

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 56th SESSION

Overview of Week 3 (01 – 05 July 2024)

During the third week of the UN Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteurs will continue discussions under **Agenda Item 3¹ in relation to the new and emerging digital technologies and human rights, the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, and extreme poverty and human rights**. Under **Agenda Item 4²**, the Council will discuss the human rights situations in **Burundi, the Syrian Arab Republic, Myanmar, Venezuela, and Belarus**. Finally, under **Agenda Item 6³**, the Council will adopt the UPR Outcomes of **Monaco, Belize, Chad, Jordan, Malaysia, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Mauritius, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and China**. Additionally, the Council will hold two thematic panel discussions on **promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic deal: promoting inclusiveness in and through sport; and on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights**.



Panel discussions



01 July: Quadrennial thematic panel discussion on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic deal: promoting inclusiveness in and through sport.

01 July: Annual panel discussion on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues



01 July: Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **new and emerging digital technologies and human rights**, focusing on mapping the work and recommendations of the HRC, OHCHR, the treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council in the field of human rights and new and emerging digital technologies, including artificial intelligence.

A/HRC/56/45⁴: The report mapped the Council's work in **human rights and new and emerging digital technologies, including artificial intelligence**, and identified gaps and challenges. The report outlined **recommendations on how to address** them. The number of technology-related outputs by the UN human rights system has already reached an astounding level– an encouraging key finding of this mapping exercise. In view of the wealth and ongoing development of the material in this area, the report does not purport to be exhaustive, aiming instead to bring a bird's eye perspective that can further facilitate work in this field by the UN human rights system, including the Human Rights Council.

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

² Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention.

³ Item 6: Universal Periodic Review.

⁴ As of 29 June, only the English (word) advance unedited version is available.

In conclusion, the HC recommended states, businesses, and other stakeholders should duly take into account and implement the recommendations made by the United Nations human rights ecosystem that apply to the design, development, operation, use, and regulation of digital technologies. Enhance efforts to ensure that human rights are fully considered across all policy areas relevant to the governance of digital technologies, such as trade, e-commerce, intellectual property, competition law, peace and security, cybercrime, and cybersecurity. Consider approaches building on the success of the UPR to have peer-review approaches allowing for deeper discussions in cross-cutting areas such as digital technologies and human rights. A digital peer process could be useful to surface good practices, identify gaps, and match resources with areas of need.

02 July: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on [the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change](#), **Elisa Morgera**.

A/HRC/56/46⁵: The report mapped efforts made in international human rights processes to clarify issues and obligations in relation to climate change. It aimed to identify good practices, challenges, and opportunities in the context of climate change mitigation, adaptation, just transition, climate finance, and loss and damage. In particular, the report defined **Climate Change mitigation** as actions that address the causes of climate change, by decreasing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere and enhancing “sinks” that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. **Climate change adaptation** entails adjustments in ecological, social or economic systems to respond to current and future climate change impacts. **The just transition** is “the transition to a green and zero-carbon economy that is fair and inclusive, creates decent work opportunities and upholds the human rights of affected communities, in particular Indigenous Peoples and populations affected by energy poverty, through social dialogue and meaningful participation, particularly in decision-making on the use of land and natural resources.” Finally, **climate-related loss and damage** is the “negative impacts of climate change that occur despite adaptation and mitigation efforts”, keeping in mind that climate change impacts are experienced unequally. The report stressed the importance of intersectionality, with a view to promoting policy coherence and increased cooperation. In conclusion, the SR recommended that States, individually and through international cooperation, apply international guidance on intersectionality in developing, implementing, funding, monitoring, evaluating, learning from and reviewing climate action at all levels; and that States, UN entities and other international organizations, business, civil society, and the research community integrate international guidance on intersectionality in climate change-related awareness-raising, education, research, capacity-building and technology-development activities.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, **Ian Fry**.

A/HRC/56/46/Add.1⁶: **Visit to Honduras, from 18 to 27 September 2023**. It focused on the overall impacts of climate change, climate change displacement, loss and damage, environmental human rights defenders, the impacts of new mitigation technologies such as hydroelectric dams, and the environmental implications of mining. Climate change is negatively impacting human rights in Honduras, including the rights to water and sanitation, food, culture, education, a healthy environment, health, work, and adequate housing. The costs of climate-related events and the lack of capacity to address climate change seem to be the main problems. **Many communities face the combined impacts of climate change, mining, hydroelectric dams, deforestation, and large-scale agro-industries, such as African palm plantations. Indigenous Peoples, as well as Afro-descendants** who mainly live in the Atlantic Coast region, are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as their way of life is closely linked to the ecosystem. The Special Rapporteur noted that not enough is being done to address the impacts of climate change. He highlighted the lack of strategic investment in building climate change resilience and establishing long-term climate change planning. He made numerous recommendations, including in relation to legislation and policies, mitigation measures such as hydroelectric dams, environmental human rights defenders, and climate change displacement.

