

Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division

Background

The Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division (HRCSPD) is the OHCHR Division with a core mandate to support the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the special procedures. It also supports the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review and the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council. Since 1 January 2014, the Division, which previously consisted of two branches, the Human Rights Council Branch and the Special Procedures Branch, also hosts the Universal Periodic Review Branch.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is an intergovernmental body comprising 47 Member States, elected by the General Assembly for a three-year period, which is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. It was established by and is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. During the reporting period, the Human Rights Council continued to address various urgent and chronic human rights situations. It further extended the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council also established two commissions of inquiry, one to investigate all alleged human rights violations in Eritrea and another to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the military operations conducted since 13 June 2014, whether before, during or after.

In addition, the Council requested OHCHR to conduct an investigation into alleged serious violations of human rights by both parties in



Baudelaire Ndong Ella, President of the Human Rights Council, addresses the opening of the Council's 26th session, June 2014.

Sri Lanka, during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and to urgently dispatch a mission to Iraq to investigate alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated terrorist groups. The Council furthermore asked the High Commissioner to report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine. Based on the final report of the Commission of Inquiry to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave human rights violations committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Council mandated OHCHR to set up a field-based structure to follow up on the work of the Commission.

The UPR is an intergovernmental mechanism which provides for the consideration of the human rights situation in all 193 Member States of the United Nations on the basis of the principles of equality of treatment and full involvement and cooperation of the State concerned. The review takes place in the framework of a working group, which has the same composition as the HRC, through an interactive dialogue of three and a half hours between the State under review and other States. Recommendations

are put forward by States for the consideration of the State under review for its follow-up. The first cycle of the UPR was concluded in 2012 with a 100 per cent record of participation of States in their review. The second cycle, which is currently ongoing, focuses on the implementation of the recommendations put forward during the first cycle. As part of its support, OHCHR organizes the holding of 42 interactive dialogues annually, prepares two out of the three background documents used for the interactive dialogues, provides assistance to the State under review and the troika -the three States drawn by lot to support the reviewed State- in the drafting of the working group report and extends assistance to States in the follow-up process.

The special procedures are mandates given to independent experts requesting them to address thematic human rights issues or human rights situations in specific countries. Mandate-holders engage with States, civil society organizations or other relevant actors with a view to examining, publicly reporting and making recommendations in relation to the issues falling under their mandates. Special procedures conduct country visits; send communications to States, and sometimes other actors, about human rights issues and individual cases; undertake awareness-raising activities; contribute to the development of international human rights standards; undertake thematic studies and provide advisory services. All mandate-holders submit reports to the HRC and, when mandated, to the General Assembly on questions relating to their mandate and activities. In 2014, the Human Rights Council established two thematic mandates, namely on the rights of persons with disabilities and on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights and one country mandate on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights. As of the end of 2014, there were 53 special procedures (39 thematic mandates and 14 mandates relating to countries or territories) with 77 mandate-holders. Furthermore, 109 States and one non-Member Observer State had issued standing invitations to special procedures to undertake visits. During 2014, special procedures conducted 80 country visits to 60 States and sent 553 communications to 116 States in which they described allegations of human rights violations or general concerns relating to laws, policies and practices, and urged relevant State authorities to take steps to investigate them and, where they proved to be well-founded, provide redress. The special procedures submitted 135 reports to the Human Rights Council and 36 to the General Assembly. They also issued 379 news releases and public statements in 2014.

Results

The following results were achieved following key interventions undertaken by the HRC and its mechanisms, with the support of OHCHR.

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

► *Increased compliance and engagement of Member States with international human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

The second cycle of the UPR continued in 2014 with the full participation of all 42 States scheduled for consideration during the year, including a number of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), namely Comoros, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Fiji and Vanuatu. States under review sent high-level representatives and the national reports prepared for the second cycle frequently included references to previous cycle recommendations and reported on implementation measures. Likewise, recommending States tended to refer more systematically to the recommendations made in the first cycle when asking questions and making new recommendations. Increasingly, countries submitted midterm reports on the measures taken to implement the recommendations received during the first cycle. To date, 54 States have submitted such reports.

