

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Overview of Week 1 (18 – 21 June 2024)

*During its first week of work, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) will consider reports under **Agenda Item 2**¹. In particular, it will focus on the critical human rights situations in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sudan, Eritrea, Nicaragua, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Further, the Council will discuss several thematic reports under **Agenda Item 3**², including the human rights of internally displaced persons, protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy, and violence against women and girls. The first week will also open with the presentation of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights annual report**.*



Opening of the session: 18 June 2024, 10 am (CET): The session will be opened by the President of the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland as host country.

Agenda Item 2: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues



18 June: Enhanced interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Afghanistan** and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, on a report on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan.

A/HRC/56/25: The report provided an intersectional analysis of the establishment and enforcement of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls. The Taliban's institutionalization of its system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, and the harms that it has entrenched, should shock the conscience of humanity. The SR concluded with **several recommendations to the de facto authorities, and States and the international community**. The international community must act to oppose and combat the institutionalized gender oppression that the Taliban has established and is seeking to maintain. The de facto authorities should fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with international human rights treaties ratified by Afghanistan; take steps to dismantle their institutionalized system of gender oppression, urgently reversing discriminatory policies and directives that deprive women and girls of rights and fundamental freedoms; and hold perpetrators of crimes and human rights abuses against women and girls to account, in accordance with international standards, among others.

18 June: Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in **Myanmar**.

A/HRC/56/23³: The report presented findings based on OHCHR monitoring (conducted between 1 August 2023 and 31 March 2024) and verification of the situation of human rights in Myanmar regarding the implementation of the recommendations made by the independent international fact-finding mission, including those on accountability, and to track progress on the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other

¹ Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.

² Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

³ English advance unedited version.

minorities. While this report refers to patterns of violations since the military coup in February 2021, it also examines trends and patterns in violations of international human rights law and, where applicable, of international humanitarian law, focusing on the human rights situation of the Rohingya and other minorities. Amid this dire human rights situation, the report concluded by presenting some positive examples of emerging local forms of administration and governance providing services that protect and promote human rights. The HC recommended the military authorities to cease immediately all violence and attacks directed against civilians, including the Rohingya, civilian infrastructures, and religious sites and personnel; release all political prisoners without further delay and halt political, instrumentalized use of the judiciary; and remove all existing obstacles to humanitarian access to ensure timely deliveries to all those in need by international and national organizations, including in Rakhine State; among others.

18-19 June: Enhanced interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner, the designated Expert on Human Rights in the [Sudan](#), and other stakeholders.

19 June: Report of the independent international Commission of Inquiry to investigate in the [Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel](#), all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity. It focuses on ensuring respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel.

A/HRC/56/26⁴: The report summarised the Commission's factual and legal findings on attacks carried out on 7 October 2023 on civilian targets and military outposts in Israel including rocket and mortar attacks. Amid months of losses and despair, retribution and atrocities, the only tangible result has been compounding the immense suffering of both Palestinians and Israelis, with civilians, yet again, bearing the brunt of decisions by those in power. Children and women make up a large part of those civilians, the latter marginalized from decision-making. The Commission concluded that civilians were intentionally targeted, that the attack was premeditated and planned over a significant period, reflecting a high degree of organization and coordination, and implemented in several locations at or about the same time. **The Commission provided several recommendations** to the Government of Israel, the Government of the State of Palestine, and the de-facto authorities in Gaza; to the UN Security Council; to the UN Secretary-General; and all Member States. In particular, recommended the Government of Israel immediately end attacks resulting in the killing and maiming of civilians in Gaza, end the siege on Gaza; implement a ceasefire; ensure that those whose property has been unlawfully destroyed receive reparations; ensure that necessities crucial for the health and wellbeing of the civilian population immediately reach those in need; ensure that age and gender-specific harm is assessed and preventive measures based on gender and child-centric risk assessments are applied to prevent harm to the civilian population during the planning and execution of military operations.

19 June: Interactive Dialogue on the **annual report** of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (following presentation made on *18 June*).

