

THE INSIDE TRACK



CONCISE INFORMATION ON THE UPCOMING SESSION
OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Inside Track HRC44:
the 44th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council

Tuesday 30th June to Friday 17th July 2020
(3 week session), Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations

IN BRIEF

- On **30th June**, H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will open HRC44 with her annual report on the human rights situation around the world, followed by an oral update on the human rights implications of COVID-19. This will provide the basis for an interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on **30th June - 2nd July**.
- During the session, the Council will consider **country-specific reports** by the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General covering human rights issues in, *inter alia*: the Philippines, Nicaragua, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Ukraine. Additionally, the High Commissioner will deliver an **oral update** on the human rights situation of the Rohingya people.
- It will also consider High Commissioner and Secretary General reports on a number of thematic issues, including *inter alia*:
 - Activities and plans of OHCHR to support States efforts to promote and protect the human rights of prisoners;
 - civil society space;
 - elimination of female genital mutilation;
 - impact of new technologies on human rights in the context of assemblies;
 - implementation and enhancement of international cooperation;
 - improving accountability and access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses;
 - intersection of race and gender discrimination in sport;
 - operations of the Voluntary Fund for participation in the universal periodic review;
 - operations of the Voluntary Fund for financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the universal periodic review.
- The Council will consider reports from, and hold interactive dialogues with, 21 **Special Procedures** (four country-specific and 17 thematic), including those dealing with: education; extreme poverty; freedom of expression; peaceful assembly; racism; right to health; sexual orientation and gender identity; trafficking; violence against women; Belarus; Eritrea; Myanmar; and Occupied Palestinian Territories. In accordance with HRC/PRST/OS/13/1 all the Interactive Dialogues (IDs) will be individual.
- As per [HRC/PRST/OS/13/1](#) there will be no general debates during HRC44.
- The Council is expected to act on around 25 draft resolutions and other texts. The deadline for submitting draft resolutions has been set at **1PM on 16 July 2020**. Additionally, it is expected to appoint four new mandate-holders including the Special Rapporteur on hazardous wastes, Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, Special Rapporteur on right to health, and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking. More information on the appointment process and the candidates can be found [here](#).¹

For the full draft programme of work for the 44th session, please click [here](#).⁴

1 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/SP/Pages/HRC44.aspx>

4 https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session44/Documents/POW_HRC44_EN.doc

IMPACT OF THE SPECIAL MEASURES TO COMBAT COVID-19 DURING THE HRC

Several measures have been taken to ensure that delegations can participate in the work of the Council in full respect of the IB package and in compliance with the health assessment and announcements made by the Swiss Federal Council related to the prevention of the further spread of SARS-CoV-2.

These include:

- All participants to the 44th session are **requested to be accredited via INDICO**, even if they have a permanent accreditation to UNOG, for the purpose of contact tracing. Participants should bring along proof of INDICO registration (QR code) on their mobile device or on paper.

- **All plenary meetings** of the Council, except for those meetings designated on the programme of work for “Decisions and conclusions”, will take place in the Assembly Hall. To ensure compliance with physical distancing guidelines, the number of people allowed inside the Assembly Hall and the other conference rooms will need to be limited to **one person per delegation**.

- The entrance to Assembly Hall will be via Door 14 (at the back side of the Assembly Hall). Delegates can directly access Door 14 from Pregny gate, and a drop-off zone will be indicated in front of Door 14.

- For purposes of contact tracing, delegates are requested to register for HRC44 via the Indico platform [here](#). UNOG Security officers will also register each participant who enters Assembly Hall by scanning his or her badge.

- Based on the risk assessment and the latest guidance from the UN Medical Directors, UNOG will require all persons physically present inside the conference rooms to wear a face covering mask. Should delegates forget to bring a mask, these will be provided as required.

- Delegations not wishing or unable to participate in plenary debates in person will have the possibility of **delivering their statements by pre-recorded video-messages**. More information on the procedure to do so can be found [here](#).

- **Special procedures mandate holders** and members of investigative mechanisms unable to travel to Geneva, will be able to participate in the interactive dialogues by **video teleconferencing**.

- Arrangements will be made to hold all **panel debates virtually** on an online-platform designated by UNOG.

- **Informal consultations and group meetings** will be able to take place at the Palais des Nations in room XVIII and XIX. In accordance with the IB package, at least one informal open-ended consultation will need to be held on each draft resolution and/or decision before it is considered for action by the Council. Additional informal consultations can take place virtually or in writing.