A partnership was formalized with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to strengthen the involvement of parliamentarians in the work of the HRC, in particular the UPR. Regional seminars were organized in Bucharest, Montevideo and Rabat, bringing together over 200 parliamentarians from different regions, to familiarize them with the UPR process and encourage its use to advance human rights promotion and protection at the national level.

HRCSPD contributed to advocacy and awareness-raising activities on the rights of persons with disabilities through the provision of advice and support to the Facilitator of the Task Force on accessibility for persons with disabilities. The Division also contributed to the organization of a workshop on the recently issued Secretary-General's Bulletin on employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities, with the understanding that improving accessibility for staff members with disabilities will also enhance accessibility for participants in the Council sessions. HRCSPD further ensured that a website for applications to vacant positions of special procedures mandate-holders and the Expert Mechanism for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was fully accessible to persons with

disabilities to ensure non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of the Council's work. Finally, an accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council was prepared to enable the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others.

From 9-11 December 2014, a two-day interregional seminar was held in Casablanca, Morocco to facilitate the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS in the HRC and its UPR. Thirty-seven delegates (including eight women), representing 20 countries, participated in the event. The seminar was the second of its kind in that its primary aim was to improve the engagement with and inclusion in the Human Rights Council and the UPR mechanism of LDCs and SIDS. The success of the seminar gave way to suggestions by delegations to establish a more stable training facility for LDCs and SIDS.

- *Increased number and diversity of rights-holders, and of national human rights institutions and civil society actors acting on their behalf, making use of United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms and bodies (EA 7)*

OHCHR facilitated the participation and engagement of civil society and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) with the Council and its mechanisms and subsidiary bodies, including through the continuous collection and dissemination of information on measures taken to support and protect civil society actors and their space to work with the Council. Following the 26th session of the Council in June, a document on frequently asked questions was prepared, which also enabled the recording of lessons learned that would assist participants at forthcoming HRC sessions. Regular briefings for civil society actors were held on the rules of procedure governing their participation in the work of the Council. In cooperation with other sections of the Office, the Division served as a point of contact for allegations of reprisals against persons who have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, which are then documented and monitored in accordance with internal procedures. Cases of allegations of reprisals were brought to the attention of the HRC President and the Bureau as well as other mechanisms, as appropriate, for further action.

OHCHR pursued the active and improved participation of NHRIs in the UPR process. The

NHRIs provided information for the preparation of the pre-session reports of the UPR and made statements during the adoption of the outcome documents. The possibility for making video statements was pursued and NHRIs from Bosnia and Herzegovina and El Salvador made video statements during the HRC's plenary session. The new online UPR submissions system, which OHCHR introduced in 2013 for the registration of submissions for the UPR documentations from stakeholders, made the processing of stakeholders' submissions more organized and transparent and enhanced the responsiveness of the Office towards stakeholders. In addition, all information and deadlines for the effective and timely participation of stakeholders in the different phases of the UPR process were made available on the website well in advance of the sessions. Furthermore, the electronic inscription system for the list of speakers was used and contributed to improving the accessibility of information for NGO participation in the UPR, including for those not based in Geneva.

- *Advances in the progressive development of international and regional human rights law in areas relevant to the thematic priorities (EA 8)*
- Numerous mechanisms made important contributions to further developing international human rights law, with the support of OHCHR. For example, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to water and sanitation published the *Handbook for realizing the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation*; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, issued the *Basic Principles on the right to effective remedy for victims of trafficking in persons*; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention initiated the preparation of draft basic principles and guidelines for remedies and procedures on the right of anyone deprived of her or his liberty to bring proceedings before the court; and the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity presented the HRC with a draft declaration on the right of peoples and individuals to international solidarity. The Division provided substantive support to Advisory Committee members and its drafting groups on a variety of issues, including human rights in post-disaster and post-conflict situations; the negative impact of corruption on human rights; promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal; local government and human rights; human rights and unilateral coercive measures; and attacks against persons with albinism. In doing so, the Division facilitated the development of standards by the Committee in the aforementioned areas, thus contributing to the



The Special Rapporteurs on the independence of judges and lawyers and on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, brief the Human Rights Council during its 26th session, June 2014.

progressive development of international human rights law and standards.