[A/HRC/56/20](#): The report provided an overview of the works of the OHCHR from 1 July 2023 to 1 March 2024. In 2023, the world commemorated the **seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The Human Rights 75 initiative provided a vital opportunity to recommit to the universality and indivisibility of human rights and to reflect on achievements in advancing them worldwide, as well as failures and lessons learned. The report underlined data concerning the current situation: a wave of some 55 conflicts worldwide devastated lives and livelihoods, with widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The world also continued to grapple with challenges relating to the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution; risks and opportunities relating to the governance of artificial intelligence and digital technologies; along with growing inequalities and polarization within and

⁴ English advance unedited version.

between societies. In conclusion, **the HC made eight recommendations to guide future work and to serve as a contribution to the 2024 Summit of the Future:** (a) Support the global constituency for human rights; (b) Place human rights at the centre of prevention and peacebuilding; (c) Transform economies with equality and sustainability at the core; (d) Ground environmental action, including on climate change, in human rights; (e) Ensure responsive governance through full participation and end impunity; (f) Ensure that technology and science are in the service of humanity; (g) Ensure young people's and children's meaningful participation in decision-making; (h) Strengthen the human rights system.

20 June: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Eritrea**, **Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker**.

[A/HRC/56/24](#): The report provided an overview of the human rights situation in Eritrea, with a focus on the persistent violations in the context of the indefinite and compulsory national service, the repression of freedom of religion or belief, the state of the rule of law and the administration of justice, and violations of civil and political rights, including prolonged and arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances. It highlighted the country's lack of civic space and evolving transnational repression patterns. The report raised concern over the continued presence and involvement of Eritrean forces in the commission of human rights violations in the Tigray region. In conclusion, the SR recommended the Government of Eritrea and the international community to exercise solidarity, protection, access to and enjoyment of human rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. He also recommended to put an end to human rights violations, as well as the chronic and widespread practices of enforced disappearance and prolonged arbitrary detention.

20 June: Presentation of the Secretary-General's report on the situation of human rights in the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and oral update by the High Commissioner on the promotion and protection of human rights in **Nicaragua**.

[A/HRC/56/22⁵](#).

[Agenda Item 3: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues](#)



20 June: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on **protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**, **Graeme Reid**.

[A/HRC/56/49](#): The report examined the human rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association in relation to protection from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These freedoms are fundamental to full participation in society, restrictions based on sexual orientation and gender identity aim to erase vulnerable minorities from the public sphere and render them invisible. LGBT and other gender-diverse persons are less able to advocate for themselves in increasingly inhospitable environments.

Finally, the Independent Expert offered recommendations to States and other stakeholders on how to prevent and prohibit discrimination, hate speech, and hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity. States and other stakeholders should also provide specialized training to law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors on the importance of freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

[A/HRC/56/49/Add.1](#): **Visit to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 24 April to 5 May 2023**. The IE assessed the situation of LGBT persons in the country, identifying good practices and challenges in implementing national and international human rights standards. The UK and its government authorities have developed strong frameworks incorporating national and international standards for the

⁵ As of 17 June, report not available.

protection of LGBT persons' human rights. Nevertheless, the policy directions are not monolithic or always aligned across the four nations of the United Kingdom. The IE, in conclusion, recommended the Government and its administrations to gather data on sexual orientation and gender identity at the central, national and local levels at all relevant service access points, to better guide the implementation of services, including by closing information and protection gaps in census data; and to ensure, through all necessary means, that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes are effectively investigated, accurately categorized and prosecuted, and that those found guilty are punished with sentences commensurate with the gravity of the offence, whereas victims are provided with effective remedies; among others.

[A/HRC/56/49/Add.2](#): **Visit to Cambodia, from 10 to 20 January 2023**. The purpose of the visit was to assess the situation of LGBT persons in the country and identify good practices and gaps in the implementation of national and international human rights standards to combat violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite constitutional protection against discrimination, in strict juridical terms, the non-inclusion of the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and the numerus clausus nature of non-discrimination provisions could give room to a literal interpretation that does not protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. No one should be forced to reveal their sexual orientation and gender identity under any circumstances, and the decision to conceal it is a deeply personal choice that is not a factor of discrimination. The report identified good practices and remaining challenges and formulated recommendations to strengthen the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Report of the Independent Expert on **protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**, **Victor Madrigal-Borloz**.