- All 47 Members of the Council will be able to designate two representatives to be present in Room XX during the **voting process**. Member States not wishing to participate in the voting procedure in person may opt for voting by designating a proxy representative. Observer States introducing draft proposals or concerned countries will also be able to designate two representatives to be present in the room at the time of action on relevant resolutions.

- **Side-events** cannot take place inside of the Palais des Nations during HRC44. Organizers of side-events are encouraged to hold these meetings virtually.





MEASURES TO ASSIST SMALL DELEGATIONS DURING THE HRC

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the OHCHR will run the **HRC Helpdesk for SIDS and LDCs virtually**. The Helpdesk is meant to facilitate the understanding of issues raised at the HRC and enhance small State delegates' participation in the session. In addition to organising fixed timeslots for virtual consultations during sessions (each Wednesday from 1.30PM-2.30PM), LDCs/SIDS delegations can also contact the HRC Helpdesk from 1.30PM-2.30PM on weekdays, by email (HRCdesksmallIPM@ohchr.org) or phone (+41 79 500 00 32). The OHCHR is also available for virtual consultations upon request.

The use of the online tool, E-Delegates, will continue in order to facilitate delegates' work during the HRC. The tool will allow delegates to circulate, table and co-sponsor resolutions, amongst others. It is accessible through the following [link](#).

Following a successful trial at HRC43, delegates will be able to use the HRC44 Sched feature (online or via the app) to personalize their agendas and synchronize their calendars. HRC44 Sched provides details on plenary meetings as well as other meetings scheduled in parallel to the HRC session at the Palais des Nations. Please note that meeting details may be subject to change and will be updated daily.

PANEL DEBATES

The 44th session is scheduled to hold seven panel debates³ on the following subjects:

- Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child – A healthy environment as a child rights concern: setting the scene (1st July)
- Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child – Ensuring children's rights through a healthy environment: a call to action (1st July)
- Panel discussion on the impacts, opportunities and challenges of new and emerging digital technologies with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights (8th July)
- Panel discussion on promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change (8th July)
- Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women – Accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings (13th July)
- Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women – COVID-19 and women's rights (14th July)
- Annual thematic panel discussion on technical cooperation and capacity-building – Upholding the human rights of prisoners, including women prisoners and offenders: enhancing technical cooperation and capacity-building in the implementation of the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules (15th July)

Concept notes on these panel discussions will be made available [here](#).³

WHAT'S IN PRINT?

During HRC44, States will consider 82 reports from the Secretary-General, High Commissioner, Working Groups and/or the Special Procedures mandate-holders.

These UN reports, which were commissioned by the Council through earlier resolutions, when published, will be made available [here](#).⁴

Additionally, a number of reports submitted to HRC43 whose consideration had been postponed will also be considered during HRC44.

‘L NUMBER’ – DRAFT RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER TEXTS AT HRC44⁵

Based on announcements made during the HRC44 organisational meeting, the voluntary calendar of regular initiatives, and on recurring initiatives from one year previously (HRC41), the following draft resolutions and other texts are expected to be tabled during HRC44. Before adoption, these texts would be subject to at least one round of open informal consultations with interested delegations.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS

(* = Initiative formally announced during HRC44 organisational meeting)

Focus of resolution	Lead sponsor(s) ⁶	Expected agenda item	Vote history ⁷
Situation of human rights in Eritrea*	Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands	2	Vote (21-13-13)
The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, United Kingdom	4	Vote (26-7-14)
The situation of human rights in Belarus*	Germany (EU)	4	Vote (20-6-21)

5 When tabled before the Council, draft resolutions (and other texts) are given an ‘L number.’

6 Based on main sponsors of previous resolutions.

7 Vote results from the last time the resolution was adopted by the Council. Vote results are represented as (YES – NO – ABSTAIN)

THEMATIC RESOLUTIONS

Focus of resolutions	Lead sponsor(s) ⁹	Expected agenda item	Periodicity ¹⁰	Vote history ¹¹
Business and human rights: Mandate of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises*	Argentina, Ghana, Norway, Russian Federation	3	Biennial	Consensus
Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls*	Colombia, Mexico	3	Annual	Consensus
Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members*	Brazil, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Japan, Morocco, Portugal	3	Triennial	Consensus
Elimination of female genital mutilation*	Burkina Faso (African Group)	3	Biennial	Consensus
Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights*	Azerbaijan (NAM)	3	Annual	Vote (28-14-5)
Extreme poverty and human rights*	Albania, Belgium, Chile, France, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Senegal	3	Triennial	Consensus
Fifteenth anniversary of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as enshrined in the World Summit Outcome of 2005	Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Peru, Qatar, Switzerland	3	New initiative	N/A

⁹ Based on main sponsors of previous resolutions.