- ▶ *Enhanced synergies, complementarity and coherence within and between human rights mechanisms (EA 9)*

The coherence among human rights mechanisms was strengthened in terms of improved coordination between special procedures and the increased visibility of the system. OHCHR supported several joint initiatives between mandate-holders advocating for the integration of human rights in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and calling for the elimination of inequalities, the provision of social protection floors and the establishment of a double accountability mechanism to hold countries accountable for their human rights commitments at both national and international levels. Through the Chairperson of the Coordination Committee, the special procedures participated in Special Sessions of the Human Rights Council, specifically on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic on 20 January and on the human rights situation in Iraq in light of abuses committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant on 1 September. The Chairperson also delivered statements on behalf of the Coordination Committee.

The special procedures fostered cooperation with regional mechanisms. For example, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions identified regional human rights systems as strategic entry points for advancing the protection of the right to life and stressed the need to engage with these systems. In this connection, he attended the 55th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in April and the Continental Conference on

the Death Penalty in July. In addition, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences participated in a series of events to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

- ▶ *Early warning functions of human rights mechanisms are enhanced (EA 10)*

Throughout the year, the HRC Secretariat supported the Human Rights Council in its effort to address chronic, emerging or ongoing human rights crises in any part of the world by providing legal, substantive and procedural advice to relevant Member States on options and modalities of implementing such initiatives. This was the case when States began considering calling for a special session on the Central African Republic in January, for a special debate on South Sudan in June or a special debate on Iraq in September. It also provided options to States interested in initiatives to respond to the crisis in Ukraine, the series of terrorist attacks in Africa and the Ebola epidemic. Consequently, the Council established (or extended in the case of the Syrian Arab Republic) commissions of inquiry and requested OHCHR to conduct investigations. Specifically, at its 26th session in June, the Council decided to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged human rights violations in Eritrea. At a special session held in July, the Council established a commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the military operations conducted since 13 June 2014, whether before, during or after. Moreover, at its 25th session, the Council

requested that the High Commissioner undertake a comprehensive investigation into alleged violations of human rights by both parties in Sri Lanka, during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. Finally, the Council asked the High Commissioner to report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine.

The special procedures addressed a number of emerging human rights issues, including the use of drones in extraterritorial lethal counter-terrorism operations; the trend of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones and emerging autonomous weapons systems; the use of mass digital surveillance for counter-terrorism purposes; implementation of the right to social security through the universal adoption of social protection floors; and the use of private military and security companies.

In 2014, the Council held 25 panel discussions on subjects ranging from the rights of the child; women's human rights; gender-based violence and discrimination; protection of the family; the rights of indigenous peoples; the rights of persons with disabilities; the integration of a gender perspective; the role of prevention in the promotion and protection of human rights; civil society space; the rights of persons deprived of their liberty; history teaching and memorialization processes; the right to privacy in the digital age; the safety of journalists; the question of the death penalty; the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide; the use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in



Webcast of Bolivia's second cycle Universal Periodic Review, October 2014.

counter-terrorism and military operations; and the human rights situation in South Sudan. These panel discussions, organized by OHCHR, provided an opportunity for the international community to focus on new and emerging thematic human rights issues while increasing awareness about these issues from a human rights perspective.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation, policies and practices increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality*

One of OHCHR's priorities is to strengthen the human rights mechanisms and the progressive development of human rights law, as outlined in its Management Plan 2014-2017. To make this priority a reality, OHCHR took steps to promote the engagement of Member States and stakeholders with the mechanisms and supported the national-level implementation of and follow-up to recommendations that have been issued by the human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review.

During 2014, OHCHR received many requests for assistance with follow-up to the UPR process,

including from Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Vanuatu and Uganda. To support these States, which bear primary responsibility for implementation of the recommendations, the Office developed a strategic framework for the Voluntary Trust Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the UPR. This framework defines guiding principles for the operation of the Trust Fund and prioritizes requests from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, enabling it to respond

to requests in an orderly, fair, universal and transparent manner. The Office submitted its second report on the operation of the Trust Fund (A/HRC/26/54) to the Human Rights Council in June 2014.

Another element of OHCHR's work in this area involved the updating of the Universal Human Rights Index to ensure that the recommendations from both the first and second cycles would be publicly available. The Office also worked to strengthen partnerships between the UN system and regional human rights mechanisms through various forms of engagement and cooperation.

standards (EA 4)

In May 2014, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief conducted a visit to the Republic of Moldova to follow up on his 2011 mission and noted positive developments related to his prior recommendations, including the adoption of the Law on Ensuring Equality (Law 121/2012) and the establishment in 2013 of the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality.