⁵ As of 29 June, only the English (word) advance unedited version is available.

⁶ As of 29 June, only the English (word) advance unedited version is available.

A/HRC/56/46/Add.2⁷: **Visit to the Philippines, from 6 to 15 November 2023**, focusing on loss and damage, climate change displacement, climate change mitigation, climate change legislation, litigation and intergenerational justice, the treatment of environmental human rights defenders, and gender equality. Climate change is negatively impacting human rights in the Philippines, including the rights to water and sanitation, food, culture, education, a healthy environment, health, work, and adequate housing. The Special Rapporteur noted that while the Government has produced many policies and laws relating to climate change, there is a distinct lack of implementation on the ground. He further noted that the development agenda, including the development of mines, hydroelectric dams and land reclamation projects, contradicts the highly fragile nature of the country. The Special Rapporteur **was deeply troubled by the treatment of environmental human rights defenders, particularly Indigenous Peoples**. He made recommendations in relation to legislation and policies, development projects, climate change displacement, and the treatment of environmental human rights defenders.

02 July: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on **extreme poverty and human rights**, **Professor Olivier De Schutter**, focusing on eradicating poverty beyond growth.

[A/HRC/56/61](#): In the report, the SR argued that the **current focus on increasing the gross domestic product is misguided**. An increase in gross domestic product is not a precondition for the realization of human rights or for combating poverty and inequalities. The SR explained why the **shift from an economy driven by the search for maximizing profits to a human rights economy** is possible and necessary. This would produce more socially useful and ecologically sustainable goods and services, and significantly reduce unnecessary and wasteful production. The Special Rapporteur will launch a round of consultations in preparation of a road map, to propose how this transformation could be achieved. Growthism needs to be abandoned. It is an unnecessary distraction from the urgent requirement to move away from economic arrangements that are inefficient and wasteful while failing to respond to the essential needs of people in poverty.

[A/HRC/56/61/Add.1](#): **Visit to Bangladesh, from 17 to 29 May 2023**. The purpose of the visit was to examine the progress made in the fight against poverty as Bangladesh prepares for graduation from the least developed country status. **Bangladesh faces multifaceted challenges from rising multidimensional poverty and inequality and climate change-related internal displacements within the country**. The SR expressed his concerns about the severe crackdown on human rights defenders and civil society and continuing attacks on freedom of speech and expression, a regressive taxation system, inadequate social protection (and a lack of protection for informal workers), and poverty wages in the ready-made garment sector. He was shocked by the impacts of a second round of food ration cuts by June 2023 for Rohingya refugees living in camps, who depend entirely upon humanitarian support and do not have a right to work in Bangladesh. **The international community has a moral and legal duty to provide the required humanitarian funds**.

[A/HRC/56/61/Add.2](#): **Visit to Ecuador, from 28 August to 8 September 2023**. The purpose of the visit was to examine the efforts made by Ecuador to combat poverty and protect the human rights of people living in poverty. **Ecuador faces a vicious cycle of poverty and insecurity**. Poverty results in insecurity and insecurity, in turn, impacts the ability of the country to fight poverty. The incidence of poverty is higher among women, the Indigenous population, and people who live in rural areas. The report set recommendations focusing on improving the situation of Indigenous groups and women, making social protection more effective and taxation more progressive and better-protecting workers' rights.

[A/HRC/56/61/Add.3](#): The study, titled *Breaking the cycle: ending the Criminalization of homelessness and Poverty*, examined a double victimization of persons experiencing homelessness and poverty laws, policies, and practices that penalize and criminalize life-sustaining activities in public spaces. Persons experiencing homelessness and poverty are extremely vulnerable to human rights violations. Homelessness is, by itself, an affront to human dignity and a serious violation of the right to adequate housing and other human rights. States have an obligation to prevent and eliminate homelessness, including by guaranteeing access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing. Similarly, poverty is a cause and consequence of a broad range of human rights violations, and States have an obligation to end and eradicate it.