¹⁰ Based on the voluntary calendar of thematic resolutions.

¹¹ Vote results from the last time the resolution was adopted by the Council. Vote results are represented as (YES – NO – ABSTAIN)

Freedom of opinion and expression	Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Namibia, the Netherlands, Sweden	3	[Note: Last substantive resolution on this topic was tabled in 2011.]	Consensus
Human rights and climate change*	Bangladesh, Philippines, Viet Nam	3	Annual	Consensus
Human rights and international solidarity	Cuba	3	Annual	Vote (32-14-1)
Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*	Sweden	3	Triennial	Consensus
Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers*	Australia, Botswana, Hungary, the Maldives, Thailand	3	Triennial	Consensus
Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*	Germany, Jordan, Philippines	3	Triennial	Consensus
Independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers	Australia, Botswana, Hungary, the Maldives, Mexico, Thailand	3	Biennial	Consensus
Special Rapporteur on the rights persons with disabilities*	Mexico, New Zealand	3	Triennial	Consensus
The contribution of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms to achievement of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter*	Australia	3	New initiative	N/A
The contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights	China	3	Annual	Vote (33-13-0)
The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests*	Costa Rica, Switzerland	3	Biennial	Consensus
The right to education: follow-up to HRC resolution 8/4*	Portugal	3	Annual	Consensus
The Social Forum	Cuba	5	Annual	Consensus

THE COUNCIL’S MECHANISMS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

17 thematic Special Procedures (e.g. Special Rapporteurs, and Independent Experts) will present their reports (including country mission reports) during HRC44. In addition, four country-specific Special Procedures (e.g. Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts) will present reports/oral updates on the human rights situation in the countries covered by their mandates and their engagement with the concerned State(s).

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC MANDATES

Mandate	Presentation of report/oral updates and interactive dialogue ¹²
Special Rapporteur on Eritrea	30th June
Special Rapporteur on Myanmar	14th July
Special Rapporteur on Belarus	14th July
Special Rapporteur on Occupied Palestinian Territories	16th July

12 Dates liable to change

THEMATIC MANDATES

Mandate	Presentation of report and interactive dialogue	Country mission reports
Special Rapporteur on trafficking	2nd July	Montenegro
Special Rapporteur on the right to education	3rd July	Qatar Tunisia
Special Rapporteur on the right to health	3rd July	Ecuador
Working Group on discrimination against women and girls	6th July	Greece
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty	6th - 7th July	Malaysia Spain
Special Rapporteur on migrants	6th July	Bosnia and Herzegovina Hungary
Special Rapporteur on leprosy	6th - 7th July	Brazil Japan
Special Rapporteur on violence against women	7th - 8th July	Bulgaria Ecuador
Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity	7th - 8th July	Ukraine
Special Rapporteur on summary executions	9th - 10th July	
Independent Expert on international solidarity	9th July	Qatar
Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons	9th July	Iraq
Working group on transnational corporations	9th - 10th July	Georgia Honduras
Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly	10th & 13th July	Sri Lanka Zimbabwe
Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression	10th & 13th July	Ethiopia
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers	13th July	Honduras Uzbekistan
Special Rapporteur on racism	16th July	The Netherlands Qatar

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

THE UPR OUTCOME REPORTS OF 2 STATES WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL DURING HRC44 (EXPECTED 16TH JULY)¹³

**KUWAIT,
SPAIN***

*Council Members

¹³ The UPR outcomes of the 12 remaining States, which were scheduled to be considered during HRC44 have been postponed to HRC45

TRUST FUND TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF LDCS AND SIDS

The Trust Fund to support the participation of LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Council, set up in 2012, has selected five (three female and two male) government officials to participate in HRC44**. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, the delegates participated in the first virtual induction course on the HRC and its Mechanisms (30 hours).

At HRC44 the Trust Fund will support the participation of delegates from the following LDCs and SIDS:

BAHAMAS*
BHUTAN
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
MALAWI
MAURITIUS

* Council Members

** Due to travel restrictions, the delegates will travel to Geneva to attend a subsequent HRC session of their choice

MOST COMMON THEMES OF HRC44*



*based on all announced resolutions, side-events, interactive dialogues, panels, and reports



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