[A/HRC/56/49/Add.3](#): **Visit to the United States of America, from 16 to 29 August 2022**. The Independent Expert has gathered significant evidence of measures adopted by the Government to further the human rights of LGBT persons, including an impressive array of public policies and legislative actions. Unfortunately, those positive measures have been deliberately undermined by a widespread, profoundly negative riptide of regressive legislative measures intended to roll back the human rights of LGBT persons at the state level. Those include deeply discriminatory measures seeking to rebuild the stigmatization of LGBT persons, limiting comprehensive sexual and gender education for all, and limiting access to gender-affirming treatment, sports and single-sex facilities for trans and gender-diverse persons. In conclusion, based on conclusions and observations made in the report, the IE provided recommendations to the federal and state-level governments of the United States concerning their respective competencies.

Among others, Governments should create a national human rights institution for oversight of international treaty obligations; strengthen comprehensive sexuality and gender education materials, adopt effective school policies and campaigns to counter misinformation, discrimination and violence affecting students; and adopt legislation necessary for the legal recognition of gender identity at the federal and state levels.

20 June: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of **internally displaced persons**, **Paula Gaviria**, focusing on climate change.

[A/HRC/56/47](#)⁶.

[A/HRC/56/47/Add.1](#)⁷: Visit to Mozambique.

21 June: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against **persons affected by leprosy (Hansen's disease)** and their family members, **Dr. Beatriz Miranda-Galarza**.

[A/HRC/56/59](#): The report provided an overview of the impact of the work of the previous mandate holder and described the vision for the mandate of Ms Miranda-Galarza, her working methods, and the strategic

⁶ As of 17 June, report not available.

⁷ As of 17 June, report not available.

themes to be addressed during her mandate. In particular, the SR would promote a human rights approach guided by an ethics of care that places people's voices at the centre and as the primary source of evidence, thereby contributing to the construction of a culture of listening and more equitable and just societies. The Special Rapporteur underlined the particularity of leprosy (Hansen's disease) as a catalyst of social, political and cultural change, serving as a beacon for a more democratic, humane, and diversity-respecting world. In the report, she underscored the significant transformation for individuals affected by leprosy, as well as their families, organizations, and allies, brought about by the implementation of the mandate.

21 June: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on [violence against women and girls](#), its causes and consequences, **Reem Alsalem**, focusing on prostitution and violence against women.

[A/HRC/56/48](#): The report examined violence against women and sexual exploitation as a form, cause, and consequence of prostitution, assessed the key conceptual frameworks and terminologies, international human rights and legal standards, and took stock of legislative and policy models. Prostitution is a system of exploitation and an aggregated form of male violence against women and girls that intersects with other forms of structural discrimination. It is exercised systematically by a wide web of State and non-state actors that subjugate, control and exploit women and girls in violation of their fundamental human rights. The SR recommended States address prostitution through a rights-based approach and implement legislation and standards that guarantee that women and girls have the right of access to equality, freedom from violence, right to life, liberty, security, dignity, and freedom from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. Among others, States should decriminalize all women and girls in prostitution and offer them recognition as victims, which would afford them protection, validate their experiences, and support their recovery.

[A/HRC/56/48/Add.1](#): **Visit to Poland, from 27 February to 9 March 2023**. The report examined the gaps and challenges in fulfilling the obligations of the State to eliminate violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, and recommends measures for preventing and combating violence against women and girls in the country. The SR recommended the Government to ensure a State-wide effective, comprehensive and coordinated set of policies to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention; increase awareness among the population regarding the services available for victims for domestic violence and the referral mechanisms available; and take immediate steps to ensure that the necessary legislative and other measures are taken to ensure that the statute of limitations for initiating any legal proceedings with regard to rape and other sexual violence; among others.

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