In conclusion, the SR **recommended that States, including local governments, to ensure full protection of the right to an adequate standard of living**, including the right to adequate housing, for everyone who is within their jurisdiction or control. This implies eradicating poverty, ensuring access to affordable housing,

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and preventing and ending homelessness, so that no one is forced to sleep or survive in the street without access to adequate housing.

03 July: Presentation of thematic reports

[A/HRC/56/27](#): Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the feasibility study on developing a **digital system** for the Human Rights Council.

A/HRC/56/28: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on analytical study on key challenges in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines, and other health products in the context of the **right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**.

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation**.

[A/HRC/56/29](#): The report provided an **overview of the situation of women and girls affected by cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation and of the efforts made by States and other stakeholders to tackle the practice**. The human rights framework provides States with a road map for developing effective laws, policies, programs and other initiatives, including through international and regional cooperation, to prevent and address cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation. The report reaffirmed that **female genital mutilation constitutes a human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence against women and girls that is inherently linked to deep-rooted gender inequality and stereotypes**. The practice jeopardizes the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of girls' and women's human rights and fundamental freedoms, while posing a serious threat to their dignity, health and well-being. The report highlighted the need to strengthen data collection, harmonize legal and policy frameworks, and strengthen regional and international cooperation and systematic coordination among States and other key stakeholders, including civil society, to tackle cross-border and transnational female genital mutilation. In conclusion, the report set **recommendations to Member States** to improve data collection and research to prevent FGM; to criminalize female genital mutilation; and to ensure that national legislation provides, in accordance with international law, for the applicability of their law to people who have performed or undergone female genital mutilation outside their territory or jurisdiction, to name a few.

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **conscientious objection to military service**.

[A/HRC/56/30](#): The report provided **recommendations on legal and policy frameworks to uphold human rights in the context of conscientious objection to military service** in accordance with States' obligations under international human rights law and applicable international human rights standards. In particular, States should give recognition to the right to conscientious objection to military service in their domestic legal systems; States should consider accepting claims of conscientious objection without inquiry; States should consider removing compulsory alternative service for individuals exempted from military service; and States should respect and protect the rights of conscientious objectors arriving from third States, including through adherence to the principle of non-refoulement and international human rights and refugee law and the implementation and dissemination of guidance on the interpretation of applicable international law, such as the UNHCR guidelines on international protection on claims to refugee status related to military service.

A/HRC/56/31: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **countering cyberbullying against persons of disabilities**.

[A/HRC/56/32](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **summary of the expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building** for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work.

[A/HRC/56/33](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **panel discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the role of public service delivery in the promotion and protection of human rights and in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[A/HRC/56/34](#): The report concluded that **public service delivery contributes to the realization of human rights and to accelerated progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Persons in vulnerable situations are particularly reliant on efficient and non-discriminatory public service delivery to realize their economic, social and cultural rights.** Corruption, insufficient resources, discrimination, and non-take-up are some of the challenges to public service delivery. These challenges can be mitigated through strengthening the rule of law, improving good governance, and applying human rights as policy guardrails and, where appropriate, human rights due diligence, including human rights impact assessments. States must ensure equality and non-discrimination in all facets of public service provision and address disparities in public service delivery to fulfil their human rights obligations and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, targeting those furthest behind first. Adequate regulation and monitoring of public service delivery, including of private actors, along with effective accountability mechanisms such as accessible complaints mechanisms, are essential. States should take measures to ensure that resources in public services are used efficiently and effectively and secure the delivery of quality, affordable and accessible services.

[A/HRC/56/35](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on sixth intersessional meeting for **dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

[A/HRC/56/36](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

[A/HRC/56/37](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the summary of the expert meeting on the **negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin** to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation

[A/HRC/56/39](#): Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on summary of the **panel discussion on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence**.

[A/HRC/56/40](#): Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the **implementation and enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights**.

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on **the impact of arms transfers on human rights**.

[A/HRC/56/42](#): The report highlighted **general issues relating to the transparency of the arms sector and specific concerns related to access to information on arms transfers**. The lack of transparency and access to information constitutes a barrier to effective oversight of arms transfers, access to justice, and effective remedies. The effective enjoyment of the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas is a necessary condition for accountability, which in turn is essential for the protection of human rights. Access to relevant information is a precondition for effective oversight over arms transfers, contributes to improving the quality of decision-making and facilitates access to justice and effective remedies for victims of violations. Some States have adopted a series of measures to enhance the transparency of arms transfers, including through the proactive publication of information through reporting. Finally, the report provided specific recommendations on information in order to overcome those barriers, and guidance on applying human

rights standards related to the interpretation of the right of access to information. The Office further recommended that business entities adhere to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights standards on transparency.