This represented a positive step taken towards the promotion of diversity as well as strengthening protection against discrimination. Further, the adoption of a law on alternative civilian service in February 2014 and the granting of amnesty for those who were previously condemned for their conscientious objection to military service in Transnistria were other examples of the implementation of his recommendations. Following the visit of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights to the Republic of Moldova in September, the Government adopted regulations in October to formally establish a position of Ombudsman for Psychiatry in accordance with her recommendation.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Legal frameworks, public policies and institutions are in place and functioning to combat sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and related exploitation (EA 1)*

During her visit to the Seychelles from 27-31 January 2014, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, recommended that the Government develop and adopt anti-trafficking legislation. A Prohibition on Trafficking in Persons Act was subsequently enacted which penalizes the crime of trafficking in persons and makes provisions for the protection and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in persons. In addition, based on the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, the Act establishes a formalized National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee to harmonize the country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons and oversee the implementation and operationalization of a National Strategy and Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons.

On 6 March, the Government of Mauritania formally adopted a road map for the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, to end slavery in Mauritania. These recommendations were made during her country visit to Mauritania in 2009 and were

reiterated through working visits and during a follow-up visit in February 2014. The road map has legal, economic and social dimensions, is designed to bridge gaps in the application of the previous anti-slavery laws and provides a yardstick for measuring progress, including through concrete timelines and the appointment of responsible actors.

80 country visits carried out by special procedures mandate-holders to 60 countries.

553 communications sent to **116** different countries and territories. **81** per cent of these were issued jointly by two or more mandate-holders.

As of the end of 2014, the response rate by States to special procedures' communications remained low at **42.7** per cent.

135 reports submitted by mandate-holders to the Human Rights Council and **36** to the General Assembly.

110 standing invitations issued by Member States and a non-Member Observer State (compared to 108 at the end of 2013).

Global Management Outputs

A gender perspective is effectively integrated into all OHCHR policies, programmes and relevant processes (GMO 3)

- ▶ In 2014, HRCSPD continued to include sessions on gender in induction sessions for new mandate-holders and in training activities for new staff supporting the special procedures.
- ▶ The Division continued to compile a statistical report, which includes the number and percentage of women delegates who attended sessions of the Council, the number and percentage of women delegates who delivered statements at the Council and the gender ratio of experts participating in panel discussions. The analysis of the statistical data collected for 2014 showed that little progress was made in terms of gender balance in many aspects of the work of the Council. The Office continued its outreach efforts towards potential candidates for special procedures mandate-holders to ensure a gender balance among mandate-holders. As of the end of 2014, 38 per cent of mandate-holders were women (in 2008, only 26 per cent of mandate-holders were women).

- ▶ In the context of the regional seminars organized by OHCHR with the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the role of parliaments in the work of the HRC and particularly the UPR, specific reference was made to the integration of gender. This contributed to an increasing number of gender-related recommendations put forward during the interactive dialogue. In UPR briefings for States, the importance of providing gender-disaggregated data was consistently highlighted. Nevertheless, references to women's rights and gender in national reports remained uneven.

Increased effectiveness in supporting human rights mechanisms (GMO 4)

