Debate under Agenda Item 4.

21 March: General Debate under Agenda Item 5.



Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

21 - 22 March: Adoption of UPR Outcomes: **Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu, Germany, Djibouti, Canada, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Cuba and Turkmenistan.**

Turkmenistan: [Report](#) of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (henceforth “Working Group”) lists 228 recommendations received by Turkmenistan, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Malaysia, Montenegro and Sudan.

Burkina Faso: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 265 recommendations received by Burkina Faso, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Eritrea, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Cabo Verde: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 205 recommendations received by Cabo Verde, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Costa Rica, France and the Gambia.

Colombia: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 231 recommendations received by Colombia, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Mexico, South Africa and Viet Nam.

Uzbekistan: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 234 recommendations received by Uzbekistan, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Germany, Nepal and Somalia.

Tuvalu: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 167 recommendations received by Tuvalu, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Lithuania, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.

Germany: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 346 recommendations received by Germany, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Luxembourg, Qatar and Senegal.

Djibouti: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 259 recommendations received by Djibouti, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Algeria, Honduras and India.

Canada: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 332 recommendations received by Canada, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Belgium, Kyrgyzstan and Paraguay.

Bangladesh: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 301 recommendations received by Bangladesh, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Cuba, Pakistan and Romania.

The Russian Federation: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 360 recommendations received by the Russian Federation, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: China, Gabon and United States of America.

Azerbaijan: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 319 recommendations received by Azerbaijan, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Bolivia, Malawi and Maldives.

Cameroon: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 291 recommendations received by Cameroon, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Cote d’Ivoire, Czechia and Finland.

Cuba: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 361 recommendations received by Cuba, which will provide responses during the 55th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Argentina, Benin and Nepal.

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