[A/HRC/56/43](#): Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the **Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**. The first focused on the theme “Gender-based violence against women and girls in public and political life” and the second on the theme “Social protection: women’s participation and leadership”.

[Agenda Item 4: Presentation of Reports and Interactive Dialogues](#)

03 July: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of [human rights in Belarus](#), **Anaïs Marin**.

[A/HRC/56/65](#): The report demonstrated an **ongoing deterioration** as the country entered a new electoral cycle. The report focused on the **right to freedom of association**, revealing a targeted eradication of all independent associations in Belarus since 2021, which affects civil society organizations and initiatives, political parties, trade unions, bar associations, and religious organizations. The SR was particularly concerned about repressive measures targeted at persons within and outside the country. The Special Rapporteur concluded that the human rights situation in Belarus has continued to deteriorate; and that the human rights situation remains extremely preoccupying requiring the Council’s sustained attention. **She recommended the Government** to launch prompt, effective, impartial and transparent investigations into all deaths in custody; put an immediate end to and promptly and effectively investigate all alleged cases of ill-treatment in detention; and ensure freedom of association; among others.

03 July: Interactive dialogue on the oral update by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the [Syrian Arab Republic](#).

03 July: Interactive dialogue on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the [situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela](#).

[A/HRC/56/63](#)⁸: The report focused on the latest developments related to **economic, social and cultural rights and the right to a healthy environment, gender, and LGBTIQ+ rights, the rule of law, and civic space** of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Persons in the country continued to face significant challenges to exercise and enjoy their rights due to different factors. In some cases, such challenges were exacerbated by sectoral sanctions. Despite the Government’s efforts to address such issues, and the Barbados agreements, the OHCHR called on the parties to fully implement these agreements, ensuring human rights are at the center of the agenda. The urgent preservation and protection of civic space is critical for a restoration of trust between the Venezuelan people and its institutions, particularly ahead of upcoming electoral processes. The OHCHR reiterated its commitment to Venezuela and its willingness to re-establish its presence in the country to strengthen its cooperation with the authorities to improve the human rights situation in the country. Among others, the OHCHR recommended the Government to urgently develop, in consultation with civil society and other relevant stakeholders, and implement a plan of action to strengthen people’s access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security, through a socially inclusive process, consistent with international human rights law and standards; and to establish normative, institutional and policy measures to fulfill its obligations towards the availability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare, including towards ensuring the protection of, and improved working conditions for health sector workers.

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03 July: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of **human rights in Myanmar**, **Thomas Andrews**.

04 July: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of **human rights in Burundi**, **Fortuné Gaetan Zongo**.

Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

04-05 July: Adoption of UPR Outcomes: **Monaco, Belize, Chad, Jordan, Malaysia, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Mauritius, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, China**.

Monaco: [Report](#) of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (henceforth “Working Group”) lists 147 recommendations received by Monaco, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: France, Honduras and Indonesia.

Belize: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 166 recommendations received by Belize, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Costa Rica, Kuwait and Sudan.

Chad: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 242 recommendations received by Chad, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Japan, Romania and South Africa.

Jordan: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 279 recommendations received by Jordan, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Finland, Ghana and Qatar.

Malaysia: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 348 recommendations received by Malaysia, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Argentina, Eritrea and Viet Nam.

Central African Republic: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 244 recommendations received by the Central African Republic, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Cameroon, Montenegro, and the Netherlands.

Nigeria: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 346 recommendations received by Nigeria, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Chile, Gambia and Malaysia.

Mauritius: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 303 recommendations received by Mauritius, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Burundi, Brazil and United States of America.

Mexico: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 318 recommendations received by Mexico, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Bulgaria, China and Paraguay.

Saudi Arabia: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 354 recommendations received by Saudi Arabia, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Algeria, Cuba and Kyrgyzstan.

Senegal: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 322 recommendations received by Senegal, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Germany, Kazakhstan and Somalia.

China: [Report](#) of the Working Group lists 428 recommendations received by China, which will provide responses during the 56th session of the Council. Troika of rapporteurs: Albania, Malawi and United Arab Emirates.

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