- ▶ OHCHR provided advice and briefings to delegations on the Council's procedures and practices and constantly updated them on the HRC's programme and meetings of the Bureau through notes verbales and the extranet.
- ▶ OHCHR made progress in enhancing the visibility of the Council through various online tools and information technologies. In particular, the proactive use of social media resulted in an increase in the number of Facebook "likes" from approximately 15,500 at the end of 2013 to 85,000 by December 2014 and an increase from 14,000 Twitter followers at the end of 2013 to 33,800 by December 2014. Three videos were produced and posted on YouTube, highlighting the activities for each of the Council's regular sessions. The videos were made accessible for persons with disabilities.
- ▶ Efforts were undertaken to reduce the volume of hard copy documents circulated in the meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. The session reports no longer include resolutions and decisions adopted by the HRC and instead provide hyperlinks to the relevant webpage. A number of documents, such as minutes of the Bureau, communications to and from the President, different versions of draft resolutions and oral statements delivered at the HRC are no longer being printed. OHCHR has also taken steps to produce and disseminate a USB key containing pertinent documents that are relevant to delegations and a calendar of the main meetings of the year.
- ▶ The Division also undertook a number of steps to facilitate the engagement of LDCs and SIDS with the HRC, including by supporting the newly established Voluntary Trust Fund to facilitate their participation in the work of the Council. As part of its outreach efforts, HRCSPD regularly provided briefings on the Trust Fund to targeted missions and regional organizations in New York and Geneva. A dedicated webpage was created to disseminate information, application procedures and activities supported by the Trust Fund in order to reach out to States which do not have permanent representation in Geneva and to potential donors.
- ▶ OHCHR provided advice and assistance to the Consultative Group to the President of the HRC for the review of candidates in light of the unprecedented number of special procedures vacancies (30), including for the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Significant outreach and awareness-raising efforts were undertaken through print and online media channels to increase the number and quality of applications.
- ▶ OHCHR provided support to the Coordination Committee of the Special Procedures to strengthen the coherence of the special procedures system. The 21st annual meeting of



The Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and on freedom of religion or belief, brief the press in New York, October 2014.



Opening meeting of the Third Annual United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva, December 2014.

special procedures was held from 29 September to 3 October in Geneva, during which mandate-holders exchanged views with the High Commissioner, the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the Human Rights Council and representatives of United Nations entities, among others.

- ▶ In terms of information tools, HRCSPD updated the Directory of Special Procedures Mandate-Holders twice in 2014 and produced weekly updates for mandate-holders to ensure improved coordination and knowledge-sharing. The Office supported the production of joint communication reports, which have been issued since 2011. In addition, OHCHR issued press releases and web-based stories relating to country visits, thematic issues, country situations and regarding individual cases of human rights violations in relation to the special procedures.

Increased effectiveness in supporting field operations (GMO 5)

- ▶ In 2014, HRCSPD worked closely with OHCHR's Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division to facilitate contributions from the field presences to the work of the HRC and its subsidiary bodies by providing information on programmed activities and mandates of the HRC relevant to field operations.
- ▶ The Division also worked closely with OHCHR field presences to design capacity-building and technical assistance projects. Through the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the UPR, assistance was provided to States to build their capacities in a variety of areas to enable more effective follow-up. Emphasis was placed on supporting national inter-institutional structures to implement recommendations and establishing tracking systems to facilitate monitoring of implementation. The Division enhanced the capacity of field presences to support the effective participation of governments and civil society in all phases of the UPR process. For example, HRCSPD staff liaised with field colleagues in Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania and Tunisia to provide timely and reliable information for the preparation of the interactive dialogue of the UPR.
- ▶ HRCSPD worked with OHCHR field presences to verify information relating to allegations as well as to prepare country visits by mandate-holders. Regarding the latter, the Office cooperated with field presences from the early planning stages of the country visits until the follow-up to the mandate-holders' recommendations. In several cases, special procedures reports were used by field presences for awareness-raising and advocacy purposes.

Human Rights Council – Outcomes of sessions held in 2014

20th special session (20 January 2014)

The Council adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic and technical assistance in the field of human rights.

25th session (3 - 28 March 2014)

The Council adopted resolutions, decisions and President's Statements on:

- Human rights in a number of thematic areas, including the right to education of persons with disabilities; access to justice for children; ending violence against children; the right to food; promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests; combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief; protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; freedom of religion or belief; adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living; human rights and the environment; the promotion of the enjoyment of the cultural rights of everyone and respect for cultural diversity; and the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights;
- Mandate of the Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders, on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Mandate of the Independent Experts on minority issues and 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;
- 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;
- Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka;
- The situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Haiti, Myanmar, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan, the Syrian Arab Republic and South Sudan;
- Assistance to Guinea, Libya and the Republic of Mali in the field of human rights;
- Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict;
- Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Integrity of the judicial system;
- Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights;
- The role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Panel on the right to privacy in the digital age;
- Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law;
- International Decade for People of African Descent;
- Postponement of the renewal of the mandate of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances;
- Outcomes of the Universal Periodic Review in relation to Belize, the Central African Republic, Chad, China, the Republic of the Congo, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Senegal.

26th session (10 - 27 June 2014)

The Council adopted resolutions, decisions and President's Statements on:

- Human rights in a number of thematic areas, including the elimination of discrimination against women; accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment; promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas; climate change; extreme poverty; protection of the family; arbitrary deprivation of nationality; the right of migrants to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; protection of Roma; the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health: sport and healthy lifestyles as contributing factors; the regulation of civilian acquisition; possession and use of firearms; the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights; and the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet;
- The right to education: follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 8/4;
- Mandate of the Special Rapporteurs on the independence of judges and lawyers, on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on the rights of persons with disabilities, on the human rights of migrants, and on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;

- Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity;
- The question of the death penalty;
- International Albinism Awareness Day;
- The Social Forum;
- Promotion and protection of human rights in post-disaster and post-conflict situations;
- Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent: draft programme of activities;
- Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights;
- Contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review;
- The situation of human rights in Belarus and Eritrea;
- The continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Assistance to Côte d'Ivoire, South Sudan and Ukraine in the field of human rights;
- Outcomes of the Universal Periodic Review in relation to Afghanistan, Cambodia, Chile, Comoros, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, New Zealand, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen.

21st special session (23 July 2014)

The Council adopted a resolution on ensuring respect for international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

22nd special session (1 September 2014)

The Council adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Iraq in light of abuses committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups.

27th session (8 - 26 September 2014)

The Council adopted resolutions, decisions and President's Statements on:

- Human rights in a number of thematic areas, including enforced or involuntary disappearances; the right to development; local government; the safety of journalists; the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation; intensifying global efforts and sharing good practices to effectively eliminate female genital mutilation; preventable maternal mortality and morbidity; preventable mortality and morbidity of children under five years of age; the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities; indigenous peoples; human rights and unilateral coercive measures; human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity; equal participation in political and public affairs; promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal; protection of the human rights of migrants at sea; and the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination;
- World Programme for Human Rights Education: adoption of the plan of action for the third phase;
- 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: the activities of culture funds;
- Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence;
- Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes;
- Mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Mandate of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent;
- Panel discussion on realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl;
- Twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Reports of the Advisory Committee;
- The Ebola epidemic;
- National policies and human rights;
- Promotion of the right to peace;
- Civil society space;
- National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights;
- Assistance to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Yemen in the field of human rights;
- The continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Outcomes of the Universal Periodic Review in relation to Albania, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal and Qatar.

Special Procedures Mandate-Holders 2014		
Mandate	Established	Mandate-holder
Country mandates		
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus	2012	Mr. Miklós Haraszti (Hungary) since October 2012
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia	1993	Mr. Surya Prasad Subedi (Nepal) since May 2009
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic	2013	Ms. Marie-Therese Keita Bocoum (Côte d'Ivoire) since January 2014
Independent Expert on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights	2014	Mr. Mohammed Ayat (Morocco) since December 2014
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea	2012	Ms. Sheila B. Keetharuth (Mauritius) since October 2012
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2004	Mr. Marzuki Darusman (Indonesia) since August 2010
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti	1995	Mr. Gustavo Gallón (Colombia) since May 2013
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	2011	Mr. Ahmed Shaheed (Maldives) since August 2011
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali	2013	Mr. Suliman Baldo (Sudan) since October 2013
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar	1992	Ms. Yanghee Lee (Republic of Korea) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967	1993	Mr. Makarim Wibisino (Indonesia) since June 2014
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia	1993	Mr. Bahame Nyanduga (United Republic of Tanzania) since June 2014
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan	2005 (SR) 2009 (IE)	Mr. Aristide Nononsi (Benin) since December 2014
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic	2012	Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Brazil) will start once the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry ends
Thematic mandates		
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context	2000	Ms. Leilani Farha (Canada) since June 2014
Working Group of experts on people of African descent	2002	Ms. Verene Shepherd (Jamaica), Chair-Rapporteur, since April 2010 Mr. Michal Balcerzak (Poland) since December 2014 Mr. Ricardo III Sunga (the Philippines) since December 2014 Ms. Mireille Fanon-Mendès-France (France) since May 2011 Mr. Sabelo Gumedze (South Africa) since August 2014
Working Group on arbitrary detention	1991	Mr. Sètondji Roland Jean-Baptiste Adjovi (Benin) since June 2014 Mr. Seong-Phil Hong (Republic of Korea) since August 2014 Mr. Vladimir Tochilovsky (Ukraine) since May 2010 Mr. Mads Andenas (Norway) since August 2009 Mr. José Guevara (Mexico) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	1990	Ms. Maud De Boer-Buquicchio (the Netherlands) since June 2014
Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights	2009	Ms. Farida Shaheed (Pakistan) since November 2009
Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	2011	Mr. Alfred de Zayas (USA) since May 2012
Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities	2014	Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar (Costa Rica) since December 2014

Mandate	Established	Mandate-holder
Special Rapporteur on the right to education	1998	Mr. Kishore Singh (India) since August 2010
Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances	1980	Mr. Bernard Duhaime (Canada) since December 2014 Ms. Houria Es-Slami (Morocco) since June 2014 Mr. Ariel Dulitzky (Argentina/USA) since August 2010 Ms. Jasminka Dzumhur (Bosnia and Herzegovina) since May 2010 Mr. Osman El-Hajje (Lebanon) since August 2009
Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment	2012	Mr. John Knox (USA) since August 2012
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions	1982	Mr. Christof Heyns (South Africa) since August 2010
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights	1998	Mr. Philip Alston (Australia) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the right to food	2000	Ms. Hilal Elver (Turkey) since June 2014
Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	2000	Mr. Juan Bohoslavsky (Argentina) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association	2010	Mr. Maina Kiai (Kenya) since May 2011
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression	1993	Mr. David Kaye (USA) since August 2014
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief	1986	Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany) since August 2010
Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health	2002	Mr. Dainius Pūras (Lithuania) since August 2014
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders	2000	Mr. Michel Forst (France) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers	1994	Ms. Gabriela Knaul (Brazil) since August 2009
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples	2001	Ms. Victoria Lucia Tauli-Corpuz (the Philippines) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons	2004	Mr. Chaloka Beyani (Zambia) since November 2010
Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	2005	Ms. Virginia Dandan (the Philippines) since August 2011
Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	2005	Mr. Anton Katz (South Africa), Chair-Rapporteur, since August 2011 Mr. Saeed Mokbil (Yemen) since June 2014 Ms. Patricia Arias (Chile) since August 2011 Ms. Elzbieta Karska (Poland) since August 2011 Mr. Gabor Rona (USA/Hungary) since August 2011
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants	1999	Mr. François Crépeau (Canada) since August 2011
Special Rapporteur on minority issues	2005	Ms. Rita Izsak (Hungary) since August 2011
Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons	2013	Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte (Chile) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees on non-recurrence	2011	Mr. Pablo De Greiff (Colombia) since May 2012
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism , racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	1993	Mr. Mutuma Ruteere (Kenya) since November 2011
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery , including its causes and consequences	2007	Ms. Urmila Bhoola (South Africa) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism	2005	Mr. Ben Emmerson (United Kingdom) since August 2011

Mandate	Established	Mandate-holder
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	1985	Mr. Juan Ernesto Méndez (Argentina) since November 2010
Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes	1995	Mr. Baskut Tuncak (Turkey) since June 2014
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons , especially women and children	2004	Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro (Italy) since August 2014
Working Group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises	2011	Mr. Puvan Selvanathan (Malaysia) since November 2011 Mr. Michael K. Addo (Ghana) since November 2011 Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga (Russian Federation), Chair-Rapporteur, since November 2011 Ms. Alexandra Guaqueta (Colombia/USA) since November 2011 Ms. Margaret Jungk (USA) since November 2011
Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights	2014	To be appointed at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council
Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation	2008	Mr. Léo Heller (Brazil) since December 2014
Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice	2010	Ms. Kamala Chandrakirana (Indonesia) since May 2011 Ms. Emna Aouij (Tunisia) since May 2011 Ms. Alda Facio (Costa Rica) since June 2014 Ms. Frances Raday (Israel/United Kingdom), Chair-Rapporteur, since May 2011 Ms. Eleonora Zielinska (Poland) since May 2011
Special Rapporteur on violence against women , its causes and consequences	1994	Ms. Rashida Manjoo (South Africa) since August 2009